

Cooperating Cultivation of International Managerial Staff by Star Hotel and Vocational College in Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Greater Bay Area

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Abstract: At present, China's tourism industry is picking up rapidly. The tourism market in Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Greater Bay Area is especially hot. With the developing of Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Greater Bay Area, more and more hotel workers with international working abilities are required. Unfortunately, young generations shows less and less interest in working in hotels. Hotels are encountering big problems in recruiting and retaining. This article analyses the reasons behind the problem, and try to give possible solutions in the perspective of cooperating cultivation talents by vocational colleges and star hotels, hoping to address this difficulty in tourism management.

Keywords: Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Greater Bay Area; Star Hotel; International Managerial Staff cultivating; Vocational College

1. Introduction of the problem: Demanding market VS high turnover rate :

During the National holiday of 2021, Guangdong has received more than 44 million tourists, with an income of 23 billion yuan. The above statistics show that tourist industry is still very hot in China. As an integral part, hospitality witnessed steady grows in guests. Therefore, the demand for workers with international working abilities increases constantly.

However, in stark contrast to this, according to a survey carried out by China Tourism Association Talent Training and Development Center aiming at all star hotels in the country, the overall turnover rate of hospitality staff reached as high as 23.95%, the rate in some specific departments was above the height of 45%. The survey also suggested that in Guangdong, star hotels need to supplement thousands of managerial staff every year, let along internationalized workers.

2. Significance:

Take the students from Guangdong Mechanical and Electrical Polytechnic as an example, in the year 2021, out of 70 graduates of Tourism Management major, there were about 30% chose to conduct their internship in hotels, and those who stayed in hotel after internship didn't even reach 1%. The figure reveals the dilemma of tourism management talents cultivating in vocational colleges and the manpower recruitment needs of hospitality. What we cultivated in colleges cannot meet the demands of the current industrial market, which means a transform should be carried out to solve this problem.

3. Possible reasons:

3.1 Long working hours, low respect

According to some feedback from varies interviews of the interns from the college in the hotels, students stated that long working hours is the first reason that prevent them form applying for the positions in hotel, especially the position of receptionists and staff in banquet departments, where overtime is frequent. Some students complained about the healthy problems aroused by long-time standing while working in the hotels.

Some students said that their parents did not allow them to work in hotels, as servicing guests in hotels and restaurants would be considered somewhat "low-grade" by the society in traditional points of view.

3.2 Uncompetitive payment

Comparing with other jobs in the market, working in a hotel doesn't guarantee a good pay. According to some researches into the interns' salaries, statistics show that students worked for an international trade company record a monthly salary at about 5000 yuan. Running a small shop in Taobao could earn around 8000 yuan a month, let along the newly born job-host of the live stream, who can earn 10000 a month. However, working in hotels as interns can earn 2500 yuan per month, and somewhat about 3500 yuan after signing contract with hotels and becoming a formal staff. The fact of lower income but heavy work load has become a great obstacle for hotel manpower recruitment.

3.3 Unpromising career path

Some students worked in hotels for a while but left finally. They reported about the uncertainty in the upbringing career path. You need to work harder than other people to get recognition, somehow the toughness of work could bring harm to the body, like backache because of long-time standing. When there are vacancies in the managerial level, hotel prefer to recruit someone from outside than staff in the hotel, which made them feel disappointed and want to leave.

4. Solutions:

The statistics above demonstrated necessity and urgency of solving the problem. As a teacher in a vocational college in the Guangdong-

Hongkong-Macao Greater Bay Area with tourism management major, I am proposing some solutions to address this problem basing on the work we've done.

4.1 Vocational Education Group as bridge for students and industries

Vocational Education Group is a alliance of government, industry, schools and research institutes. It invited relevant companies to join in the group, so that when there are vacancies, colleges can recommend students in the college to the positions needed. Both companies and colleges benefit because it's a faster, cheaper and more efficient way for companies to recruit, and for students to hunt jobs. Companies need to apply for the entry of Vocational Education Group in colleges, so the qualifications will be checked by teachers, which ensure the reliability of companies and later the quality of jobs. This helps students to have brighter future in career. Having Vocational Education Group will help promoting the college with a good reputation in getting students good jobs. In return, it will help with enrollment of the college. Colleges in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area enjoy a geographical advantage so that they can invite companies not only from Guangdong province, but also from Hong Kong or Macau. Students will have a boarder range of job choices in terms of geography.

4.2 Integrative“Order cultivating”by industries and schools address the problems intensively.

As China is stressing great importance on “the integration of vocational education with industry”, which introduced many industries to work with colleges to cultivate potential employees that suit the needs of the industrial market. Therefore, vocational colleges should try to cooperate with hotels in varies ways to cultivate possible interns, to ensure the industry with the source of the employees in the future. One very effective way is called “Order cultivating”, which requires hotels to sign contracts with vocational colleges, providing some kind of financial support to contribute to the cultivation of the potential interns from certain majors. And the students in this ordered class will be prior when applying jobs in this hotel in internship or even after graduation. This cooperative pattern has been proven effective as there were more students went into the cooperating hotels adhering to the contacts, which to a certain extent ensure the human resource of hotels. It can address many of the problems state above in the following ways.

4.2.1 Integrative“Order cultivating”ensure reasonable working hours.

Contacts signed by Hotels and colleges for Integrative“Order cultivating”classes states clearly that interns from this college are not allowed to work during night shift or in some inappropriate over-time, which make sure that interns from colleges will not work over night in the positions of receptionist etc. Most of the positions are adhered to labor laws and regulations. By doing this, college can try to ensure interns with reasonable working hours.

4.2.2 Integrative“Order cultivating”give interns a prior in promoting.

The “Order cultivating”contact also stated that interns from this college will work as interns in certain positions and will acquire necessary training. They will be considered as a priority where managerial vacancies arouse. Of course, students from college still need to work hard, behave good to get better chance in promotion. But in some way, this guarantees them of more hopes in future career developing.

4.2.3 Integrative“Order cultivating”provide reasonable payments.

Colleges negotiate with cooperating hotels with the latest pay rate every year, to ensure students financial benefits are above the minimum wage line. Furthermore, hotels are required to set some grants to motivate more students to get involved. For example, Intercontinental hotel set up a student grant in a college in Guangdong, students coming from impoverished families, who have worked in the hotel for more than half a year can apply for it. This motivates interns, especially those who are not so wealthy to apply jobs in the hotel.

4.3 Co-educating students with required skills in school, preparing them for the positions beforehand.

China is calling for industries to participate into college's class education so as to teach students with required skill in college. Therefore, after they finished study in school, they can enter jobs faster than before. Being in the location of Guangdong-Hongkong-Macao Greater Bay Area, where foreign affairs and services are more common, we need more working staffs with international communicative ability and vocational techniques. Therefore teachers should be trained with vocational working experience,like working in hotels for at least half a year, so that they can teach the latest skills in hotels. Or, colleges could ask experienced managerial staff to teach students on site or on line, as on-line class is also a popular and safer option in the epidemic.

4.4 Promoting learning by competitions

World skill competition and some other provincial contests help promoting students' learning skills. In accordance with China's enhancing skill education strategy, the government holds many kinds of skill competitions to help promoting the skill development. Thereafter, colleges can organize students to take part in the competitions. And in the preparations for the competitions, students would be stimulated to learn vocational skills and improve their English skills.

5. Retaining policies in the hotel

Hotels are also the sufferers of this problem, they are having a lot of strategies to help retaining staff, especially excellent interns. According to the interviews of the interns and many hotel managerial staff, hotels do have a lot of intern-promoting programs. They are as follow.

5.1“Caring Interns” program

Hotels actually did realize this problem, so try to show that they care about interns. They have “Caring Interns” program, which shows caring for the interns, by offering one-to-one tutors, coach them skills needed in work, meeting with them constantly to learn about their thoughts, having free frequent meals and activities together. When interns complete internship, hotel will hold farewell parties to celebrate, and reward the outstanding ones.

5.2 “Management Trainee” program

Many international hotel group have “Management Trainee” program to help cultivating their own managerial successors. For example, “IHG Future Leaders Programme” give employees opportunity to get higher in career by offering training. There are usually two options for them, one is “Future Leader Aspire Programme”, this other is “Future Leader Embark Programme”. Feedback had that the applicants need to go through an English interview when applying for this program. Applicants are asked to deliver a self-introduction and introduction about career-planning in the future, all in English. So, in the career developing road of hotels, English skills are very important, especially in international hotels.

6. Future endeavors

After years of practicing with the above strategies, there are more students coming from college to work in cooperative hotels, and some of them stay in the hotel for further development. So to some extent, we’ve found this an effective way of solving the problem of recruiting the hotels are facing. However, there are still some unsolved aspects, in which I would like to explore in the future.

6.1 Effective retain policies to attract young staff

The number of students who are willing to apply for jobs in hotels are still very small, which is the first question that need further care. Second, the number of students want to stay in hotels for their career is also very small, which means the retain of interns is still a problem for hotels. So, in the future, further research need to be carried out in the field of attracting employees and retain. Especially in create more effective retain policies in hotel. For example, policy of giving priorities to internal recruiting, and implementing more transparent promoting system so that the hotel staff would be motivated to stay.

6.2 Design better compensation system

More efforts need to be made in the area of giving reasonable payment according to social and economic development. It’s common that hotels need to be economic in paying for manpower, but lower compensation system will definitely not suitable for getting better manpower. According to Maslow’s Need Hierarchy theory, physiological needs rank first in the need pyramid. Money is an important substance to survive. So having satisfying compensation is the foremost element for retaining. So competitive payments for hotel employees is a consideration in the future research.

6.3 Enhance students’ English servicing level

With the integration of development of Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Greater Bay Area and globalization, more and more internationalized employees needed in industry. So as college teacher, we should focus on improving vocational students’ English servicing level, meaning cross-culture communication skills, and oral English in daily work. My proposal is to bring in some bilingual text books for vocational tourism courses, and implement more bilingual classes and activities in school. We should give students more opportunities to practice their oral English in class, so we can have courses like Tourism English or Even Hotel English.

6.4 Internationalized qualified Tourism teachers

Teacher qualification is important in improving students’ skills. The current situation in tourism management major is that there are not sufficient internationalized qualified teachers. Therefore, as China is trying to cooperating with more schools internationally, like TAFE in Australia, or technical vocational education and training (TVET) in the UK. We can also take advantage of the developing of Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Greater Bay Area, to explore more possibilities in co-training teachers, enable more teachers with internationalized vocational qualifications and also, lifting their English level as well. By this why, we can ensure the tourism teachers with better international skills, hence improving the levels of students.

Summary

To sum up, internationalized vocational education is still a crucial issue for China’s further development in the near future. Therefore, I would like to study on cooperating cultivation of international staff by star hotels and Vocational Colleges, to get better solutions for tourism vocational education in China, especially in Guangdong-Hongkong-Macau Greater Bay Area, hoping to find better ways to cultivate more competent skill workers for the market. I know that some part of the plan might sound immature or inadequate, however, that is the exact reason why I am applying to study in the research program, hoping that I can get more knowledge and skills to accomplish it.

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