

# **An Application of Quality Function Deployment (QFD) to Study Abroad Programs in Hospitality at US Universities**

Chin-Hsun “Ken” Tsai  
Texas Tech University

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a conviction that hospitality education disciplines are converging rather than diverging (Sullivan, 1986). This is supported by the fact that products and services that need an interdisciplinary approach are continuously emerging and entering the market. The curricula should, therefore, be designed to ensure that an undergraduate will possess all the qualities of a generalist and all the competence of a specialist, with a capacity for lifelong learning. To identify the components of such curricula, Quality Function Deployment (QFD) is used for determining and assessing the relationships between industry requirements, curriculum areas of study and specialization, contents and instruction methods and styles. The Quality Function Deployment methodology can be used to explore the tradeoffs associated with the scope of hospitality courses in terms of breadth and depth of coverage of the subjects and to suggest possible treatment to hospitality courses.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

There are considerable difficulties encountered in attempting to ascertain industry needs in an educational context. Agreement as to what the lodging industry collectively expects of the study abroad programs in hospitality education has not been allocated in the literature. The industry's needs should be assessed, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The research objectives are:

1. To analyze differences and expectations between the hospitality educators and hotel operators for undergraduate hospitality study abroad programs.
2. To develop a methodology for the design of lodging industry-focused undergraduate hospitality study abroad programs using Quality Function Deployment.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Since the early 1990s, there have been a number of QFD applications in the education area (Yu, 2003). In order to provide a clear demonstration concerning the application and analytical techniques of QFD, an empirical study of undergraduate hospitality study abroad programs will be conducted to apply Quality Function Deployment to hospitality programs at US universities. The conceptual research framework is presented in Figure 1. The two main foci of this study are hotel operators and hospitality department administrators. Personal interviews with individual hotel operators will be conducted first. The sample will be selected from American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) member hotels. The results will be analyzed using content analysis to identify what the hoteliers expect and what aspects of undergraduate hospitality study abroad programs are of most concern to hoteliers. Secondly, surveys will be conducted to gather information on the importance of hoteliers' opinions and satisfaction regarding undergraduate study abroad programs at US universities. Indices and order of hoteliers' needs will be determined.

Third, the sample of programs will be selected from programs which have a CHRIE membership, evidence of study abroad programs in hospitality, and number of years of experience with study abroad programs in hospitality. The administrator of exam program will be contacted by the researcher to set up the interview.

Finally, hoteliers' needs and the quality improvement of undergraduate hospitality study

abroad programs will be shown on a matrix. The matrix will be analyzed to draw conclusions. The findings will be used as the basis for setting priorities for quality improvement of hospitality study abroad programs.

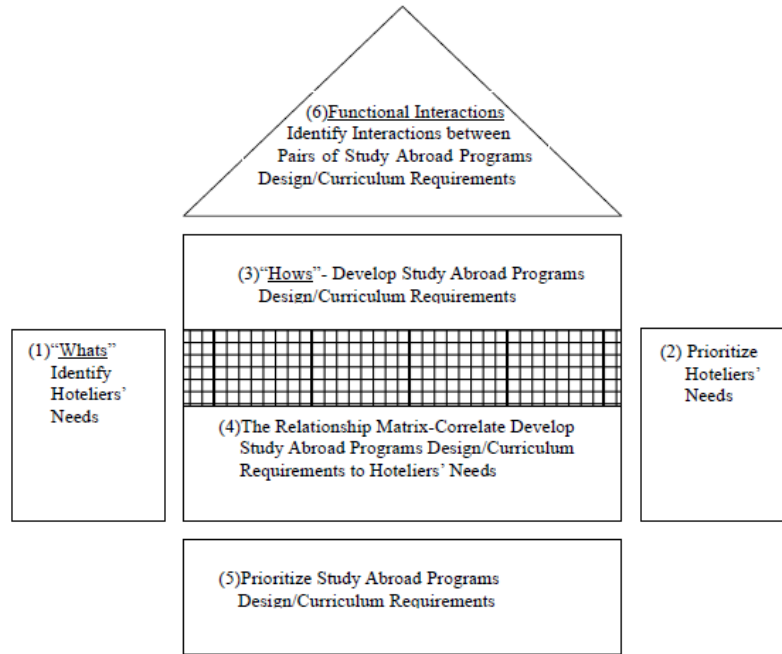


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Framework

## REFERENCES

- Sullivan, L. P. (1986). Quality Function Deployment in Education. *Quality Progress*, 33-35.
- Yu, D. Z. (2003). *An application of quality function deployment to the food and beverage industry – An empirical study on the Prague restaurant in Kaohsiung*. Unpublished master thesis. Hualien: National Dong Hwa University.