
**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE GAPS
BETWEEN TOURISM EDUCATION PROVISION
AND INDUSTRY NEED IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

Thesis submitted by

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January, 2009

**In fulfilment of the requirements for the
Masters Degree in Technology (Tourism Management)
in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism**

Durban University of Technology

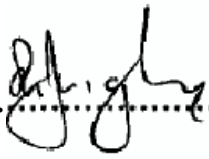
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To all those individuals who have contributed to this study by way of encouragement, professional advice and valuable assistance, I wish to express my sincere appreciation.

In particular I would like to thank the following persons:

- Dr S McKenna, my supervisor, for her professional guidance and endless support throughout the period of this study.
- Ms R Sucheran, my co-supervisor for her guidance during the beginning of the study.
- Mr F Khan for his assistance with the statistical analysis.
- Dr R Townsend for her professional assistance with editing the final draft of the dissertation.
- Prof A Jordaan for general support and financial assistance.
- The library staff of the Durban University of Technology Riverside Campus for their efficient services.
- My wife Simmi, sons Sanvir and Tasveer for their patience and encouragement.
- To the Divine Lord KRSNA

S. Jugmohan

Durban

January 2009

ABSTRACT

There is a growing demand for professionally educated and trained staff in the tourism sector. However, current literature reveals a significant disparity between the tourism education provided by institutions and the skills required by the industry. A major challenge facing tourism education institutions is the identification of industry needs and requirements and the involvement of industry in curriculum design. The aim of this research is to examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees and whether the provisions of higher education tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs. Identifying this 'gap' will assist in improving the development of tourism education programmes to meet the needs of industry. The research examines the relevance of the tourism qualification from three stakeholders' perspectives, namely, managers from the tourism sector, tourism graduate employees, and tourism academics. Surveys, in the form of structured questionnaires, were used to obtain information from the three groups.

The overall findings of the study revealed that gaps do exist in the tourism curriculum according to the perceptions of stakeholder groups that participated in this study. The recommendations are that closer collaboration is required between academics, managers from the industry when designing tourism curriculum and also to sustain the relevance of the curriculum to meet the needs of industry.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS EMPLOYED IN THE STUDY

- CUE Colegio Universitario Del Este
- DEAT Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
- DoE Department of Education
- DUT Durban University of Technology
- FET Further Education and Training
- GDP Gross Domestic Product
- HET Higher Education and Training
- ICT Information and Communication Technology
- ITS Information Technology System
- ISTHM International School of Hotel Management
- KZN KwaZulu-Natal
- NQF National Qualifications Framework
- PATA Pacific Asia Travel Association
- SAQA South African Qualifications Authority
- SATOUR South African Tourism
- THETA Tourism Hospitality Education Training Authority

- TQM Total Quality Management
- UKZN University of KwaZulu-Natal
- UNIZUL University of Zululand
- WIL Work Integrated Learning
- WTO World Tourism Organisation

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether tourism curricula at Higher Education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) are aligned with the human resource needs of the tourism industry. More specifically, this study hopes to identify gaps between the education and training provided to higher education tourism students and the human resources needs of the tourism industry in KwaZulu-Natal. The value of a curriculum can be best measured by the perceptions of its end users. Industry and graduates are more inclined either to benefit or not from a curriculum that either reflects current and future needs of industry or fails to do so. When students embark on a career, they have expectations that they would find meaningful employment after graduation and are able to make use of the skills acquired during their studies. At the same time recruiters would expect that education providers have made the necessary efforts to ensure that their curriculum is aligned to the needs of industry. Therefore this study attempts to address this important research area by identifying whether the provision of higher education travel and tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa).

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Tourism is regarded as one of the world's fastest growing industries. According to the World Tourism Organisation's Tourism 2020 vision, international arrivals are expected to reach over 1.56 billion by the year 2020. Of these worldwide arrivals in 2020, 1.8 billion will be intraregional and 377 million will be long haul travellers (WTO, 2003). Figures produced in the South African Tourism Report (SATOUR) in 2007 indicated that global arrivals grew by 6.6% from 846 million in 2006 to 903 million in 2007. The total international tourism receipts in 2007 grew by 5.6% to reach US\$856 billion (SATOUR, 2007). Moreover, the 2007 report also shows that figures for tourism's contribution to GDP also increased from 7.9% (R137.6 billion) in 2006 to 8.1% (R159.6 billion) in 2007. The report also indicates that direct and indirect jobs created through tourism increased by 5% from 896.900 in 2006 to 941.000 in 2007.

South Africa has also entered the world tourism stage since 1994 and has benefitted immensely from its contribution as an important economic activity. Tourism has provided South Africa with an alternative in creating much needed job opportunities due to the ongoing economic crisis and the impact this has on mining, manufacturing and agriculture. Figures released by SATOUR in 2007 found that the number of foreign arrivals in South Africa increased to 8.3% in 2007 reaching 9.090.881, exceeding the global average of 6.1%. The value of tourism can therefore not be underestimated, and it is imperative that we are able to provide world class service to our visitors. This can only be achieved through the appropriate education of those involved in the tourism industry.

In order for such education to be responsive to the industry's needs, it is necessary for all tourism stakeholders to work in collaboration in order to design curricula that meet international standards. This view is consistent with Van Schalkwyk (2008) who explains that the challenges for tourism in South Africa include the availability of qualified staff and the urgent need for service excellence through the development of customer service programmes for sustainable tourism growth. Manuel (2008) agrees that a measure to deal with skills shortage will involve linking education to the demands of workplace by:

- Designing curricula for better alignment with market requirements;
- Practical work experience;
- Improving the employability of graduates;
- Providing career paths for people leaving school; and
- Giving attention to vocational training and improved alignment between companies and the Sector Education and Training Authorities.

The global tourism industry needs to give increased importance to service quality, and skills standards across sectors and, more importantly to academic education and training of employees (Smith and Cooper, 2000). A major challenge facing tourism education institutions providing career training today to tomorrow's workforce is the identification of future industry needs and requirements, which leads to the establishment of sector specific education and training skills standards and the involvement of industry in curriculum design (Smith and Cooper, 2000). Baum (1993) argues that as with other labor intensive service-based industries, the tourism product is highly dependent on the human factor. Fayos-Sola and Jafari (1996) assert that the task of human resource development in the new age of tourism has been inadequately addressed, and the need for uniformity in the face of specialized knowledge in the field should be recognized, given the urgency of securing qualified human resources Ad hoc remedies or treatments should be avoided and a total quality management approach should be considered.

Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997) maintain that it is important to recognize the expectations and real needs of all stakeholders that form a system in tourism education and avoid the risk of producing educational content which is too narrow in scope and of little practical use. Tourism curricula need to reflect recent and future industry needs and developments in order to ensure graduates are equipped with appropriate and industry relevant skills. Therefore thorough research has to be undertaken in collaboration with industry to ensure that courses offered are relevant and are producing tourism graduates with the skills and knowledge they will need to be competent in the workplace (Walo, 2000).

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The growth of tourism in South Africa and the need to develop human resources has increased the number of institutions offering tourism studies (Saayman, 2005). According to Saayman (2005), this increase does not mean better training. The numbers of tourism graduates from many of these disparate education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal; raises concerns regarding the quality of these graduates who are entering the tourism industry. According to Steynberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003),

the goal of tourism education in this millennium will remain to educate and train future generations of employees in the sector, including consumers of tourism products and services. Steynberg *et al.* argue that the process by which this objective is achieved is changing as attention is paid to delivering programmes that satisfy both international needs and also provide for local contexts, cultures, and industries. Tourism is youthful and has had to concern itself with fundamental issues, long since resolved in more mature subject academic fields. Tourism as a field of study is difficult to classify and is reflected in the development of tourism education from a variety of different perspectives (Cooper, Shepard and Westlake, 1996; Fayos-Sola, 1996; Evans 2001).

There are differing expectations between tourism educators and the tourism industry in that employers emphasize practical skills and general transferable skills, whereas educators are concerned with developing more conceptual and tourism specific skills. This results in poor communication between two groups, a lack of involvement of educators in the industry, or industry's role in education (through advisory boards) often being poorly defined (Evans, 2001). Therefore, Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997) consider that it is important to recognize the expectations and real needs of all stakeholders that form a system of tourism education that avoids the risk of producing educational contents which are too narrow in scope and of little practical use. The aim should be to promote communication among those involved so that answers can be found for the complex needs of all of them, which is not an easy task (Cooper et al., 1997). As expressed above, the issue of curriculum is a major concern for many researchers in tourism. It is therefore necessary to examine the appropriateness of the tourism curriculum in a local context and to provide solutions for future development and design by incorporating stakeholder feedback.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Objective One

To identify whether the tourism curricula offered at higher education institutions are adequately meeting the needs of industry.

Objective Two

To identify skills gaps between public higher education and training provided to the tourism workforce and industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal.

More specifically, the objectives of the study sought to identify:

- Industry's perceptions of the tourism curriculum;
- Academics' perceptions of the tourism curriculum;
- Graduates' perceptions of the tourism curriculum;
- Meaningful differences between the ratings of skills by the various sectors;
- Perceptions from the various sectors of graduate occupations and
- Tourism curriculum development and improvement processes.

These objectives can be expressed as the following research questions:

- 1) To what extent are the tourism curriculum offered at higher education institutions adequately meeting the needs of industry?
- 2) What are the gaps between public higher education and training provided to the tourism workforce and industry needs in KZN?

1.5 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

After searching various databases, the author is of the view that there is no published research in the tourism field in the province of KwaZulu-Natal that has empirically investigated whether the provision of higher education travel and tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs by assessing the perception of managers, academics and tourism graduates. Therefore this study will assist in:

- Improving the development of tourism education programmes to meet the needs of industry.
- Testing the extent to which skills items within an educational cluster are addressed in the curriculum.

- Revealing which skills are not addressed, and which are slightly, reasonably, or fully addressed in the curriculum.
- Providing suggestions as to how tourism curricula can be aligned to industry needs.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- a) The study does not comprise all tourism sectors. The researcher has chosen specific industries that are the major employers of graduates from higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal. This is not representative of all the tourism sectors.
- b) The researcher has only selected public higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, namely Durban University of Technology (DUT), University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), and the University of Zululand (UNIZUL). This study does not include other private providers of tourism education. This was done for ease of access of information and cost effectiveness.
- c) The study is a measure of perceptions by the various stakeholders. Conclusions are reached on the basis of the extent to which industry stakeholders, academics and graduates perceive that the curriculum addresses certain skills. The study does not attempt to measure actual proficiency of graduates or to ascribe certain proficiencies to the implementation of a curriculum, instead it attempts to gauge the extent to which the stakeholders believe that the curriculum is appropriate.

Other limitations related to the research design are discussed within Chapter Three of this thesis.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is structured in six chapters:

Chapter 1 introduces the study by providing a background to the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the rationale for the study, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on the role of tourism education, tourism as a multidisciplinary phenomenon, problems in the development of education, and the need for integrated frameworks in tourism education. The chapter also discusses human resource concerns in the tourism industry and considers approaches to tourism curriculum development.

Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology employed for this study, including the objectives, the research instrument, the population, and sampling, and the way in which the data, both qualitative and quantitative, is analysed.

Chapter 4 addresses the main theme of curriculum appropriateness by analysing the results of the qualitative analysis. The results are discussed using thematic categories as sub headings. These categories arose from the data and quotations from all three sectors are incorporated into the discussion to provide a picture of the extent to which the three sectors – academics, industry and graduates – believe that the current curricula are appropriate.

Chapter 5 presents the results of the quantitative analysis. All three sectors completed a rating of a detailed range of skills. The results are evaluated by using visual comparisons of mean scores for skills items tested. An overview of the quantitative data is provided and discussed in this chapter. The more detailed analysis of each set of skills is provided as a set of appendices.

Chapter 6 presents an overview of the conclusions of the research findings, recommendations for improvements and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This review of the literature begins by focussing on the development of tourism, including the importance of tourism, the role of tourism education, tourism as a multi-disciplinary phenomenon, problems in the development of tourism education and the need for integrated frameworks in tourism education. Secondly, this chapter will focus on human resource issues in the tourism industry. Thirdly, this chapter will discuss issues relating to tourism curriculum, including approaches to tourism curriculum development.

2.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM

From a development perspective, the internationalisation of tourism can be traced back to the earliest trading, to the pilgrimages of the medieval times, and the Grand Tours of the aristocracy and the upper middle class in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Shaw and Williams, 1998) while mass international tourism is a product of the twentieth century, popularised after the second world war. Davidson (1993) confirms that people have travelled all over the world either to trade, fight in wars or to educate themselves and agrees that tourism developed on a huge scale in the last forty or fifty years. The advances in science and technology, such as the invention of the passenger aircraft and railways, coupled with free time and disposable income, has contributed to mass tourism in this century (Davidson, 1993). This view is shared by Jenkins (1997) who agrees that the rise in disposable income and increase in leisure time availability have influenced the continued growth in the global tourism industry. Baum (1993) note, that the international travel and tourism industry will continue to maintain the positive growth curve and maintain the number one spot in terms of its value, relative to other sectors, by the end of this century. To support this statement, in 2008 the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimated that travel and tourism are expected to generate close to US\$8 trillion in 2008, rising to approximately US\$15 trillion over the next ten years. The growth rate for world travel and tourism between 2009 and 2018 is estimated by the WTTC to be averaging 4.4% per annum, supporting 297 million jobs and 10% of global GDP by 2018. In the case

of South Africa, the 1994 transition from the apartheid government to a democratically elected government opened up the doors of South Africa to the rest of the world paving the way for a previously isolated tourism industry. According to figures released in the South African Annual Tourism Report, 2008 foreign tourist arrivals show that South Africa received 9,090,881 tourists and created 414,100 direct jobs and 527,900 indirect jobs in 2007. Tourism also contributed R159, 6 billion to GDP in South Africa in 2007. Tourism can therefore be viewed as a very important economic activity globally.

Elliot (1997) explains that tourism is more than an industry and an economic activity; it has the ability to raise living standards and quality of life through the inflow of finance, new employment and educational opportunities, and the revitalisation of local traditions and cultures. Cooper, Shepard and Westlake (1996) provide four reasons to justify the importance of tourism: They are:

- Tourism is a major contributor to the balance of payments in many countries.
- As an industry tourism plays a major role in creating a number of jobs.
- Tourism offers an economic alternative to countries with fewer sources of wealth generation.
- The tourism industry is a major generator of revenue and provides jobs to millions of employees.

As a major contributor of revenue to a country tourism deserves the attention of government, not only for marketing but also for the development of human resources. South Africa has to consider that tourism is a labour intensive people industry requiring educated professionals to manage and provide first class service to tourists. The WTTC (2008) confirms this by suggesting that travel and tourism is a key industry for employment and career growth requiring skilled, quality individuals to fill managerial, front line and customer facing positions. This study therefore aims to foster a closer relationship between education and industry to close gaps that may exist in tourism curricula and industry needs. The findings from the White Paper on Tourism (South Africa, 1996) emphasises the value and benefits of tourism for the South African people. The document also expresses the need for people to enter the

tourism industry. In the early 1990s training providers had used this as an opportunity to offer tourism programmes. This was the birth of many disparate providers, and non-accredited tourism programmes in South Africa. The South African Qualifications Authority and the Council for Higher Education had to intervene to ensure providers and programmes were accredited. Providers were required to conform to various accreditation guidelines. Some private providers made use of consultants and their lecturers, many of whom were young graduates with tourism qualifications with no industry experience to develop tourism programmes for accreditation. This ad hoc solution had created obvious fragmentation, since these providers were all developing tourism programmes without reference to each other and without stakeholder engagement or curriculum scoping workshops with industry. This view is consistent with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism report (DEAT, 2008), suggesting that the tourism sector by nature is fragmented and inarticulate and this affects performance in skills development and standards in training is poorly managed, the quality in training varies, the content and quality of materials vary, and links between industry and private enterprise are relatively absent limiting the relevance and appropriateness of training. The DEAT document suggests that a body of principles or a set of “common understandings” needs to be established to promote coherence among all role-players within the sector. For this purpose the DEAT document proposes the following principles:

- **Public – Private Partnerships:** the focus here is on the benefits to be gained through the participation of both. Industry can make significant contributions to policy and also benefit from participation in government programmes. This collaborative action provides joint solutions and taps into the unique strengths brought by each party.
- **Uniformity in Standards:** here emphasis is placed on the commitment of all parties to abide by the standards which govern practice in the field since uniformity in standards in the tourism sector is largely absent.

- **Industry Relevance:** the document proposes that education and industry must join forces to promote and sustain the industry relevance of training. Partnerships between industry, educators and trainers will promote transformation with regard to access to industry relevant content and facilities, also industry participation will enhance the design and delivery of educational programmes.
- **Equalizing Opportunities to Grow and Succeed:** here the goal is to eliminate inequities for employees in the sector by building a viable pool “from the bottom up” moving entrants into careers as their potential and performance will allow.
- **Articulation between Levels of Governance:** the focus here is on creating synergy and articulation within provinces, local boards and associations and to include local communities which is seen as essential for effective delivery.
- **Strategy Coordination and Alignment:** suggestions are proposed for a need to build an integrated system of delivery based on the alignment of strategic priorities.
- **Accessibility of Opportunity:** this principle will provide people within the sector with an opportunity to grow into positions of influence, into wealth and economic wellbeing.
- **Articulation and Continuity in Educational Programmes:** this principle will promote professional development that gradually builds valued competence rather than ad hoc programmes of training which are unrelated and do not contribute to career development.
- **Promoting Strengths through Stakeholder Unity:** the emphasis in this principle is for all stakeholders to share resources and to establish collaborative ties forming a unified association that represents a larger frame of interest.

The principles proposed in the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism document consistently suggest that input of all key-players should be promoted through a “single minded” approach. These sentiments are also shared by other researchers within this study.

2.3 APARTHEID EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of colonialism, segregation and apartheid forms the existing pattern of provision of schooling in South Africa. This can be traced back to times when education was configured along race, class and geographic lines. Blacks depended on mission schools while the majority received no schooling at all. Schooling for Whites expanded rapidly while this was not the same for Africans, Indians and Coloureds. The apartheid government created further divisions by introducing Bantustans for separate ethnic groups, hence the introduction of Bantu Education in 1953 (Fataar, 1997). Under apartheid the majority of students attended schools that were the least adequately funded, with the lowest teacher qualifications, poorest facilities and highest class sizes (Christie, 1997). This legacy still impacts on students meeting the entry requirements at Higher Education Institutions to this day.

2.4 ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

An outstanding feature of the former technikon sector in South Africa has been its production of skilled personnel to meet the immediate skill needs of the national economy (Kraak, 2006). The other important asset has been its easier access criteria, especially to students with weak grade 12 matriculation results. This has favoured largely black and African. Universities’ entrance requirements are much higher, while technikons require a pass mark in the Senior Certificate Examination at the end of grade 12 (Kraak, 2006).

2.5 POST APARTHEID EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

In 1995 The South African White Paper on Education and Training was introduced to offer guidelines on post apartheid education policy and to provide an integrated approach to education and training (Christie, 1997). Christie (1997) explains that the while the situation has improved yearly, there are still comparatively high dropout and repeater rates, particularly among black schools, and compounding this problem is the high failure rates and a curriculum which does not give access to further education and employment in the modern economy. In comparison, most white students completing matriculation examinations enjoy a greater status of being a major selector for higher education opportunities since their curriculum prepares them for university entrance (Christie, 1997). To rectify this problem, the White Paper on Education and Training introduced proposals to restructure the relationship between education and training, to introduce greater flexibility of structures, to enhance mobility between learning contexts, and to build quality on the levels of a National Qualifications Framework. These proposals are aimed at lifelong learning, which would widen access to education and training as well as link it to human resource development polices (Christie, 1997).

2.6 THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The NQF is a framework for all education and training that takes place in South Africa from pre-school level up to the highest level of tertiary education. Education is divided into a number of levels, bands and phases. One of the intentions of the NQF is to integrate education and to address skills shortages in order to strengthen economic growth. The NQF also aims to facilitate access to education and training and to redress past unfair discrimination in education. The South African Qualifications Authority is responsible for the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

NQF Objectives

- To create an integrated national framework for learning achievements.
- Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths.
- Enhance the quality of education and training.
- Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

2.7 THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) was established in 1995. This body is answerable to the ministers of Labour and Education and is responsible for the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by formulating policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards for qualifications and for accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications.

2.8 THE ROLE OF TOURISM EDUCATION

Tourism education is a sector moving from uncertainty to maturity as governments begin to recognise the value and scale of jobs created in tourism (Smith and Cooper, 2000; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Shepard and Wanhill, 2000). Tourism has attracted a growing academic community including specialised journals and textbooks as well as professional societies within individual countries and internationally (Cooper et al., 2000).

According to Gee (1997) professionalism is the key element that will drive the tourism industry in the 21st century and he emphasises that high standards are crucial to developing professional personnel. However, the tourism industry has taken time to appreciate the specialist needs in human resource development compared to other industries (Jenkins, 1997). Smith and Cooper (2000) agree that there has been a slow

realisation, led by international agencies, of the role of tourism education, training, and human resource development to achieve economic competitiveness. In order for the tourism industry to remain competitive in any country it requires high quality managers and other employees (Jenkins, 1997). Tourism education and training should help make the sector more competitive and to achieve this it has to respond to the real needs for human capital both in industry and public administration by offering quality (Cooper, Fayos–Sola, Jafari, and Hawkins Spivack, 1997). Gee (1997) describes a profession as including specialised knowledge that includes long and intensive preparation and certification for practice similar to fields such as medicine, law, engineering, education, architecture, and accounting that are immediately recognised as true professions. While there is merit in the statement by Gee, it must be noted that tourism is a major force in the economy of the world and therefore deserves academic consideration (Cooper et al., 2000). To support their statement Cooper *et al.* (2000) are convinced that tourism is a subject area or domain of study, but they do acknowledge that it currently lacks the level of theoretical underpinning that would allow it to become a discipline. This fog surrounding the clarification of tourism as a discipline affects tourism education and curriculum planning. Since this problem regarding tourism as a discipline persists it may be the reason why tourism courses offered by different providers within a country varies considerably. This is prevalent within the South African scenario. Tourism courses differ considerably between Universities of Technology compared to Traditional Universities, Further Education and Training Colleges and Private providers (Saayman, 2005). All these providers are educating and competing for similar sub-sectors in tourism, with differing curricula. This is why this study is important to educators in tourism, tourism students who are recipients of the product, and tourism industry employers who finally pay salaries to employed graduates for providing professional services to tourists.

2.9 TOURISM AS A MULTI-DISCIPLINARY PHENOMENON

Tribe (2005) explains that the study of tourism consists of a tourism research community and a symbolic record of tourism knowledge that humans attempt to “capture, to represent, to describe, to explain and to predict the phenomenon” of tourism. According to Cooper, Fayos–Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997) tourism is a

young socio-economic activity which encompasses a large variety of economic sectors, players and academic disciplines and it is this complex composition that makes it difficult to draw up universally acceptable definitions that assists in describing the concept. Cooper, Shepard and Westlake (1996) describe the tourism industry as highly fragmented; it lacks agreement between government, industry and academics as to what constitutes the tourism industry. Moreover Cooper *et al.* (1996) argue that if a sector cannot be fundamentally defined and its activities documented, the needs of that sector create difficulty in respect of training and education and the consequences of this vagueness raise questions whether the study of tourism belongs to other better established areas.

Jafari (1997) acknowledges that a number of universities are offering tourism degree programmes since the early 1980s and questions what students are being educated for and suggests that the education community, their graduates and governments need a common answer to this matter. This diversity affects tourism education in South Africa as well. Many third year students questioned informally by this researcher do not know which tourism sector they will join after graduation. This problem of the unknown has serious consequences for tourism students compared to students graduating in other disciplines such as engineering or law. The latter may have a good idea of which organisations they may join if asked. The question that arises is how does tourism education prepare students for such a diverse field and do students depart with any specialisation at all (See figure 1). For example, if a tourism student chooses an elective in Hotel Management from the first year of study he may wish to specialise in this area and focus on starting his career as a trainee manager after graduating. Riley, Ladkin and Szivas (2002) agree that diversity exists in the tourism industry and suggests that if we are to understand decisions about occupational choice, job mobility patterns or vocational programmes, a framework has to be found to express both differences and the commonality within the diverse range of occupations and operating units. This fragmentation problem is supported by Jafari (1997), who states that the problem is not limited to university programmes and that industry sectors also see themselves as independent and apart from one and another and/or from tourism. To illustrate this diversity in the tourism industry Jafari uses an example that shows how each sub-sector may refer to the same customer using different terminology. According to Jafari (1997), “when people board the plane, the

airline calls them passengers; upon arrival they check into a hotel which calls them guests; they go across the street to a restaurant which calls them customers; they visit the highpoint of the city through a tour company which calls them sightseers, next day they visit a travel agency which calls them travellers; that afternoon they go to the local chamber of commerce which calls them visitors; later on they drive to a winter-resort which calls them skiers; they also participate in a two day conference and the local convention bureau calls them business travellers; at the end of the trip the government office records them as tourists”. This description by Jafari (1997) illustrates that even terminology used in the sector differs among different suppliers within the tourism industry when referring to a single client.

Baum (1993) emphasises that the wide variety of sectors that characterises most tourism industries results in a diverse range of jobs in terms of their technical demands, their educational requirements, their location, their conditions and the kind of person that will be attracted to employment in them. Baum (1993) maintains that it is impossible to list all the employment categories within a typical tourism industry and even if a possibility existed, the outcome would not be of significant value, as this is attributed to the diversity of businesses in terms of size, markets and operations; that exists within any one category. In view of this diversity in a sector that cannot be easily described, it is difficult to identify training needs. With South Africa entering the global tourism stage after apartheid the government quickly identified the economic spinoffs from this phenomenon and placed tourism education as a priority area in The White Paper on Tourism (South Africa, 1996). This also became an opportunity for many education providers enrolling large numbers of students with diverse curricula. This study therefore aims to find out whether tourism programmes are meeting the needs of industry and their value to the industry, as will be shown in this study. Figure 1 below captures a sample of the diverse range of jobs that exist in the tourism field. A question that arises here is what type of tourism curriculum can sufficiently prepare a student for the diversity of positions available in the field of travel and tourism. A closer look at these occupations may pose further questions such as whether it is necessary to study tourism to qualify for these jobs listed below, or whether graduates from other disciplines may easily compete for these positions because they may have specialised in some of the areas.

Figure 1: Sample Listing Positions Available in the Field of Travel and Tourism

Tourist Bureau Manager	Travel Journalist / writer
Promotion / Public Relations Specialist	Marketing Representative
Group Sales Representative	Tour Operator
Travel Agency Manager	Recreational Specialist
Tour Escort	Retail Store Manager
Incentive Travel Specialist	Hotel/Hotel Manager
Consultant	Translator
Planner	Sales Manager
Policy Analyst	Financial Analyst
Research / Statistical Specialist	Campground Manager
Economist	Marina Manager
In Transit Attendant	Front Office / Book Keeping Manager
Motor Coach Operator	Resident Camp Director
Vehicle Rental Manager	Destination Development Specialist
Information Officer	Travel Agent
Interpretive Specialist (Museums)	Travel Counsellor / Sales
Destination Information	Manager
Reservation Agent	Curriculum Specialist
Teacher / Instructor	Departure Controller
Transfer Officer	Group Sales Manager
Business Travel Specialist	Public Relations Officer
Association Manager	Tour Broker
Receptionist	Tour Leader
Meeting / Conference Planner	Guide
Convention Center / Fair Manager	Sales Representative
Guest House / Hostel Manager	Recreation Facility / Park Manager
Restaurant Sales Manager	Promoter

Source: Boora and Dutt 2006

2.10 PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM EDUCATION

Many researchers have different views of the discipline and nature of tourism education. Tribe and Airey (2005) explain that as the provision of tourism programmes expanded and as more scholars started examining tourism, the more traditional, disciplined-based forms of knowledge were developed. Tribe (2005) indicates that the study of tourism uncovers new ways of seeing tourism, maps out new concepts, elaborates new theories and builds up a body of knowledge. While implying that tourism knowledge is essential, he believes that it is much less than the activity it describes. Echtner and Jamal (1997) maintain that the debate concerning the disciplinary development of tourism is unlikely to be resolved in the near future, because the evolution of tourism studies as a distinct discipline faces significant challenges. This includes a lack of agreement among academics on how to approach the study of tourism (Page, 2007). Academics from around the world need to find solutions to this problem. South African tourism education development is faced with the same situation and requires guidance from a regulatory council to avoid fragmentation. Regulatory frameworks for a South African context will be discussed later in the study. As a discipline tourism is made up of subjects from many other disciplines. This diversity causes confusion to students studying tourism, a disciplined approach is suggested with a guiding framework within which to locate these subject approaches and industries (Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, Shepard and Wanhill, 2000). Tourism also suffers from an image problem in academic circles, which can be overcome through high standards of professionalism, knowledge and application from everyone involved (Cooper *et al.*, 2000). According to Cooper, Shepard and Westlake (1996) a discipline should include the following characteristics:

- It has an established body of theory which has been fed and extended by research and debate which serves to underpin its curriculum;
- It is a formal, recognised branch of an institution which is perceived to be legitimate and worthy; and
- It has the status and credibility and involves acknowledged mental training on the part of both the student and the educator.

Tourism as a discipline is often made up of a great number of subjects from other disciplines that tend to distance it from the actual 'tourism discipline'. Tourism programmes should be developed to include more core tourism subjects and sufficient tourism electives that focus on the sub-sectors. Tourism is dynamic by nature and as a discipline its characteristics differentiate it from other disciplines such as medicine or engineering. It is essential that students are provided with proper guidance and their career paths need to be narrowed to allow for specialisation to enter the industry with confidence. Industry should also benefit from a skilled workforce, since industry pay their staff for professional services. It is therefore imperative that industry and education join forces to design relevant curricula so that industry can benefit from a skilled workforce. It is hoped that this study will be able to promote an agenda for improving curriculum development.

2.11 HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES FACING THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Wander (2002) explains that as tourism enters the new millennium it will continue to grow and maintain its place as the largest industry in the world. However it will be faced with the challenge of finding qualified employees to fill the many job positions that will open. Qualified employees at all levels of the tourism industry – from entry-level through to senior management – are going to be necessary if the industry is to maintain and improve the quality of the product it markets and promotes to the consumer (Wander, 2002). In support of this view, Riley, Ladkin and Szivas suggest that education is the major platform for the development of human capital for the industry (2002). Baum (1994) believes that the specific position of human resource factors in tourism policy formulation is an area that has been neglected in academic discussion. However, Bird, Hood and White (2001) emphasises that increasing the level and quality of tourism employment is becoming an important policy priority in most nations. Mayaka and King (2002) maintain that human resources are an important part of tourism operations and feature as a component of most tourism development plans. They further explain that improving the skills and knowledge of the workforce can assist destination competitiveness and help to establish and maintain a viable industry. Mayaka and King (2002) provide interesting comments on improving skills to and knowledge of the workforce. This may be viewed as an accepted solution for a competent workforce throughout the world; however, this is

only achievable through much needed resources and leadership. With the lack of funding and manpower to drive the process, these solutions may be limited to proposals only.

According to Scotland (2006), human resource development professionals will have to concern themselves with the types of curricula issues in tourism and hospitality programmes and how these impact human resource development needs of the industry. Scotland (2006) suggests that the quality of the workforce is to some extent dependent on programme curricula of higher education institutions and the human resource professional is responsible for assisting these potential employees to fulfil their roles within the organisation effectively. Lipman (1997) recommends that our human resource systems have to be adapted to meet the new industry dynamic and, more importantly, the need for adaptation to changing demand pattern is necessary:

- There will be a new breed of traveller.
- Travellers will come from new cultures, with different languages and social habits.
- There will be more young people, more women and many more retirees travelling.
- There will be a demand for more competitive products and prices, as well as customised service.
- Customers will be sophisticated making use of superhighway information, virtual reality vision, and interactive screens will be used to effect smart card payments and ticketless travel.

According to Baum (1993), a review of tourism trade publications in any major destination country in the world gives clear indication of the concerns of professionals within the industry for human resource matters. Baum (1993) states that the following “universal” themes appear consistently in the case studies:

- Demography and the shrinking pool/labour shortages;
- The tourism image as an employer;
- Cultural and traditional perceptions of the industry;

- Rewards and benefits/compensation;
- Recruitment, retention and staff turnover;
- Education and training, both within colleges and industry;
- Skills shortages, especially at higher and technical and management levels;
- Linkage of human resource concerns with service and product quality;
- Poor management and planning information about human resource matters in the tourism industry;
- The tendency to develop human resource policies, initiatives and remedial programmes that are reactive to what is currently happening rather than proactive to what is likely to occur.

A review of literature reveals similar views concerning human resource matters that support the ‘universal’ themes expressed by Baum (1993). They are:

- The growth of tourism as an industry is severely limited by the lack of adequately trained personnel; although the industry has developed in spite of this constraint, the quality of service provided to visitors has frequently been a casualty (Mahesh, 1994).
- The development of a tourism industry creates new employment opportunities; however, critics of the industry contend that tourism provides primarily low paying, low skilled jobs which are demeaning (Choy, 1995).
- Travel and tourism graduates are facing challenges in securing jobs within the travel and tourism industry, as their degrees have low recognition among travel and tourism employers (Petrova and Mason, 2004).
- In order to maximise any potential upturn in business there needs to be an investment in human capital currently so that the appropriate resources are deployed and in place since an appropriately educated workforce cannot be sourced at short notice because it takes many years for suitably qualified workforce to emerge (Lenehan, 2005).

- Compared to all sectors of the international economy, tourism shows the most potential for growth; however this growth is faced with a shortage of trained individuals across the entire sector and a solution to this problem is the development of new programmes to cope with the demand for improved services and higher quality expectations (Collins, 2002).
- Labour represents a high cost tourism business and therefore businesses often attempt to reduce costs by curbing remuneration levels, the result of this being that the employees, who have fewer options about where they can work, seek employment in the tourism industry (Graham and Lewin, 1999).
- The tourism industry globally, and locally, faces several human resource issues such as changing demographics, skills shortages, recruitment challenges, retention issues and negative perceptions as an employment choice (Bird, Hood, and White, 2001).

Tourism industries require personnel that are able to maintain high standards of service excellence. The nature of tourism businesses also demand that staff are adequately equipped to operate in frontline positions as these staff are in direct contact with tourists. To maintain these standards, businesses need to invest in staff development. According to Harrington (2007), a study conducted by Deloitte and Touche found that organisations that invested a high percentage of their budget on developing their staff outperformed the average organisation.

Baum and Conlin (2003) maintain that public sector policy-makers and private sector decision-makers need to recognise that human resources are a necessary element for successful tourism development. Baum (1994) states that many official tourism policy statements acknowledge the importance of human resource concerns in a general sense but are limited in their focused and detailed development of the implications of these issues. Baum and Conlin (2003) explain that the obstacle to the incorporation of human resource planning into the development process is the fragmentation of responsibility that frequently exists in public and private sectors for this area. According to Baum (1993), the tourism resource concerns are the same

internationally; however, countries go about dealing with the concerns in a manner that is locally determined rather than through the application of common principles. He further points out that the private sector of the tourism industry, in most countries, is highly fragmented, and is commonly made up of an amalgam of small and large businesses, providing a range of diverse products and meeting the needs of differing markets. This results in their human resource requirements being varied.

Baum (1994) states that the pattern varies from country to country in the human resource field, but the bodies involved include:

- The various industry sectors, through their representative bodies as well as at individual company level (especially large state-owned or multinational companies such as airlines and hotels);
- National (state) education providers;
- Private educational institutions;
- Specialist training agencies;
- National employment, labour or manpower agencies;
- A range of government departments (which may include Tourism, Education, Employment, Industry, Productivity, etc);
- Social partner organisations, especially trade unions;
- National, regional or local tourist agencies.

A study was undertaken by Baum (1994) to consider the human resource environment within tourism at a national level and to place particular emphasis on the management and coordination of this function. His findings confirm the important position that human resource concerns occupy within overall tourism policy formulation, strategy and implementation and, more specifically, a focus on the fragmentation of public and, sometimes, private sector responsibility when both the policy and implementation dimensions of human resource development within tourism are being considered.

According to him this problem exists due to the absence of coordination and ownership because of the diversity of bodies with partial but not total oversight of the

human resource area. Policy and implementation tend to be addressed in a fragmented and isolated manner, with little consideration of the overall consequences of such dispersion. A similar study was conducted by Bird, Hood and White (2001) to develop a systematic approach to tourism education and human resource development policy work in Western Canada. The authors propose a comprehensive and coordinated human resource development strategy for the tourism industry. They suggest the following nine policy requirements:

1. **Government commitment:** here a long term commitment is required by government to include a vision for tourism resource development and the tourism industry through various forms of funding, planning and coordination.
2. **Industry/employer commitment:** industry support is highlighted for implementing a learning system for good human resource practices, investing adequate financial resources in human resource development, participation in training schemes, and supporting local institutions with work integrated learning placements and serving on advisory boards.
3. **Employer/employee incentives:** the focus here is on offering education and training incentives in various forms for the purpose of career advancement opportunity, improved salary benefits and employer contributions for professional developments.
4. **Human resource development agency:** tourism education councils are proposed to address the need for policy fragmentation with regard to human resource development through government funding.
5. **Core training standards and learning outcomes:** the focus here is placed on what industry recognises, such as the value of standards, training that has career relevance, consistency between programmes, credit transfer and professionalism.

6. **Practical and theoretical training:** the focus here is placed on the value of on-site and off-site learning and the experiences students gain from work integrated learning.
7. **Access to flexibility of education and training:** A) links between levels of institutional programming (high school, certificate, diploma, and degree) and from private institutions / workplace training to colleges and universities; B) different modes of delivery to accommodate the lifestyle of the learner – these requirements support lifelong learning, and recognise the need for linkages between formal education and industry learning.
8. **Industry- government- educator/ partnerships:** to avoid fragmentation, There is a need to involve these key players in human resource planning.

The policies highlighted above are essential; however, for these policies to be effective they cannot be managed independently. Similar policies have been set out in the draft human resource development strategy for the tourism sector for South Africa by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT, 2008). The purpose of this document is to streamline and rationalise skills development in the sector so that it adds value to the sector's growth and performance. For this purpose regulatory frameworks are required for implementation or it may lead to fragmentation and interested parties solving problems in isolation as will be discussed in this study.

2.12 LACK OF INTEGRATED FRAMEWORKS IN TOURISM EDUCATION

According to Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997), tourism education lacks the integrated frameworks or contexts which characterise other disciplines, resulting in fragmentation, because tourism is relatively immature, compared to established disciplines. Cooper *et al.*, (1997) further indicate that fragmentation has implications for the delivery of tourism education. The authors argue that if the overall perspective is missing or incomplete, it will be difficult for educators to develop a holistic approach to communicating ideas and information when

conclusions relating to the “big picture” are still unresolved. A study conducted by Mayaka and King (2002) regarding the quality assessment of tourism education and training in Kenya shows that there is a compelling need for closer collaboration between industry and educational - providers and considerable support for the operation of industry advisory committees is recommended. According to Mayaka and King (2002), ideally such collaboration should take place under one umbrella body that is able to exercise independence from direct influence by one of the key players. The proposed organisation might address issues such as:

- Identification of the pool of skills and competencies required in various tourism industry sectors;
- The formulation of national standards and possible establishment of a core curriculum;
- Pursuit of means and resources to ensure quality in training and education and equitable distribution of these resources.

It is important for all key players within the tourism sector to work in unison to find solutions for problems within the sector and not independently. The implementation of a framework may act as an enabling mechanism that could assist to avoid duplication of efforts ensuring that all players operate with reference to each other. This study attempts to find out whether the tourism curriculum offered at higher education institutions are meeting the needs of industry by considering the views of managers, graduates and academics. It is hoped that the perceptions from these groups will assist in improving tourism curricula. The researcher has avoided the one sided approach of seeking views of academics, managers or graduates in separate studies. The researcher has made efforts to incorporate all three groups in this study.

Cooper, Shepard and Westlake (1996) explain that the development of tourism has been piecemeal and *ad hoc* and this is reflected in the differences in the way in which various educational institutions position their curricula. South Africa may find itself in a similar situation as many tourism educational providers, preparing students for the industry with a diverse range of curriculum. There is little articulation from Further Education and Training (FET) to Higher Education Training (HET) . This may be

referred to as an operation in silos. This affects lifelong learning for a student wanting to progress from FET to HET. Cooper *et al.* (1996) indicate that the multi-disciplinary and inter-disciplinary nature of the subject and its relative youth means that there has been little opportunity for the development of an integrated and coherent approach to tourism studies. According to them, the lack of an overall framework for tourism education has been noted by academics because of the widely differing approaches to tourism education internationally, and within the same country, lacking a systematic development of the field of study. As mentioned earlier South Africa experiences a similar problem. According to Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997), universities, associations, unions, businesses, and international bodies worldwide develop and provide courses for specialisation in different areas in tourism at basic, intermediate and advanced levels. They believe this approach resulted from a rise in the demand for tourism in many countries encouraging spontaneous, uncoordinated development of the different tourism initiatives including training that has consequently led to fragmentation. Cooper *et al.*, (1997) add that together with the fragmentation of training output must be added the lack of mutual recognition of different qualifications and an absence of common standards in international accreditation procedures. This fragmentation causes confusion for tourism employers attempting to ascertain what skills have been acquired by those in training, thus representing an obstacle to the students' professional mobility. South Africa's tourism education faces a similar situation. There are many disparate education providers offering tourism education with each provider using differing curricula. This approach has obvious implications as each student may be competing for a position in the same industry and employers might find themselves in a difficult situation when assessing the qualification of the candidate. This is why this study is important to find out whether higher education tourism curricula are meeting the needs of industry.

Gee (2002) explains the importance of voluntary trade associations in resolving some of the issues of labour supply and demand. He refers to the role of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) acting as a catalyst by bringing together its government, industry and education members in order to identify needs and develop the education and training of tourism resources in the Asia Pacific region. Gee (2002) found in his study the following diverse challenges in this area including: availability of programs,

access, instructional resources, quality and consistency of training, cultural appropriateness of educational models, programme diversity, private-public sector involvement, and systemic approaches. He explains the PATA perspective as one in which the development of human resources and leadership was viewed as the key to sustainability of tourism, the organisation since its inception in 1952 represented partnership of both public and private sector membership, numbering over 2,200 organisations. It has a chapter network of 81 chapters with 17,000 members worldwide (Gee, 2002). An investigation conducted by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism South Africa (DEAT, 2008) regarding Human Resource Development for the Tourism Sector show similar findings as Gee. This is an indication that the education, training and human resource development problem is not confined to a single country and other countries are also affected with similar issues. This study therefore aims to close some of the gaps that exist between education and industry as both are instrumental in the developing of human resources for the tourism industry. By this it is meant that industry and education need to work together to solve this problem.

In the case of South Africa the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (2008) published a draft human resource development strategy for the tourism sector. The DEAT document refers to education and training for the tourism sector as complex: it includes the Department of Education (DoE), the Tourism Hospitality Sport Education Training Authority of South Africa (THETA), (DEAT), government departments, private providers and employers as role players that are instrumental in developing tourism education in the country.

Reference is also made to course content and standards for tourism programmes that differ widely among training entities and in spite of this no effective integrated mechanisms exists that can streamline the diverse arrangements for training. The document argues that while ongoing input and leadership support from industry is essential for progress, developments in the sector should be government led since the majority of current education and training functions for tourism growth are lodged in the public sector. The document further proposes that this should be the mandate of the THETA. In comparing PATA to THETA, both organisations play a role in developing education and training in tourism; however, PATA is a voluntary trade

association whereas THETA consists of labour unions and employers and is constituted by government. THETA claims that its scope of influence to serve the sector well is limited. The findings in the DEAT report indicate that since THETA is the designated education and training authority for the tourism sector it should provide the necessary leadership and training decisions which will ultimately benefit the sector; however, this has not materialised (DEAT, 2008). The report also argues that while employers can be drivers for change in the sector they are not represented on the THETA board and have no significant role in shaping the education and training system for the sector (DEAT, 2008). In considering the above views, this study has similar aims to seek the value of implementing frameworks, regulatory bodies or councils that can act as a catalyst to bridge the huge gaps that fragment the entire tourism education system. In South Africa we have the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) which acts as a regulatory framework for all qualifications and sets standards in terms of generic levels of study and names of qualifications. But this does not specify in any detail the content of such qualifications. Also the quality assurance processes for higher education qualifications such as accreditation by the Department of Education and by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) help to ensure that suitable standards of qualification offerings are maintained – but again, these do not look at the requirements of the particular industry.

Lipman (1997) echoes the sentiments of Baum (1994), Baum and Conlin (1993), Gee (2002), Bird, Hood and White (2001) concerning the human resource challenges that the tourism industry faces. Lipman (1997) suggests that new collaborative relationships in human resources are critically important and refers to the *Gearing up for Growth* studies conducted by the World Travel and Tourism Council among governments in Europe, Asia and Latin America. According to him, the *Gearing up for Growth* studies have some common conclusions:

- There are already serious shortages for quality labour, particularly in the hotel and resort sector.
- Transferability of labour across borders will become increasingly important.
- Better recruitment will be achieved with greater recognition of industry and the quality of jobs within it.

- Both government and industry departments consider that existing training facilities and standards are inadequate. Each tends to blame the other for inadequacies.
- All agree that school and college curricula must have more travel and tourism courses, focused on workplace needs.
- All consider that human resource development should have a higher priority in corporate and government decisions and funding.
- There are strong recommendations for the creation of new public/private sector national and regional frameworks through Educational and Training Councils to match support for changing needs.

As mentioned earlier the figures released by the South African Tourism Report (2007) show that South Africa is experiencing growth in foreign tourist arrivals. South Africa experienced this growth after democracy in 1994 and needs to have properly trained individuals to meet the high service standards expected by the foreign tourists. This training and education need was also identified in the South African Tourism White Paper (1996). The problems highlighted by Lipman (1997) are similar to the South African scenario. The minister of tourism of South Africa Van Schalkwyk (2008) agrees that the challenges in South Africa include the availability of qualified staff. The minister of tourism explains that service excellence is a priority for sustainable tourism growth.

Another study was undertaken by Lenehan (2005) to develop a blue print for human resources and development of the Jordanian tourism industry. The study outlines the rationale for a National Council for Education and Training in Tourism at Amman, Jordan. He maintains that the council will be a catalyst for professional development by providing programmes specifically tailored to meet the needs of industry and to provide focus to disparate providers of tourism education through a system of awards and recognition (Lenehan, 2005). He proposes the following roles and activities of the council:

- The proposed council will bring disparate tourism education providers together under a single system. Thus, a unified education system will prevent confusion among employers regarding the different tourism programmes on offer. However, for this system to work it was essential to have an internationally recognised framework to guide the programmes on offer. To further achieve the council's aims it was also necessary that all programmes on offer be subject to independent validation and international scrutiny.
- The creation of this council will also be able to create a more professional structure to the industry, thus attracting new entrants to an improved product offering which would lead to increased tourist numbers.
- The council will also be able to provide information on current best practice for the industry through research.
- The council will also ensure that programmes and courses are updated taking into account the needs of industry.

Lenehan (2005) concludes that a council offers many benefits. The key benefit is that a professional workforce will be more aware of the needs of the tourist and will be in a much better position to meet both the quality and value needs of the modern customer. It is clear that many researchers are concerned with the way in which tourism education is being developed. Therefore this study is important to examine the appropriateness of the tourism curriculum in a local context by considering the perceptions of managers, graduate employees and academics. Answers from this study will reveal whether gaps exist in the tourism curriculum and whether tourism education in South Africa requires a framework to avoid fragmentation. At the same it is important to realise that developing a curriculum for higher education cannot be done in isolation, or within departments of institutions. Developing a curriculum requires frameworks, councils, resources and leadership to avoid fragmentation.

2.13 ISSUE RELATING TO TOURISM CURRICULUM

According to Cooper, Shepard and Westlake (1996), many of the elements which make up the body of knowledge of tourism have not been modified, updated or

deleted for a number of years. Cooper *et al.* (1996) refer to major reviews of tourism degrees undertaken by The British Tourism Society in conjunction with the now disbanded Council for National Academic Awards, to update and advance the body of knowledge for tourism which had not been formally updated for over ten years. Despite these surveys, Cooper *et al.* (1996) maintain that it is very difficult to assess the degree of knowledge-centred content which exists within the educational framework. They refer specifically to degree level where academic freedom allows individual educators to work freely within their course frameworks to develop their curricula independently. The authors argue that educators selecting course content must do so by directly referring to the aims of the course and ensuring that the content developed meets the prescribed aims. According to Jenkins (1997), the pioneer institutions tended to study tourism as a macro analysis of a developing industry. Little attention was given to micro analysis, or to the needs of the companies and organisations involved in supplying tourism services. This lack of concern by the universities for the industry's needs and the industry's failure to appreciate the difference between tourism education and tourism training promoted misunderstanding. He further explains that the problem for industry employers is that often they cannot judge the quality of different courses because there is no benchmark against which evaluation can be made. The author explains that there is a lack of standardisation of courses, course content and of the qualifications of those teaching the courses. According to him, there are difficulties within countries; and comparisons between countries are even more problematic (Jenkins, 1997). Cooper, Shepard and Westlake (1996) believe that curriculum evaluation is necessary to make decisions that influence practice and to add something to the body of knowledge. They indicate that curriculum and course design as a process is incomplete without procedures incorporated to collect and process information to make informed decisions about the course with regard to:

- Whether or not it reflects teachers' aims, course aims, institutional aims, and so on;
- Whether or not it achieves the stated objectives of the course, programme and department;

- Whether or not it effectively links objectives, content, methods and assessment; and
- Whether or not it satisfactorily copes with internal and external constraints imposed.

Education providers need to consider the proposals above and they should also implement policies that ensure curricula are being reviewed regularly. Education providers should avoid developing curricula in isolation; they should work together with industry to ensure that they are responsive to the needs of industry. In fact, educators should also make efforts to review their own practice regularly to check if their preparation and delivery are aligned with the aims of the curriculum.

Tribe (2005) identifies two key issues for the tourism curriculum: the first being a choice of which aspects of the tourism phenomenon are to be studied, and the second, a choice of which types of tourism knowledge are used to approve the phenomena. He states that curricula for tourism education represent several steps of removal from the phenomenal world of tourism and encompass a smaller domain. According to him there is only a certain amount that can be incorporated into a curriculum and the curriculum for tourism degrees spans a period of three academic years. Steynberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003) share the view of Tribe and suggest that the three year tourism curriculum must be periodically reviewed so as to maintain its relevance in a fast changing environment. They state that the magnitude of tourism's contribution to the global economy clearly demands a new approach to curriculum development. These authors indicate that there is a need to maximize tourism's contribution to the global tourism market by providing a unique education perspective to meet the rapidly changing requirements of the industry. Steyneberg *et al.* (2003) maintain that the value of a global tourism curriculum is that it will be based on the expressed needs of the industry as opposed to the judgements of tourism educators. The authors believe that this approach will better meet with the needs of industry. Higher education tourism programmes would be in tune with communities' needs and expectations and tourism students could more confidently look forward to the multitude of challenging job opportunities that await them in the dynamic global industry. The key factors that led

to the decision to develop the global three-year curricula according to Steinberg *et al.* (2003) are:

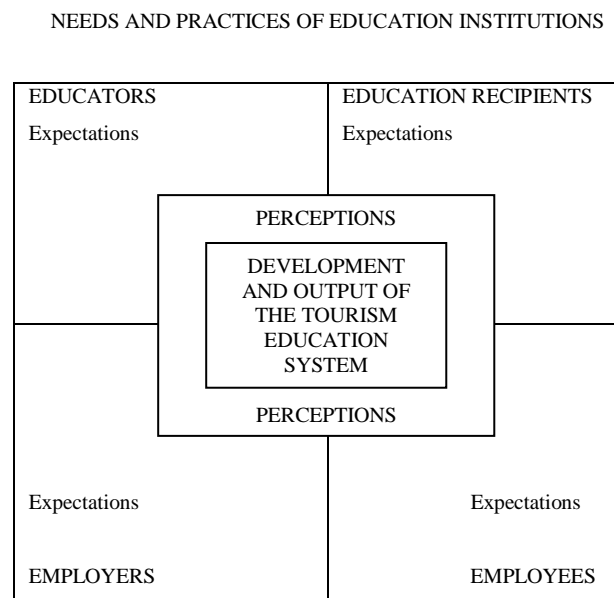
- Globalisation and the impact that it has on tourism trends and patterns;
- The quest for standardisation for curriculum globally;
- Professionalisation of the various tourism professions;
- Greater articulation: as an academic discipline it is fundamentally universal;
- will avoid cultural biases, better coordination and uniformity;
- Rapid growth of the industry and number of training institutions;
- Lack of trained educators;
- Diversification of tourism curricula, and
- Need to be driven rather than to be supply driven.

Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997) explain that constructing a tourism education system needs to take into account the diversity and the multiplicity of players involved. They believe that a single perspective approach will not be successful. According to them, the design of curricula contents must match up to the different expectations in the demand for tourism education systems. Cooper *et al.*, (1997) provide a description of these expectations:

- ***The expectations of education recipients/future employees:*** these are the immediate consumers of the training output. They bear the costs and are involved in the educational process. Although their skills levels, expectations and demands will differ they are seeking a long term career.
- ***The expectations of employers in the private and public sectors:*** these are the direct consumers of the skills acquired by students and those with real knowledge of tourism current demands. It is therefore essential that they should be offered a chance to express their real needs, to help reach an accurate definition of targets to be addressed and the gaps to be bridged.
- ***The expectations of educational professionals:*** their role in ensuring educational quality is decisive. However, educators also have expectations of

the education system-the resources available, tools for the job, the right to freedom of teaching methods and evaluation mechanisms. Employers emphasise the student's practical skills in the expectation that these be general and transferable, whilst educators tend to create tourism-oriented materials of a more theoretical nature. Therefore it is important to recognise the expectations and real needs of all stakeholders to form a system of tourism education that avoids the risk of producing educational contents which are too narrow in scope and of little practical use (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 2: Hawood and Maki Model: Parties Involved in the Development and Output of Tourism Education.



Source: Cited in Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997)

This study uses a similar approach where it considers the perceptions of educators, education recipients (graduate employees), and employers to find out the extent to which curricula are perceived to address various skills adequately. It is hoped that the findings will be able to make improvements to higher education tourism curricula.

2.14 APPROACHES TO CURRICULUM DESIGN FOR TOURISM

Tribe (2005) defines curriculum as a “whole programme of educational experiences that is packaged as a degree program, its constituent parts are a number of modules or courses, which in turn may be specified as a series of syllabi or course content”. He further proposes the wider concept of curriculum space to capture not just what is taught, but what is excluded. Tribe’s (2005) idea of curriculum space is based on the premise that there is a vast expanse of knowledge from which tourism educators /academics can define what constitutes a tourism degree. According to him the point about curriculum space is that there is a range of different stakeholders with diverse interests that may seek to exercise their influence (to varying degrees) over curriculum content. Tribe (2005) argues that the tourism curriculum represents a contested space as illustrated in Figure 2.

The inside rectangle of Figure 2 illustrates curriculum space for tourism. The circles inside the rectangle (X and Y) represent a particular framing of the curriculum. The outside boxes represent the various interests, which may influence a particular framing. The actual content of the framed curriculum will depend upon the power exerted by these interests. Tribe’s (2005) example further explains that, the circle X illustrates an outcome where the government exerts a strong central control on the curriculum. Circle Y illustrates a curriculum influenced by the interests of lecturers in critical subjects.

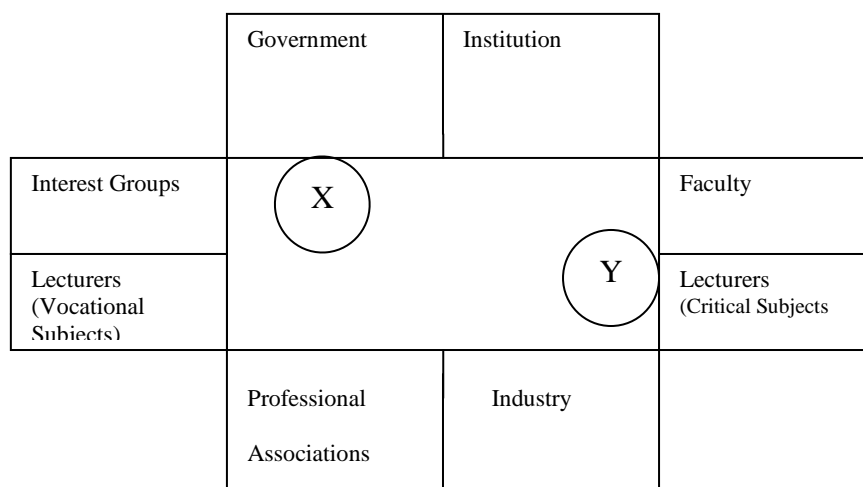


Figure 3: Curriculum Space: Source: Tribe (2005)

Tribe's model makes provision for input from different stakeholder groups. This reinforces the call for unity when developing curricula. As Tribe (2005) explains, curricula represent contested space. This should allow for input from students, parents, industry, education and government. It is imperative that government also take the lead when curricula are being developed, since tourism is an economic activity that creates employment and contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Government needs to provide the funding and resources.

Tribe (2005) developed principles for the ordering of the curriculum for tourism higher education. He divides curriculum space into four quadrants. These are vocational action, reflective vocational, reflective liberal and liberal action. This framing in curriculum can be seen in Figure 4. The vocational action part of curriculum space is considered as primarily work centred where the focus is on enabling the students to be operational, and make a smooth transition in the world of work. In the reflective vocational part of Tribe's curriculum space there is an emphasis on reflection, evaluation and modification of tourism industry skills and knowledge. The liberal action curriculum space embraces three main ideas, the uncovering of "the truth", scepticism and search for the "good life", all of which are relevant to tourism. According to Tribe (2005), a liberal tourism curriculum, firstly, provides students with a holistic understanding of tourism as a phenomenon and not simply as an industry and it ensures that the student's knowledge range of tourism is broad and coherent, encompassing an understanding of issues such as consumer wants, supplier expertise, host communities, the place of government, aesthetics, environment and values in general, encouraging students to adopt a critical perspective on the tourism knowledge gained. A tourism curriculum should be balanced between vocational and liberal space. If too much emphasis is placed on vocational space, it will become industry oriented catering for industry needs only, thereby losing focus on the need for critical thinking which is essential for the development side of tourism that is found within the liberal space. Since tourism curricula represent contested space it allows for key - players to provide input during curriculum development. This opportunity should be extended nationally and should not be decided by educators and a few members from industry who are not generally representative of all the tourism sub-sectors. Key players need to be identified if this

is proposed as a solution. One of the problems is resources and leadership, while the other problems with developing curricula for tourism are the absence of frameworks that should provide the guiding structure. In the case of South Africa tourism is Government led, private sector driven and community based. Government will need to provide the necessary resources and funding to drive this process, to bring all the key players to provide input to eliminate the fragmented tourism curriculum. It is hoped that the results of this study will be able to influence this need.

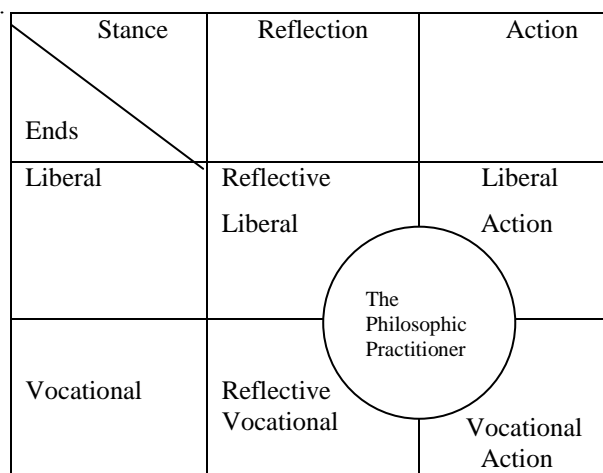


Figure 4: A curriculum for the Philosophic Practitioner
Source: Tribe (2005)

2.15 APPROACHING TOURISM CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Steynberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003) propose a global approach to tourism curriculum. According to the authors, increasing international competition for tourists requires highly competent and innovative graduates. They also emphasise that the cost of higher education is escalating and similarly tourism students expect their tertiary education to be their passport to a working society. These authors indicate that it is imperative that educators constantly monitor the pulse of the industry and keep their programmes responsive to the needs of industry as well as to the expectations of students (Steinberg *et al.*, 2003). Smith and Cooper (2000) conducted similar research to analyse current practice in the planning of curricula in tourism and hospitality management. These researchers used the International School of Tourism and Hotel

Management (ISTHM), Colegio Universitario Del Este (CUE), Ana G. Mendez University System, Carolina, Puerto Rico, to illustrate key issues and decision points in curriculum planning. Smith and Cooper (2000) and Steinberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003) share similar views: they all believe that the goal of tourism education will remain to educate and train future generations of employees in the sector. However, Smith and Cooper (2000) believe that the process by which this objective is achieved is changing as attention is paid to delivering programmes that not only satisfy the international needs of a global sector but also provide for local contexts, cultures and industries. Taking into account the context of the curriculum and educational principles of curriculum planning, the ISTHM began to develop its curriculum in 1996. The school conducted two curriculum development seminars to lead the ISTHM faculty through a unique curriculum development process. The curriculum development was based on focus groups involving more than 40 international and local industry representatives. Smith and Cooper (2000) describe the elements of the five-step curriculum development process:

Curriculum Development Process

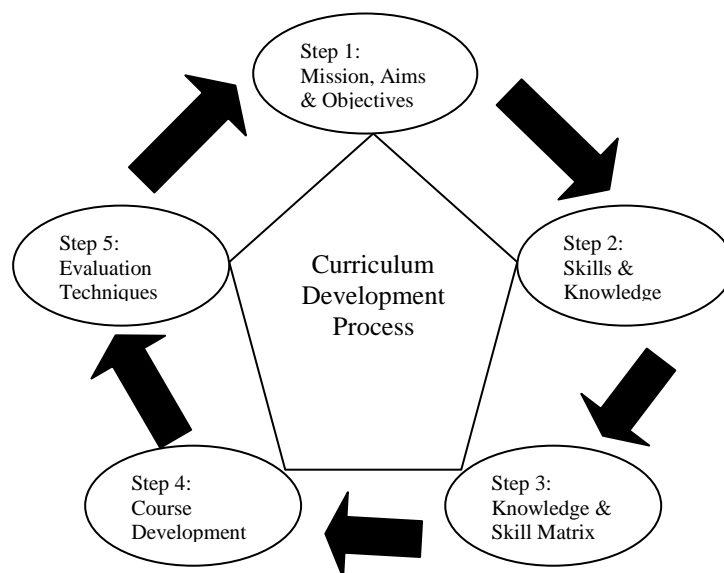


Figure 4: A five-step curriculum development process
Source: Steynberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003)

Step 1: Mission, aims, and objectives. The first stage determined the mission, aims and objectives. A distinction has to be drawn between the tourism and hospitality field to avoid confusion between delivering skills and concepts. At this point there is a need to have clear statements and aims to be able to match the educational programme closely with the needs of all stakeholders. Developers should aim to deliver better educational services that enable students to:

- Compete successfully in the job market;
- Be productive members of society;
- Develop career path;
- Seek additional levels of education;
- Engage in life-long learning experiences;
- Contribute creatively in the area of work and the industry;
- Perform effectively in a multicultural work environment; and
- Maintain high industry standards of quality service.

Step 2: Skills and knowledge. In this step developers need to ensure that the skills and knowledge to be delivered are linked carefully to other elements of the curriculum to align course delivery and assessment. In this step, the ISTHM task force identified five skills and knowledge areas:

- Intellectual abilities or core skills;
- Technical skills;
- Industry knowledge;
- Interpersonal skills;
- Professional skills.

Step 3: Knowledge and skill matrix. In step three the skill and knowledge assessments derived in step 2 are sorted out using a matrix. The skill and knowledge assessments are divided into interpersonal and intellectual components under the main categories of technical and professional:

- Technical/interpersonal skills that are both applied and technical;
- Technical/intellectual skills that are both conceptual and technical;
- Professional/interpersonal skills that are both applied and professional; and
- Professional/intellectual skills that are both conceptual and professional.

Step 4: Course development. Step 4 requires developers to consider balance and sequencing of content during the planning stages. This step of the balancing processes allows developers to use the knowledge and skill matrix derived in step 3 to develop course content for degree programmes. At this point it is necessary to establish a working definition of terms:

- Prerequisite – knowledge and skill that must be learned prior to taking the course;
- Links – knowledge and skill that can be learned at the same time;
- Timing – order that knowledge and skill must be learned;
- Rank – importance of knowledge and skill in overall education;
- Depth – knowledge and skill that builds on earlier learning experience; and
- Breadth – knowledge and skill that reinforces learning experience.

Smith and Cooper (2000) explain that tourism is suited to a range of techniques that expose students to the practical application of the subject and also to the complexity including the interrelationship of the sector. They provide the following examples to illustrate this approach, namely case studies, visits, guest speakers and practical in-company training. With regards to assessments they suggest practical assessments, case studies and assessing in the workplace as highly appropriate while automated assessments and multiple choices are recommended for larger groups keeping in mind the academic level and purpose of the assessment.

Step 4 makes provision for courses to be designed with knowledge and skill areas identified in step 3. The curriculum is finalised in this step and is ready for distribution.

Step 5: Evaluation Techniques: This step makes provision for evaluation of the tourism curriculum by students, employers, parents, government and validating bodies, keeping in mind quality which is vital. At this point the researchers propose two basic approaches to evaluate whether the curriculum has met its intended aims and objectives. Formative evaluation is suggested, which is an internal process that is designed to evaluate the elements of the curriculum. This allows provision to make necessary improvements, while summative evaluation is recommended to view the quality of the entire curriculum and its output broadly, and this evaluation is normally performed by an outside agency such as a validating body or industry organisation.

A review of the literature reveals extensive information and models for curriculum development. The effective use of these models and the uniting of the key players to provide input during curriculum development require leadership, frameworks and resources. This may apply in the South African context, where the levels of participation of community, parent groups and students in the development of curricula may be absent although tourism is said to be government led, community based and private sector driven.

2.16 CONCLUSION

Chapter Two reviewed the literature in relation to the objectives of the study and highlighted important topics to set the study in perspective. The following topics were presented in this chapter: the development of tourism, apartheid education in South Africa, higher education access, the National Qualifications Authority and the South African Qualifications Authority, the importance of tourism, the role of tourism education, tourism as a multi-disciplinary phenomenon, problems in the development of tourism education, human resource issues facing the tourism industry, lack of integrated frameworks in tourism education, and tourism curriculum. Chapter Three presents the methodology employed for this study.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research design and procedures utilized for this descriptive study include collecting data by the use of a questionnaire to answer questions concerning the objectives of this study. To explain the methodology in detail, the following key aspects will be addressed:

- Firstly, the research design will be outlined in order to explain the objectives and application of the empirical investigation;
- Secondly, the planning of the survey will be described, focusing on the questionnaire design, testing procedure, questionnaire layout and contents, as well as the population and sample size;
- Thirdly, the methodology used to disseminate the questionnaire will be described;
- Finally, the process of data analysis used in this study is discussed.

3.2 THE RESEARCH APPROACH

Welman and Kruger (1994:2) explain that research is a process in which scientific methods are used to expand knowledge in a particular field of study by applying various methods and techniques to create scientifically obtained knowledge by using objective method and procedures. This study used qualitative and quantitative methods. Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianlund (1995) refer to this method as triangulation. According to Ghauri *et al.* (1995) triangulation can improve the accuracy of judgements by collecting data through different methods. Cresswell (2003, p.4) indicates that including only quantitative or qualitative methods “falls short of the major approaches being used today in social and human sciences.”

The objectives of this study is to analyse whether the provision of higher education travel and tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal.

This study attempts to identify the gaps that exist between the higher education providers of tourism and industry. In the case of this study, the problem posed by the researcher is:

“An investigation into the gaps between tourism higher education provision and industry need in KwaZulu-Natal”

In addressing the problem, the following objectives were investigated:

- To examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees in various sectors of the tourism industry in KwaZulu-Natal.
- To identify gaps between public higher education and training provided to the tourism workforce and industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal.

The perspectives of Tourism Academics from three public higher education institutions were sought, as well as perspectives of Human Resources Managers or General Managers from industry who have employed tourism graduates from these institutions. The research also included the perspectives of tourism graduates employed within the tourism industry.

3.3 PLANNING THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The empirical survey was conducted by means of an electronic-mail survey and hand delivered questionnaires developed on the basis of issues raised in the literature review. The process followed during the empirical survey is described below.

3.3.1 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires are the most popular data collection method in business studies (Ghauri, Gronhaug and Kristianslund, 1995). According to Finn, Elliott-White and Walton (2000) there are two types of questions in questionnaires – open and closed. Closed questions have pre-coded answers and respondents are restricted to a series of pre-determined answers, whereas in open questions respondents are encouraged to

express themselves more freely. Finn *et al.* (2000) also explain that closed questions have advantages because they are easy to analyse and quick to answer while the disadvantage is that the respondent may be forced into an answer which approximates to what they want to say. Open questions are useful in determining a respondent's feeling on a topic or for identifying the reasons why they hold particular points of view (Finn *et al.*, 2000).

In designing the questionnaire, open questions and a five point Likert-type scale were used. A Likert scale requires respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with a statement or a set of statements concerning a particular object (Finn, Elliot-White and Walton, 2000). Riley, Wood, Clark, Wilkie and Szivas (2000) explain that open ended questions do not impose restrictions on the possible answer, but are more challenging to aggregate and computerise. However, open questions offer richer and deeper responses. The researcher used open ended question to obtain richer responses from the respondents without posing limitations on their opinions. As explained by Finn *et al.* (2000) open questions encourage respondents to express themselves more freely. The researcher also required respondents to complete a rating scale with sixty skills items, and for this section of the questionnaire closed questions were used. According to Finn *et al.* (2000) this method is easy to analyse and quick to answer.

3.3.2 THE LAYOUT AND CONTENTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

An introductory and directional paragraph was placed at the beginning of the questionnaire. This information provided guidelines to the respondents in order to complete the questionnaire. Since there are three populations in this study, academics, industry and graduates, two similar questionnaires were developed for Academics from Universities that offer tourism qualifications and Industry Managers who have employed tourism graduates. The questionnaires for these two groups contained qualitative questions that required explanations. The third questionnaire designed for Tourism Graduates contained the same information as part B of the questionnaires designed for Academics and Industry Managers. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

Industry Managers / Tourism Academics / Tourism Graduate Employees

Section A required information regarding curricula / work integrated learning and employment in the tourism industry. There were 14 questions for tourism academics and 10 questions for industry managers and 2 questions on demographics for tourism graduates in this section (Annexures, D, E, F).

Section B considered the extent to which current tourism curricula are perceived to address skills items within six educational clusters. Based on the review of literature, the researcher factored 60 skills items which were used for evaluating the extent to which a curriculum is perceived to address each skill. The 60 skills items were listed as sub-skills within the following six educational clusters: human resource skills, business education, tourism specific education, tourism elective units, technical training, and personal skills. For each skill item, respondents used a five point Likert scale to rate their opinion in terms of the skills being addressed in the tourism curriculum, Table 1 shows an example of the rating scale used for this study.

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not addressed in curriculum	Slightly addressed in curriculum	Reasonably addressed in curriculum	Addressed in curriculum	Fully addressed in curriculum
Customer Service					

Table 1: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Skills items”

Section C required general comments on tourism curricula and the needs of industry. This section had one question only.

3.3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Finn, Elliott-White and Walton (2000: 94) it is important to guarantee confidentiality for the respondent and respondents should be treated courteously and honestly. An informed consent letter was first sent to potential respondents to

participate in this study. The potential participants were informed of the following ethical principles:

- The name of the institution supporting the research;
- The name of the researcher;
- The name of the supervisor;
- The aims of the research; and
- The voluntary participation of potential respondents.

Anonymity was considered as the identity and the name of the respondent and the company was not requested. The potential respondents were also informed that confidentiality will be maintained and that the researcher will not identify respondents or associate particular views with particular institutions (Annexures, A, B, C).

Ghuri, Gronhaug and Kristianlund (1995: 62) provide the following guidelines for the construction of questionnaires:

- Use simple concise language;
- No unrealistic demand should be made of the respondent;
- Ensure that everybody understands the question the same way;
- Ensure that each question deals with only one dimension or aspect;
- Questions should be formulated avoiding an *escape route* or alternatives such as “Don’t know” or “No comment”;
- Questions should be specific and concise;
- Questions should be formulated in polite and gentle language;
- Use straightforward language which does not have double meaning;
- Questions should be placed in the right order;
- The layout should look neat and tidy;
- Pre- test the questionnaire.

Finn, Elliott-White and Walton (2000) explain that questionnaires should be kept as brief as possible to avoid respondent fatigue and they should be well spaced out. According to Ghauri *et al.* (1995), a shorter questionnaire has higher chances of being returned fully completed and that no standards are available in the existing literature

regarding the precise length of a questionnaire. Most of the above guidelines were considered for the design of the questionnaire. However, the researcher acknowledges that the questionnaire for the academics and the managers may have been lengthy. The questionnaires for academics had 14 questions that required explanations as well as a rating scale that contained 60 skills items to complete. Managers had to answer ten questions with explanations and were also required to complete the rating scale which contained 60 skills items. The responses from graduates were faster, because they were required to complete the rating scale and comment on the curriculum only.

The researcher completed a draft questionnaire and had re-examined the content in close collaboration with the supervisor. The following aspects of the questionnaire were taken into account before finalisation:

- The time taken to complete the questionnaire;
- The level of comprehension regarding the wording of the questions;
- The appropriateness and relevance of certain questions.

Several improvements were incorporated in the revision of the layout and the contents of the questionnaire after discussions with the supervisor. One of the changes in design was the revision of the quantitative tables to make them similar across the three sectors so that some comparison could be made.

3.3.4 THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

a) Population

The population is the study object which may be individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events, or conditions to which they are exposed (Welman and Kruger, 2004). Since the objective of this study was to investigate whether the provision of higher education travel and tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal, the population of this study were academics from three public higher education institutions namely University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Zululand and Durban University of Technology, as well as tourism

graduate employees from these education institutions and human resource managers from the tourism industries that have employed these tourism graduates.

b) Sampling

A sample is a sub-set of a larger grouping, population. Samples are studied in order to learn something of the characteristics of the larger groups (population) of which they are part (Riley, Wood, Clark, Wilkie and Szivas, 2000:75). The major source of the sampling frame for tourism graduates from Durban University of Technology was a list of alumni students generated from the ITS system. The ICT department was approached with a request for alumni tourism graduates. The researcher requested graduate details from 2002 to 2007. According to the list provided by the ICT department, a total of 300 names were identified. The researcher decided to telephone students by choosing random cellular numbers. This method proved unsuccessful, as most of the cellular telephone numbers did not exist anymore. The researcher changed the approach to random telephone calls to landline numbers. With this approach a very large percentage of potential respondents were automatically eliminated from the list since their only contact telephone numbers were cellular numbers. It is common for young students to change cellular numbers since many of them do not have contracts.

The researcher decided to use the snowball sampling method. According to Riley *et al.* (2000: 87), snowball sampling is one of the most interesting techniques where small groups are the focus and the population of interest is either small or possesses rare or unusual characteristics. Snowball sampling involves identifying a member of the population of interest and asking them if they know anybody else with the required characteristics (Riley *et al.*, 2000:87). The researcher telephoned land line numbers and explained the purpose of the call. In most cases the person required to participate was at work. The researcher reassured the family that the call was meant for research participation, and was either given a cellular number or the work telephone number of the potential respondent. Once contact was established with a potential respondent, who agreed to participate, email details were requested. A polite request for their tourism graduate colleague's contact details was made for participation in the research.

Requesting alumni lists from the University of KwaZulu-Natal proved difficult as a result of strict policy. Several emails and telephone calls made no progress. As a final attempt a graduate tutor was contacted to participate and a request for contact details of other graduate colleagues was made. This measure had more success, and the researcher was given other graduate names and contact details for participation. The researcher experienced similar problems when requesting tourism graduates' contact details from the University of Zululand. A request was made to the Head of the Tourism Department from the University of Zululand who stated that finding graduate details may prove difficult but agreed to help. A list containing 13 names was emailed to the researcher. Some of the cellular numbers did not work. Graduates from the list were employed with the Department of Education, and were thus not eligible to participate in the research as the researcher required graduates who were employed in the tourism industry. Three graduates from the University of Zululand were eligible to participate in the research. A total of 49 questionnaires was distributed to graduates and 33 responded. This revised sampling method was a limitation to the study. The alternative approach however still provided valid data in that graduates from all the institutions completed the questionnaire and rich data was obtained through the open and closed format of the questionnaire.

Tourism academics from the three public higher education institutions from the KwaZulu-Natal Province also formed part of the sampling frame, namely University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Zululand and Durban University of Technology. The Director of the Tourism Discipline was contacted to participate in the research by telephone. The researcher explained the aims of the study and the Director agreed to participate. A list of other academics within the tourism department was made available by the department administrator through email. The Head of Department from the University of Zululand was contacted by telephone to participate in the research. The researcher explained the aims of the research and the department head agreed to participate. The Head of the Tourism Department also forwarded the details of other academics lecturing within the department. The researcher was in contact with some of the department lecturers and contacted them to participate as well. The researcher is based at Durban University of Technology and emailed the Head of the Tourism Department and all the academics from the two campuses to participate.

Both the Head of Department and academics agreed to participate in the research. A total of 20 academics were identified as possible participants. Only 16 academics completed and returned the questionnaire. Of the non participants one was retired and did not feel that it was necessary to participate and two were part time and also felt that it was not necessary for them to respond, and one gave no reason for not responding.

Employers from the tourism industry also formed part of the sample frame. Extracting the sample of tourism graduates / employees automatically determined the tourism employers of the various sectors. The researcher was concerned mainly with employers that employed tourism graduates from the three higher education institutions. The researcher contacted the human resource managers by telephone and explained the aims of the research and requested their participation. All the human resource managers contacted were interested in participating in the research as they felt that the aims of the study were relevant to industry and education. A total of 13 questionnaires were sent out and eleven managers responded.

3.4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Tourism Academics

A total of 20 questionnaires was distributed to academics from the three Universities. Ten questionnaires were hand delivered to academics from Durban University of Technology, six questionnaires were hand delivered to academics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal and four questionnaires were delivered to the academics from the University of Zululand. A total of 16 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing an 80% overall response rate.

Tourism Graduate Employees

A total of 49 questionnaires were sent out by electronic mail to graduate employees. Only 33 questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a 69.38% overall response rate. According to Makaya and King (2002), employees should be well

placed to comment on quality gaps in their capacity as end-users of the skills acquired at college or on the job.

Tourism Industry / Employers

A total of 13 questionnaires were sent out by electronic mail to human resource managers from the tourism industry. Eleven questionnaires were completed and returned, representing an 84.61% response rate. From the two non respondents one had resigned from the company and one provided not having time as a reason to complete the questionnaire. Employer opinions of employee skills are useful in the assessment of training and education quality and the identification of these gaps may be used to cross check findings, which is a time consuming and costly exercise (Makaya and King, 2002).

The questionnaires were distributed and collected in August and September 2008. Reminders in the form of telephone calls and emails were sent out to potential respondents requesting their feedback if they did not respond to the first request.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences programme (SPSS) and Excel were used for analysing the quantitative data. Comparative graphs for each skills items were developed showing the responses of the three groups in percentages. A further six composite graphs were developed showing the mean result for all the skills items added together within each educational cluster. The statistical analysis of the results for the skills items tested assisted in interpreting the data and drawing conclusions about the findings of the study.

Interpretive analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data using thematic categories from the analysis as sub-headings. The researcher read the feedback from respondents to become familiar with the data and to establish interpretations that may be supported by the data. The content of the text was then cut and placed on a chart under sub-headings. All text relating to a specific theme was given a code, for example “tourism curriculum review” was coded as TCR and all text relating to curriculum revision was

cut and placed under that heading. Once all the text was cut and placed on a chart, it allowed the researcher to make a more careful comparison of the text. The text and codes were not regarded as final and were moved around until the researcher was satisfied that it also supported other themes as well. The final step required discussing the data under specific headings.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter Three explained the methodology employed for this study using the following headings: section 3.1 briefly introduces the methodology, 3.2 explains the research approach, 3.3 discusses the questionnaire, 3.4 explains the population and sample size, 3.5 explains the distribution of the questionnaire and 3.5 discusses the data analysis. Chapter Four presents the results of the quantitative analysis and Chapter Five presents the results of the qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The objectives of this study was to analyse whether the provision of higher education travel and tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal. Ultimately the research sought to indentify the gaps that exist between higher education providers of tourism and industry needs. Identification of these ‘gaps’ will assist in the development of tourism programmes to meet the needs of industry. The previous chapter describes the research methodology used for this study. This included the research approach, the questionnaire, the population and sample size, the distribution of the questionnaire and the response.

In this section, the qualitative analysis of the questionnaires will be discussed using thematic categories from the analysis as sub-headings. This discussion follows from section A of the questionnaires (Annexures D, E, F) which comprised open-ended questions. As explained in the previous chapter, this study addresses the main theme of curriculum appropriateness by posing questions to the following stakeholders: tourism industry managers, tourism academics from public higher education institutions in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and tourism graduate employees who are alumni from these institutions.

Industry managers employing tourism graduates from the selected institutions were asked whether they were satisfied with the skills that tourism graduates bring to their organisation and if the tourism curriculum adequately meets their needs. Academics were asked whether they were satisfied that their curriculum meets the needs of industry. Academics were also asked to elaborate on how universities could develop a better curriculum that meets industry need. They were further asked to comment on how often they reviewed their curriculum. The final question put to academics was which occupations their graduates enter after qualifying with a tourism diploma/degree. Graduate employees were asked to comment on the tourism curricula that they followed during their years at university and their perceptions of its

appropriateness now that they were employed in the industry. This section addresses the main theme of curriculum appropriateness. The discussion begins with perceptions of the tourism curriculum from each of the participant groups. The chapter moves on to discuss the perceptions about the sectors graduates occupy. The final theme examines the issue of curriculum development and improvement processes.

4.2 Industry Perceptions of the Tourism Curriculum

Tourism Employers are direct consumers of the skills acquired by students. These employers also have a knowledge of tourism's current demands, and this is why they should be offered a chance to express their real needs, which could assist in bridging any gaps that may exist in tourism curriculum development (Cooper *et al.*, 1997). In this study, most industry managers expressed dissatisfaction with the tourism curriculum offered at higher education institutions in terms of meeting industry need. It must be noted that the higher education institutions that participated in this study offer different courses with different focus. The University of Technology offers diplomas with a focus in travel and eco-tourism, while one of the traditional universities focus on the heritage sector the other focuses on the recreation industry. A limitation of the study is that conclusions are reached about institution offerings generally and the data does not differentiate along the lines of level or focus of qualification. Manager 8 had this to say: "It does not prepare the learner for the working environment; a lot needs to be done to bridge the gap between what is taught and what is really required by industry." Sharing this view is Manager 11: "it is too vague and we find we still need to train them further according to our standards and industry standards." Manager 10 stated that "there is certainly a huge gap between the reading materials used in institutions in comparison to the up to date, ever changing information required in the industry." Eight out of eleven managers indicated that they were not satisfied that the curriculum meets industry needs, while two of the managers felt that they were partially satisfied and only one manager felt completely satisfied that the curriculum meets industry needs. Manager 10 also stated that the "institutions focus mainly on theoretical knowledge and a lot is not required in a working tourism environment." Manager 9 agrees with this by saying "some graduates have a theoretical background on dealing with tourists but do not have the

ability to do public speaking nor can deal with conflict situations.” Sharing this perception is manager 8 who says that “graduates struggle with problem solving skills, they run to the supervisor the minute they encounter problems.” The data therefore indicated a great need for more soft skills in graduates.

These types of comparisons suggest that gaps may exist between education providers and industry. It is also an indication that closer collaboration is needed to close these gaps. Tourism curricula need to reflect recent and future industry needs and developments, to ensure graduates are equipped with appropriate industry relevant skills and research has to be undertaken in collaboration with industry to ensure that courses offered are relevant and producing graduates with skills and knowledge they will need to be future managers (Walo, 2000). As tourism is a profession, the subject curricula need industry input (Singh, 2006).

4.3 Academics’ Perceptions of the Tourism Curriculum

It was also important to find out whether academics were satisfied that their curricula meet the needs of industry. According to Evans (2001), there are differing expectations between educators and the industry in that employers emphasise practical skills and general transferable skills, whereas educators are concerned with developing more conceptual and tourism specific knowledge. This suggests that both stakeholders have conflicting interests and this may lead to opposing views in terms of their curriculum preparedness and industry need.

This is evident in the perception of the following academic participants with regard to being satisfied that their curriculum meets the needs of industry. There were both positive and negative views. Academic 2 stated: “the feedback that we received so far indicates that our students are able to execute the tasks and responsibilities that lead to the development of the organisation that has employed them.” Academic 14 supported this view by indicating that “most of the employees that we contact are very happy with our students.” There is clearly a matter of concern here; while academics are implying that they are in contact with industry and that industry is content with their alumni, industry feels the opposite. A second concern is that when the departments

were approached for alumni lists to participate in this study, no records were available. The absence of student tracking systems within departments creates doubts as to how such research is carried out with industry. Academic ten and academic 13 indicated that employment rate was high implying that industry was happy with the tourism curriculum, and academic 10 stated that “negligible % unemployed” supported by academic 13 who explicitly stated “graduate employment rate is high and there has been very little negative feedback from employers.” These opposing views between industry and academics are evidence that stakeholder consultation is insufficient. These findings are in line with those of Evans (2001) indicating that poor communication exists between the two groups, a lack of involvement of educators in industry, and industry’s role in education.

There was acknowledgement of this charge of lack of communication between stakeholders in the data from a few of the academics. Academic 1 stated that “there are certain gaps which become evident when students get placements for internship programme.” This could mean that students may become more vocal when they return from their internship programme; perhaps making comparisons between the classroom theory and industry practice. Alternately these students provide feedback to their internship coordinator through written reports based on their experiences, and these gaps may surface in the reports. Academic 9 firmly expressed total dissatisfaction with the curriculum-industry link: “I feel it does not expose the students to the ever changing tourism environment.” This seems to indicate a concern about the use of traditional education methods in the light of a dynamic industry. Traditional education methods are not sufficient to meet the demands of a dynamic world which is driven by information, global competition and new technologies (Pillay, Lewis and Wilss, 2004). On noting the discrepancy between the industry and academics’ views, and the different views among the academics, we are left with a number of questions. How often is education engaging with industry? Do academic departments have policies that require lecturers to review their curriculum regularly? According to Cooper *et al.* (1997), the aim should be to promote communication between those involved so that answers can be found for the complex needs of all stakeholders.

4.4 Graduates' Perceptions of the Tourism Curriculum

This study also includes the perceptions of tourism graduate employees (alumni) from the three public higher education institutions in the province of KwaZulu-Natal. Graduate employees were asked to comment on the curriculum that they followed during their study towards a degree/diploma in tourism. Students are recipients of education and are seen as future employees and as consumers of education output by paying for education and are involved in the education process (Cooper *et al.*, 1997). Students are in a good position to comment on the curriculum as they form the link between education on one side and industry on the other. As students, they have ambitions and expect to find employment after graduation. They place their trust in the hands of the educators and the department offering the programme and believe that the curriculum will meet with the expectations of the industry that employs them. Educators are seen as captains who are in command of the ship and their authority is rarely questioned, until the student is confronted with the moment of truth. This is when the student arrives in industry and may find a mismatch between what was taught and what is required.

This perception of mismatch was evidenced in the data from the tourism graduate employees, when asked to comment on the tourism curricula that they followed during their term of studies. Graduate responses in relation to the curriculum were mainly negative. Many of the graduate employees perceived that their tourism course was too general, and that it should have been more industry related. As participant 16 stated: "the course was more generic rather than being specific." This view was shared by graduate 27: "the course does not equip one with industry specific skills." In a similar vein, graduate 2 stated that the course should focus on teaching learners specialist knowledge that is required in the tourism industry rather than providing an overview of the tourism industry. This perception could mean that the curriculum may lack industry specific focus and may require more input from industry. These perceptions seem aligned to those expressed by industry participants and more tentatively expressed by some of the academic participants.

The data from the graduates seemed to support that from industry. Graduate 20 had this to say: "there is too much theory, no on the job experience." In agreement was

graduate 19 who stated that “the course I took was more theoretical than practical so I found myself not knowing how to put theory into practice.” Graduate 12 stated there is a need “to learn how to communicate with others and to learn more on customer service and telephonic skills.”

Singh (2006) suggests that soft skills such as formal letter writing, personal skills and transferable skills must be considered when formulating curricula. Some education institutions use work integrated learning (WIL) as a solution to bridge the divisions between theory and practice, however, Singh (2006) points out that the whole area of work placement is controversial since the problem extends to the quality and type of placement offered by industry and the range of opportunities experienced by students. The concern here is the management of this component between education and industry to provide the student with the maximum benefit from the experience. Gee (1997) refers to WIL as “reality skills” and states that the best practicum will attempt to link practice with what is taught as theory, while Collins (2002) sums it up in his words: “there is no better teacher than experience and education is only a clinical approach to experience.”

Tribe (2005) believe that tourism curricula should comprise a balance of vocational and academic focus. A lack of vocational application has consequences for the work-readiness of tourism graduates and impacts on the efficiency of the sector. Conversely, a lack of academic or theoretical base to tourism education has negative consequences to tourism as an area of academic activity and to students that study tourism in the long term (Cooper *et al.*, 1996). Cooper *et al.* (1996) conclude that there is enormous diversity in the way tourism studies are approached as a pedagogical subject; they refer to the way it is taught and interpreted by individual educators and departments.

A possible concern that arises from the graduate perception of mismatch between the tourism curriculum and industry need could be related to the fact that many academics who lecture within tourism programmes do not have a tourism qualification and may also lack industry experience (Saayman, 2005). Adding to this problem is the application of broadly stated outcomes when the curriculum is designed. This view is consistent with Saayman (2005). Saayman (2005) explains that a lack of properly

qualified lecturers are employed to present tourism courses at universities, technikons (now Universities of Technology), technical colleges and a number of private colleges, which has led to the influx of foreign educators in South Africa and the rest of Africa. Considering that some tourism lecturers may lack industry experience, they may apply the minimum standard in terms of outcomes for the industry specific skills that is normally required by industry. Cooper *et al.* (1996) qualify this statement as they agree that there is a shortage of qualified educators with relevant industry experience and that few qualifications exist that primarily focus on the development of educators or scholars who seek a career in the field of tourism education and training. Although this study considers the higher education sector only, it should be noted that this is also a major problem in South African secondary schools that introduced tourism as a subject. The majority of the educators are not adequately prepared to teach tourism. This point is consistent with Pawson (2002), who conducted a study regarding a travel and tourism curriculum for the training of secondary school teachers. Pawson explains that there are no formally qualified teachers specifically in the learning area travel and tourism and that teachers are recruited from subjects such as geography, history and economics to teach travel and tourism, because there is an absence of relevant teacher training in this field.

4.5 Perceptions about Sectors of Graduate Occupations

Tourism education needs to consider the progression of students who undertake tourism studies in order to enter employment and develop their careers in the industry (Ladkin, 2005). I found with some surprise that little is known by the relevant higher education institutions about careers and employment in the tourism industry and what happens to their graduates once they leave the institution. There was little evidence that the alumni are being tracked although such information sheds important information on labour market behaviour and labour mobility. This study collected data from the tourism departments of the three participating institutions. None of the institutions' tourism departments kept alumni databases. This lack of past student records creates many gaps in the types of information that should impact on curriculum design (Ladkin, 2005).

Some of the concerns that are raised here are how these tourism departments find out if their students have secured meaningful employment and what progression they have made since entering their first occupation. In my view students are the most valuable source to provide feedback to academics on the curriculum that was offered to them in terms of its subsequent appropriateness so that remedial action can be taken. In this section, I will discuss whether tourism students occupy tourism occupations after graduation by matching the job profile of alumni (collected in the questionnaires) from these institutions. This is a method of cross checking tourism curricula and tourism occupation.

Some academics indicated that their curricula did meet the needs of the various subsequent occupational sectors into which their graduates would venture. When academics were asked whether they were satisfied that their curriculum met industry needs, academic 15 indicated that “the curriculum is strategically designed to meet the needs of the cultural and heritage sectors.” Academic 16 stated that there was a focus on training “students in both theory and practical aspects of tourism management in the cultural sectors.” However, it was also articulated by some academics that clarity was needed as to exactly which sector alumni worked in. Academic 4 stated that “our programme was originally developed in consultation with various stakeholders and representatives of industry, we therefore think that it meets the industry needs (and those of the heritage sectors) but ultimately we don’t know where most of our students find jobs and whether we trained them adequately.”

According to Ladkin (2005), there are many opportunities for employment in tourism but a lack of career development and the unattractiveness of some occupations are a problem for students choosing tourism as a career. In this study I also attempted to find out from tourism academics which jobs their students occupied after graduating with a tourism qualification. These were some of the responses: “I don’t know” (Academic 6), “we don’t have reliable or comprehensive information about this” (Academic 4), “front desk officer; house keeping; tourism manager.” Academic 8 admits: “I am not in possession of previous student alumni statistics in order to properly comment.” Academic 11, provided the following list: “local government; education; tourism manager; hospitality industry; museums; teaching; tourism agencies; tour operators.”

The problems with defining tourism employment are linked to the difficulties of defining tourism and the complexities of the industry. Furthermore tourism is not recognised as a single entity in the Standard Industrial Classification, but exists in a number of areas (Ladkin, 2005). I have concerns about a few of the jobs which academics indicated that their graduates occupy, I have reservations about a three year diploma or degree graduate occupying front office or house keeping positions. This may be a necessary entry position, after which a graduate might be fast-tracked. The concern is whether industry perceives the diploma or graduate students as having been educated only for this entry-level position. If so, one wonders if a student graduating from a Further Education and Training (FET) college may be equally or better prepared for such positions.

There is also a concern that academics are saying that their tourism alumni are also employed as teachers. Academic 15 says, “lately the demand has been on teaching.” The reason for this is due to the introduction of tourism in the school curriculum. Many school educators are now being challenged with a subject that they did not study within their qualification. In this case students in high school may be faced with one of two problems: one is having a teacher without content or discipline knowledge and the other is having a teacher with a tourism diploma and no teaching qualification. One has to question the effectiveness of both of these. Is the introduction of tourism in secondary schools influencing the need for teachers with tourism backgrounds? This problem opens up a new debate on educational practices in South Africa.

4.7 Tourism Curriculum Development and Improvement Processes

The availability of highly skilled graduates is a key requirement for the future of the tourism industry and, to achieve this objective, universities will need to tailor make educational programmes to suit the specific requirements of the tourism industry (eMelo, 2006). This study attempted to find out from tourism academics how universities can develop a curriculum that meets the needs of industry and how often tourism departments reviewed their curriculum. Graduate perceptions regarding the development and updating of the tourism curriculum were also elicited.

When academics were asked to comment on developing a curriculum that meets industry need, this is what they had to say: “we should find out what industry need” (Academic 7). In agreement was academic 1 who stated that “when designing programmes, universities have to liaise with industry and find out exactly what industry wants.” While academic 4 also felt that “regular surveys among key stakeholders within the industry provide useful information,” academic 6 shares this view and stated that “liaison with various tourism service providers on a regular basis would shed light as to what industry needs.”

The majority of the academics proposed that designing a curriculum requires input from industry. One needs to take cognisance of the size of the tourism industry and the resources required to undertake such a project. Institutions offering tourism cannot depend on a few advisory members from industry and develop curricula in an isolated manner. The absence of regulatory frameworks to guide such projects leads to fragmentation. This is one reason why so many different programmes exist within a city or a province and a country as a whole. This fragmentation is common to tourism programmes when compared to other more established disciplines such as law, accounting or engineering. It must be noted that the broad industry focus and requirements (as discussed in chapter 2) are somewhat conflated in the data which looks at industry as one whole whereas the industry is a complex of different types.

Supporting similar perceptions were graduates who had this to say: Graduate 21’s response was, “I think lecturers need to spend time in industry itself so they have an idea as to what students really need to cover in their syllabus.” Student 1 echoes a similar view: “lecturers need to go out and identify exactly what the industry expects tourism graduates to know when they complete their degree/diploma.”

The proposals expressed by the academics and graduates are expected. However, this suggestion of greater liaison between industry and education and, in particular, the need for academics to have more ongoing industry experience only offers a partial solution to an extremely challenging problem, especially for tourism. Tourism is made up of many subsectors; it is interesting to find out how education approaches such a huge task with limited resources and who is going to drive the process.

As discussed in the literature, very often tourism programmes are developed in an isolated and fragmented way and they also lack frameworks to support such initiatives. Feedback from industry is essential for curriculum developers to make informed decisions such as closing any possible gaps that may exist between education and industry. The question is what format will this process take.

Another way of achieving this is through advisory committees (McKenna and Sutherland, 2006). Advisory boards are generally made up of industry specialists, such as managers or supervisors or subject specialists. Normally such experts are invited by education to provide input when the curriculum is being developed or revised. As Cooper *et al.* (1996) explain, that difficulty exists in developing links with one sector of the tourism industry without alienating the needs of another. Singh (2006) offers a moderate solution by suggesting that university and industry seek common ground by coordinating theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in order to assist each other by understanding each other's problems.

A question about curriculum improvement put to tourism academics revealed several inconsistencies. Academics were asked how often their department reviewed the tourism curriculum. This is what they had to say: "not often as - the need arises" (Academic 3). Academic 16 stated: "Depending on the course every two or three years." (Academic 13) said: "every few years to align to current trends." While academic 2 stated that reviews take place "every year, we have internal meetings that look at the relevance of the programmes (based on the feedback) to industry also taking into consideration the changes that take place in each organisation." These contradictions indicate that departments may not have guiding policies that warrant regular reviews. The feedback also revealed inconsistencies from departments of the same institutions in terms of curriculum review practice. The tourism industry is dynamic by nature; it is changing constantly; it is therefore imperative that educationists review their curriculum regularly to keep in touch with industry trends.

4.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an analysis of the qualitative data collected from three sectors: tourism graduates, tourism academics and industry. All the questions focused on one central theme, that is “curriculum appropriateness”.

The data presented here clearly indicates that there is no consensus between all stakeholders that the tourism curriculum is appropriate and meets the needs of industry. The majority of the participants contended that the curriculum requires much more industry input to meet the needs of the tourism industry. A minority group within the educators felt that the curriculum was appropriate and met the need of industry. The feedback from the stakeholders that input is needed from industry to develop an appropriate curriculum supports the suggestion by Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997) that a Total Quality Management (TQM) must be introduced as a first step when constructing a competitive tourism education system based on identifying the needs and expectations of the employers, the educated and the educators. Students are challenged with the rising costs of education, and bring strong expectations that their tourism qualification will lead to meaningful employment. It is unfair if their expectations are not met on account of education offering programmes that are not fully aligned to industry needs. Tourism students definitely need guidance on career development and progression. Academics need to keep track of their graduates. Information collected from such data can be used to gauge current employment trends and establish gaps between education and industry. Finally, it is essential that all tourism stakeholders contribute to the curriculum decision making process.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study was to establish whether gaps exist in the travel and tourism curriculum as perceived by educator, industry and tourism graduate employees. The previous chapter describes the results of the qualitative analysis of this study. In this section, the quantitative analysis of the questionnaires will be discussed.

This discussion arises from the analysis of section B of the questionnaire. Here the study attempts to evaluate any distinguishable skill gaps within the tourism curriculum as perceived by tourism educators at public higher education institutions, industry managers who employ these graduates and graduate employees from these institutions. In examining this objective, the average for all the skills items was calculated using SPSS to identify any meaningful difference between the respondents' perceptions in terms of the extent to which critical skills were addressed in the curriculum. A Likert scale was employed in this section whereby each of the three respondent groups rated aspects on a five point scale. The wording of the scale was slightly different to reflect the different viewpoints from which the respondents encountered the issues.

The questionnaires for industry had the following Likert scale: 1= not prepared at all, 2=slightly prepared, 3=reasonably prepared, 4=prepared or 5=completely prepared. The questionnaires for academics had the following scale: 1= not addressed in curriculum, 2=slightly addressed in curriculum, 3=reasonably addressed, 4=addressed in curriculum or 5=fully addressed in curriculum. The questionnaires for students had the following wording for their Likert scale: 1= not prepared at all, 2=slightly prepared, 3=reasonably prepared, 4=prepared or 5=fully prepared. The questionnaires were thus all concerned with the extent to which the curriculum prepared graduates for the tourism industry. The slight differences in wording ensured that industry and

graduate participants called on their own perceptions from their own standpoint of employers of graduates or as students who have completed the curriculum.

Section B of the questionnaire is made up of six skills areas and each of these is made of a number of items, with a total of sixty items. The six skills areas are: human resource skills, business education, tourism specific education, tourism elective units, technical training and personal skills (Annexures D, E, F). Each of these skills areas is discussed in turn below. The discussion begins with a general accumulative overview of the ways in which the three group; educators, industry and tourism graduate employees, have responded to the items within each skill. This is followed by a consideration of some of the responses to particular sub-skills where the discrepancies in the responses of the three groups are noteworthy. The detailed responses to all items are provided in Annexures G, H, I, J, K, L, M.

5.2 Perceptions about Human Resource Skills

The skills items tested within the business education cluster included customer service, customer guest relations, leadership and management, communication skills, etiquette and protocol, supervision, handling difficult people and public relation skills. The study only discussed skills items that showed notable gaps between the perceptions of the three groups, managers, academics and graduates. Human Resource Skills are an essential part of the tourism industry, included within this skill is the ability to manage and to mentor people. According to Chand (2006), human resource skills are essential to achieve organisational excellence. George (2007) agrees that the success of a tourism organisation depends on its employees' contribution and commitment, therefore the area of human resources needs to be nurtured through quality human resource management practices. Figure 1 below provides a visual comparison of mean scores for a composite of the nine sub-skills items tested. *(Detailed graphs for skills items not discussed in the study are available in Annexure G.)* To determine whether or not notable differences exist between managers, educators and graduate employees (students), the researcher compared the ratings of the three groups in each skill to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the tourism curriculum. In a composite of the nine skills items tested in the area of

Human Resources skills, 78% of the managers from the industry component contended that these skills were not addressed or were only slightly addressed. This is of great concern given the importance of this skills area in the tourism industry. 71% of academics were of the view that this skill area had been reasonably to fully addressed by the curriculum. There is thus a notable contrast between these two groups in their perceptions of graduate readiness to cope with human resource aspects of their work. The students had a range of views in this regard with no clear shared perception as to the extent to which the curriculum had addressed this skill.

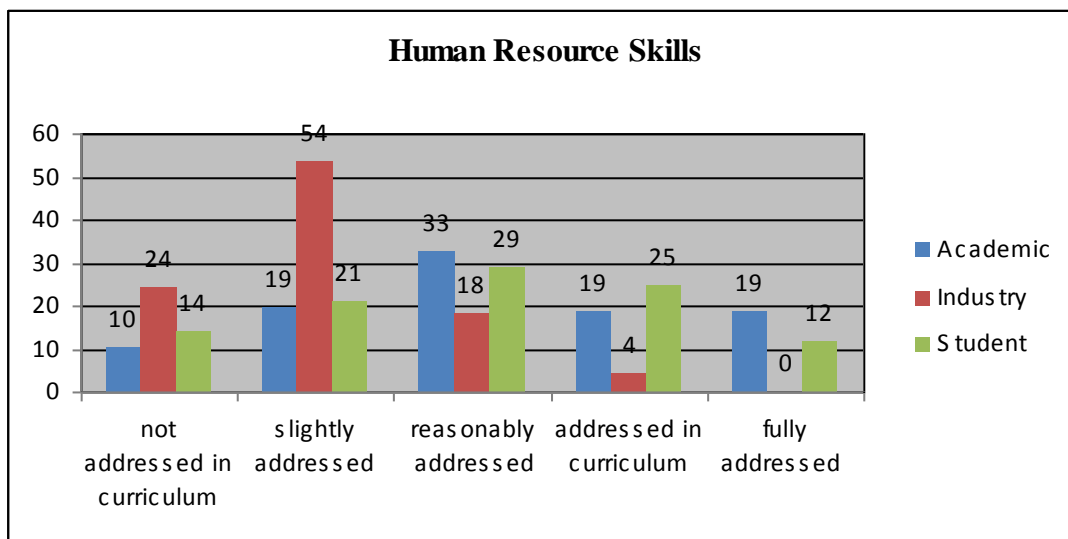


Figure 3: Average result for skills items tested in human resource educational cluster

Overall a closer comparison of the human resource sub-skills as evaluated by all three groups indicates several notable differences. This study sought to identify skills gaps between the three groups. The study attempts to discuss sub-skills that showed a greater gap in terms of the perceptions among the groups. The following sub-skills were chosen for discussion in the human resource educational cluster: customer service skills, customer guest relations, leadership and management, etiquette and protocol, coaching and mentoring, supervision and handling difficult people.

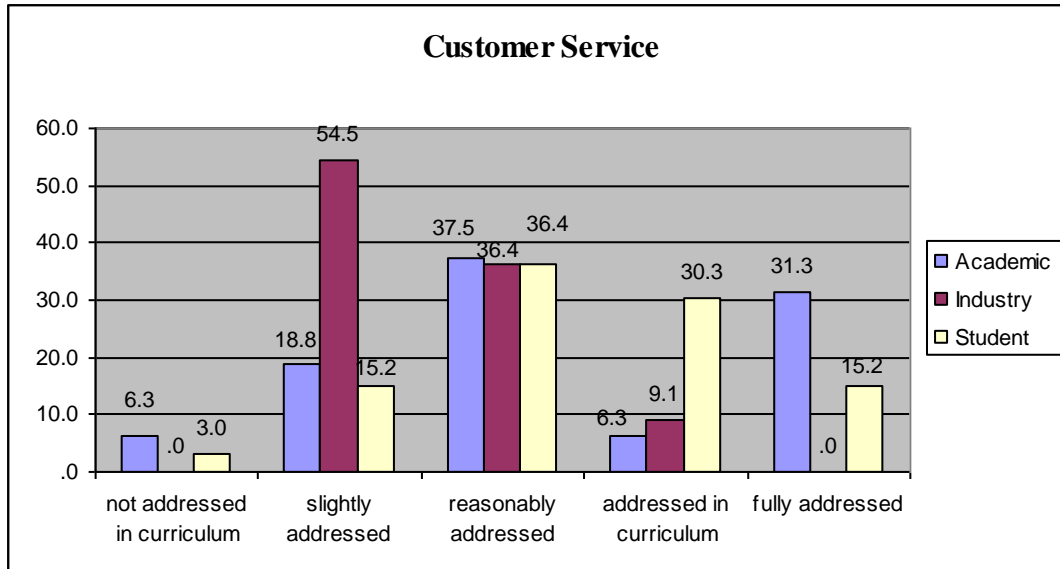


Figure 4: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Customer Services”

Rowe, Smith and Borein (2002) explain that the provision of products and services forms part of the travel and tourism industry’s daily function and that staff within these organisations are required to deal with customers as part of their daily work. According to them this process requires effective customer service which leads to customer satisfaction and repeat business, thereby ensuring success and the profitability of an organisation. When the question was asked about the skill *customer service*, more than half the managers from industry (54.5%) found that the customer service skill was slightly addressed, while 37.5% of academics and 36.4% of students indicated that the skill was reasonably addressed. However, only 15.2% of students rated this skill as fully addressed and no managers supported that the customer service skill was fully addressed. This comparative graph is surprising as a lack of this skill has implications for tourism businesses. Tourism enterprises rely on the provision of excellent customer service as many of the organisations compete for the same customer. This graph indicates that serious attention is required to address this skill.

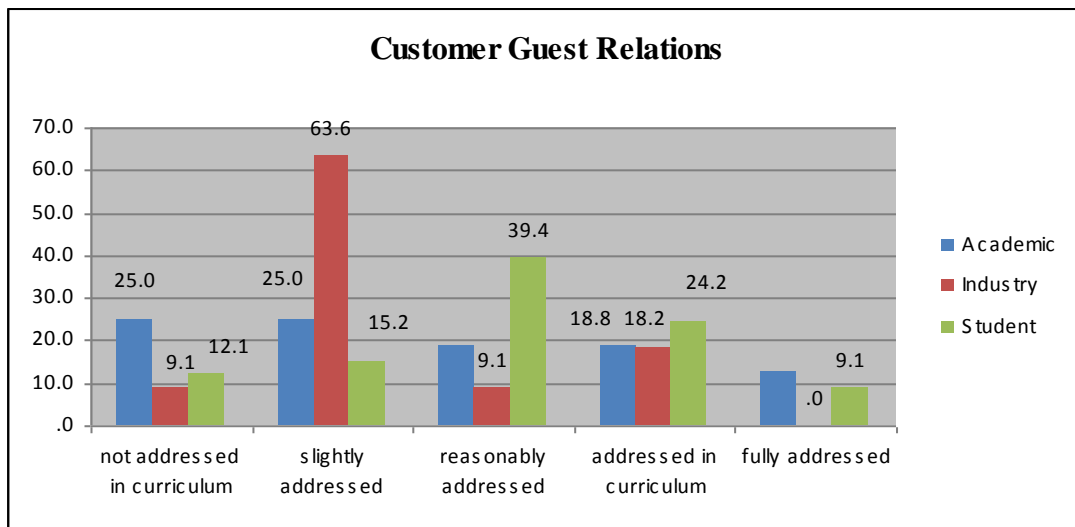


Figure 5: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Customer Guest Relations”

Davidson (1997) describes customer guest relations as the ability to make visitors feel welcome, cared for and confident that they receive a high standard of services. Regarding the question about *customer guest relations*, 63.6% of industry managers rated this skill as slightly addressed whereas 25% of academics indicated that the skill customer guest relations was slightly addressed and 39.4% of students rated this skill as reasonably addressed in the curriculum. There is agreement among the three groups that customer guest relations is addressed; however, there is a very low percentage of respondents from the three groups who agree that the skill is fully addressed. The results from this graph is surprising as it would be expected that more respondents would have rated customer guest relations as fully addressed in the curriculum, since this skill can be closely associated with any tourism business dealing directly or indirectly with customers.

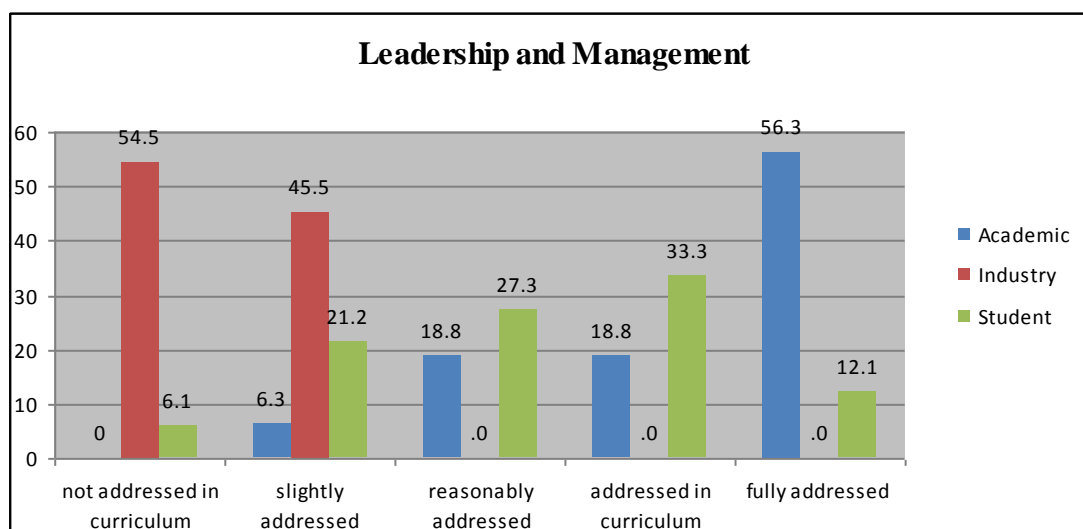


Figure 6: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Leadership and Management”

Leadership is essential to mentor individuals and develop their skills by adding value to them, thus making them more valuable to an organisation (Maxwell, 2005) while management is described as a process of coordinating the organisation’s human and physical resources to achieve its goals (George, 2007). When the question was asked about the skill *leadership and management*, 100% of managers rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum or only slightly addressed. This was in stark contrast to the responses of the academics with 56.3% believing the item is fully developed. This raises serious concerns about the extent to which industry needs are being met by the curriculum, and raises concerns about the discrepancy between the education and industry sectors.

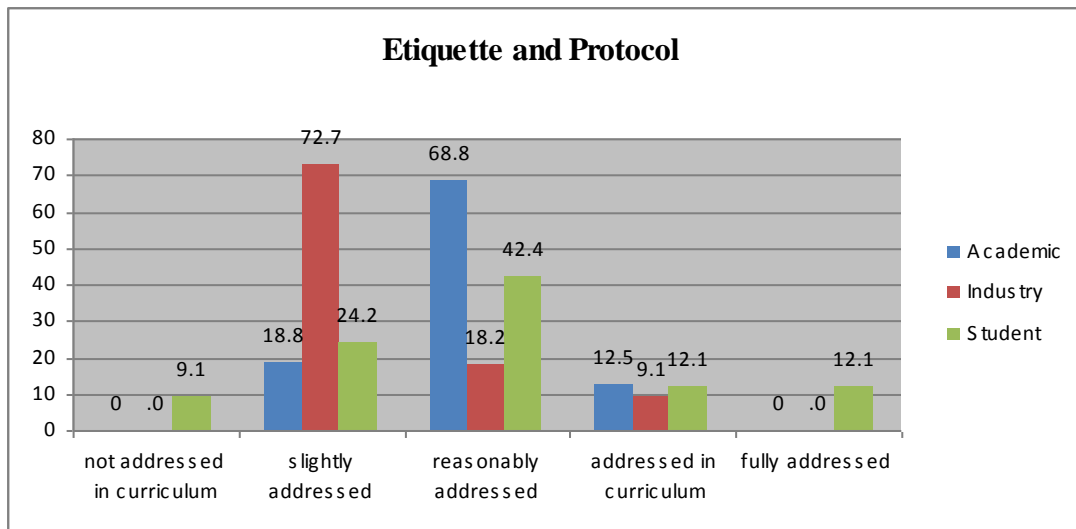


Figure 7: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Etiquette and Protocol”

Van Rensburg (1999) describes etiquette as the “conventional laws of courtesy observed among members of the community”. An individual who acquires knowledge of etiquette displays confidence and control at all times through charm and finesse (Van Rensburg, 1999). Protocol is described by Van Rensburg (1999) as “a body of diplomatic etiquette; all conventional formulae and rules acknowledged in diplomatic circles”. Acquiring knowledge of etiquette and protocol is essential for tourism graduates, especially those who occupy front office positions at hotels, passenger services and check-in positions at airports or information officers at tourist offices. With regard to *etiquette and protocol*, 72% of managers rated this skill as slightly addressed, whereas 68.8% of academics and 42.4% of students indicated that etiquette and protocol were reasonably addressed. However, there was consensus among academics and industry that this skill was not fully addressed in the curriculum. This is problematic in that it highlights an industry need which the current curriculum is ignoring, but it is positive that both industry and education sectors share this view, making it potentially easier to address the problem.

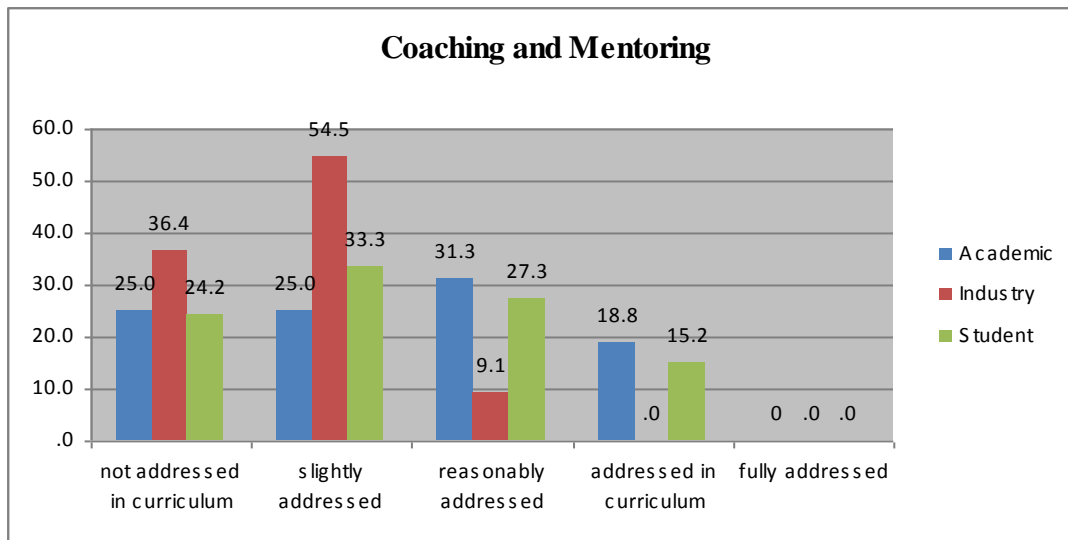


Figure 8: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Coaching and Mentoring”

Meggison and Cluterback (1997) describe mentoring as off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work and thinking. This is achieved through personally developing the individual learner, while coaching focuses on results of the job over a longer term. The coach and the learner explore the problem together and set up opportunities for the learner to try out new skills. Regarding the skill *coaching and mentoring*, 54.5% of managers and 33.3% of students indicated that this skill was slightly addressed. An even number from the academic component regarded this skill as not addressed in the curriculum (25%) as well as slightly addressed (25%). This shows that more participants were experiencing a lack of this skill as compared to 31.3% who indicated that this skill was reasonably addressed. There is a notable difference between the perception of managers compared to academics and students. However, there was consensus among the group that this skill was not fully addressed in the curriculum. As with the previous issue of etiquette and protocol, this graph indicates a shared view that the curriculum does not presently address this skill satisfactorily.

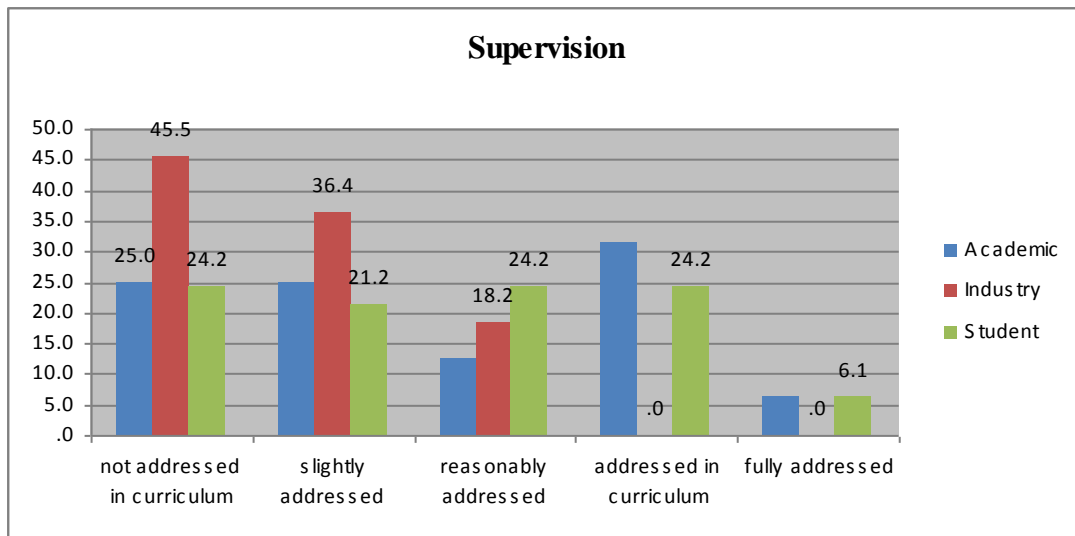


Figure 9: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Supervisory Skills”

Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997) describe supervision as a level which includes those employees in charge of a group of workers but not responsible for the entire department. This skill is important to most of the sub-sectors of the tourism industry. Examples of some of the industries include airlines which require supervisors to take charge of the junior level staff during different shifts. Travel agencies and tour operators have different levels of supervisory staff; categories include senior consultants, followed by intermediate consultants and junior consultants. When the question was asked about *supervisory skills*, 45.5% of managers perceived that this skill was not addressed in the curriculum, whereas just over 30% of academics and 24.2% of students indicated that this skill was addressed in the curriculum. However, the three groups indicate that this skill is not fully addressed in the curriculum, only 6.1% of academics and students felt that this skill was being fully addressed. A lack of this skill especially within the tourism industry creates problems since the structures within most of the tourism industry depend on the availability of competent supervisors.

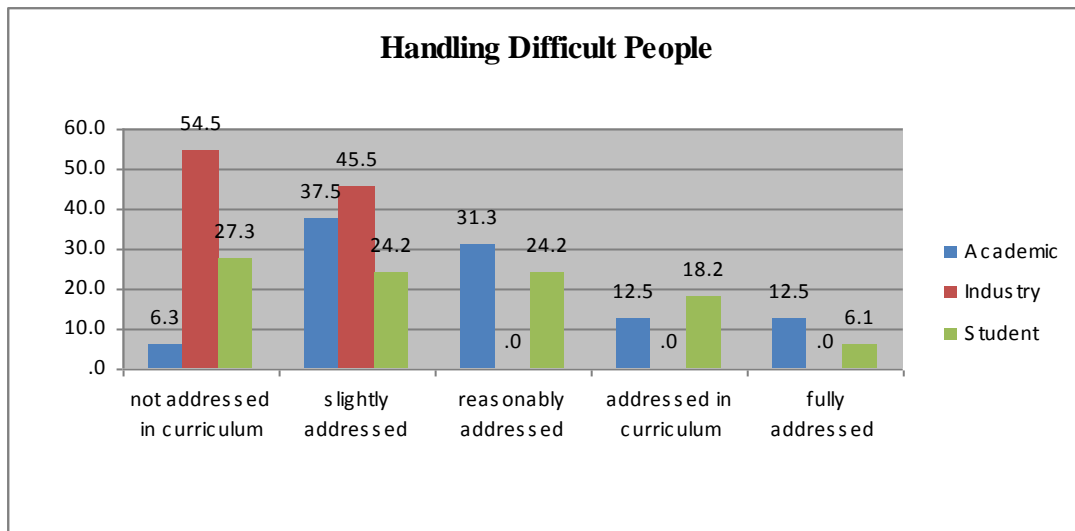


Figure 10: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address the skill “Handling Difficult People”

The ability to handle difficult people is an important skill for tourism employees. A unique characteristic of tourism occupations is the frequency of direct contact between customers and employees. Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2004) provide an example of an airline passenger to demonstrate the series of encounters, beginning with purchasing the ticket from a reservations clerk, checking in luggage at the airport, in-flight service, baggage claim on arrival and the award of frequent flyer credit. Frontline personnel must be able to take responsibility and manage themselves by responding to pressure from customers through tolerance, flexibility, and empathy (Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons, 2004). Regarding the question about *handling difficult people*, over 54.5% of managers rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum. Slightly over 45.5% of academics and 24.2% felt that the skill was slightly addressed. Although the skill of handling difficult people was rated by academics as reasonably addressed (31.3%) and (24.2%) by students, the overall rating for fully addressed was low. Only 12.5% of academics and 6.1% of students felt that this skill was fully addressed in the curriculum. The results show a notable difference especially between managers and academics. Managers felt very strongly that handling difficult people was neither reasonably addressed, nor addressed at all in the curriculum, or at least not fully addressed in the curriculum.

5.3 Perceptions about Business Education Skills

The skills items tested within the business education cluster in this study include research methodology, tourism law, management theories, marketing research methodology, economics, statistics, entrepreneurship, developing business plans, office management, project management, sales skills, marketing, financial management and business management. As mentioned earlier, the researcher only discussed the skills items that showed notable gaps regarding the perceptions of the three groups. There is similarity in the skills tested in this study and the ones proposed by Gee (1997), who states that business skills within tourism programmes should minimally cover: management, marketing, accounting, finance, law and economics. Gee (1997) also explains that although these skills are found within generic courses it must be related to tourism service based businesses.

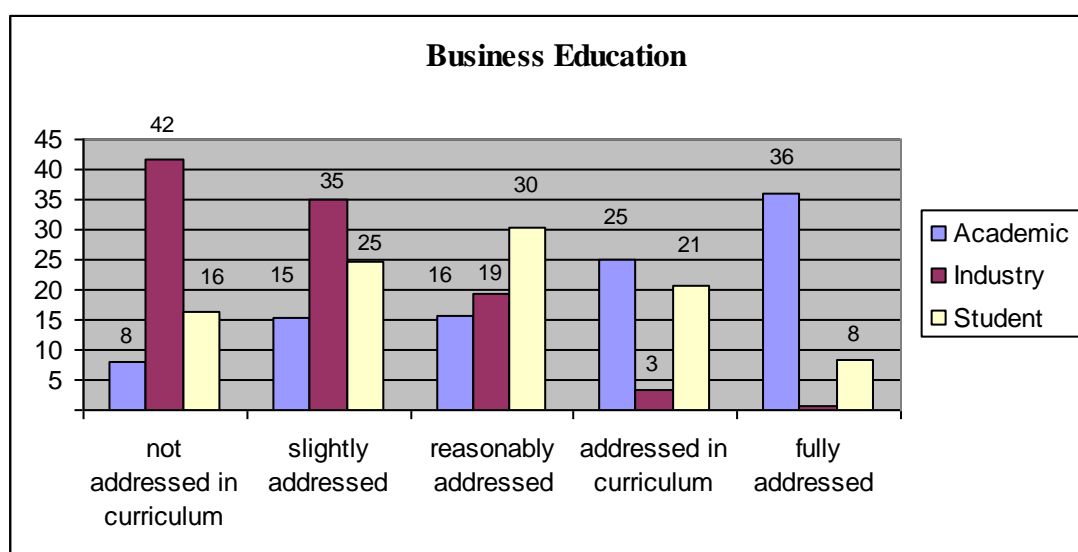


Figure 11: Average result for skills Items tested in business education cluster

Figure 11 provides a visual comparison of mean scores for each of the 14 sub-skills items tested. (*Detailed graphs for the sub-skills items not discussed in the study are available in Annexure H.*) To determine whether or not notable differences exist between the evaluations of managers, educators and graduate employees (students), the researcher compared the ratings of the three groups in relation to each skill to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the tourism curriculum. From

the 14 skills items tested, 42% of the managers from the industry component indicated that these skills were not addressed, while only 36% of academics rated this skill as fully addressed and 30% of students rated the business education skills as reasonably addressed in the curriculum. There was no consensus among the three groups as less than 1% of managers and as little as 8% of students felt that business education skills were fully addressed in the curriculum. A closer comparison of the individual assessments of the business education sub-skills by all three groups revealed several notable differences. This difference in perceptions in the individual sub-sector skills will be discussed below.

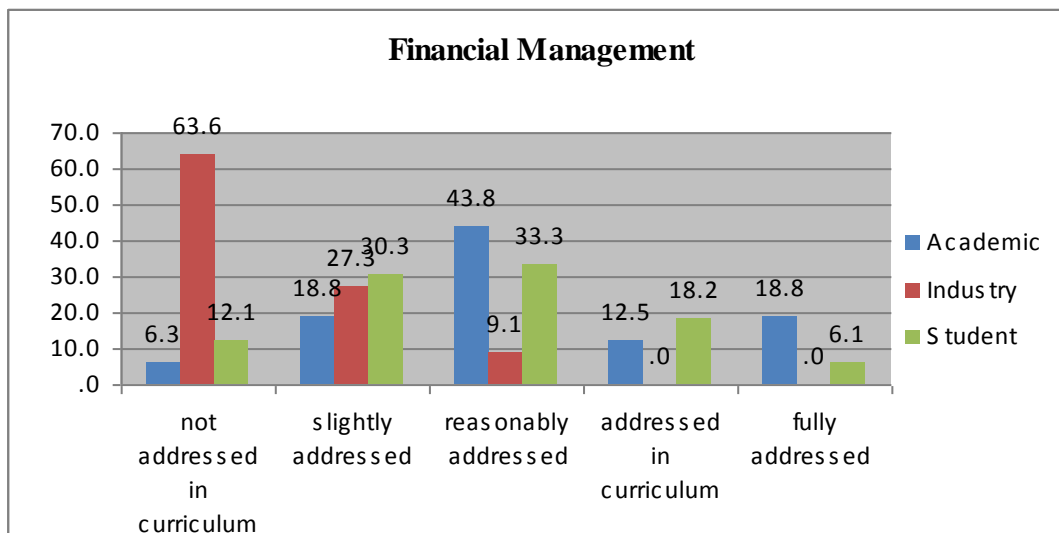


Figure 12: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Financial Management”

Financial management is concerned with raising, using, and investing financial capital (Harrington, 2007). According to George (2007), tourism managers should be well versed in the use of financial planning as this assists organisations to compete effectively against other global players in the tourism industry. When the question about *financial management* was asked, 63.6% of managers indicated that this skill was not addressed in the curriculum, while 43.8% of academics and 33.3% of students felt that financial management was reasonably addressed in the curriculum. However, less than 12.5% of academics indicated that this skill was addressed in the curriculum and only 6.1% of students and no managers rated financial management as fully

addressed in the curriculum. There were notable differences in the perceptions of all three groups.

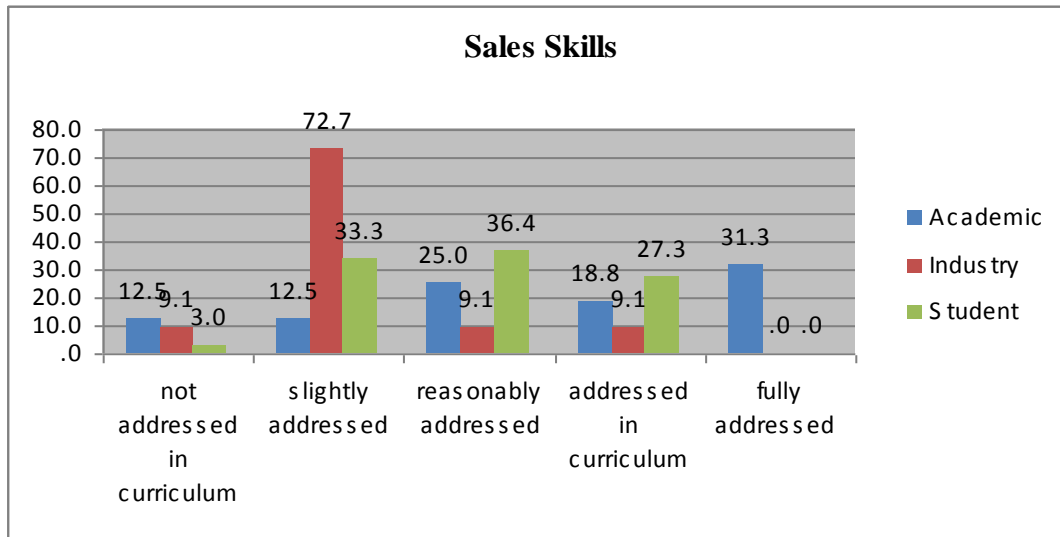


Figure 13: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Sales Skills”

Sales skills are important for travel personnel because travel products are intangible and travel sales personnel are challenged to sell products that cannot be tried or tested although the customer pays in advance. It is also a requirement of sales staff to identify and meet client needs by gaining knowledge about clients and travel products (Trooboff, Schwartz and MacNeill, 1995). When the three groups were asked to rate *sales skills*, over 72.7% of managers rated this skill as slightly addressed in the curriculum, while 36.4% of students felt that it was reasonably addressed and 31.3% of academics indicated that sales skills were fully addressed in the curriculum. However, the perception of managers and students differs from academics in that none of the managers and students felt that this skill was fully addressed.

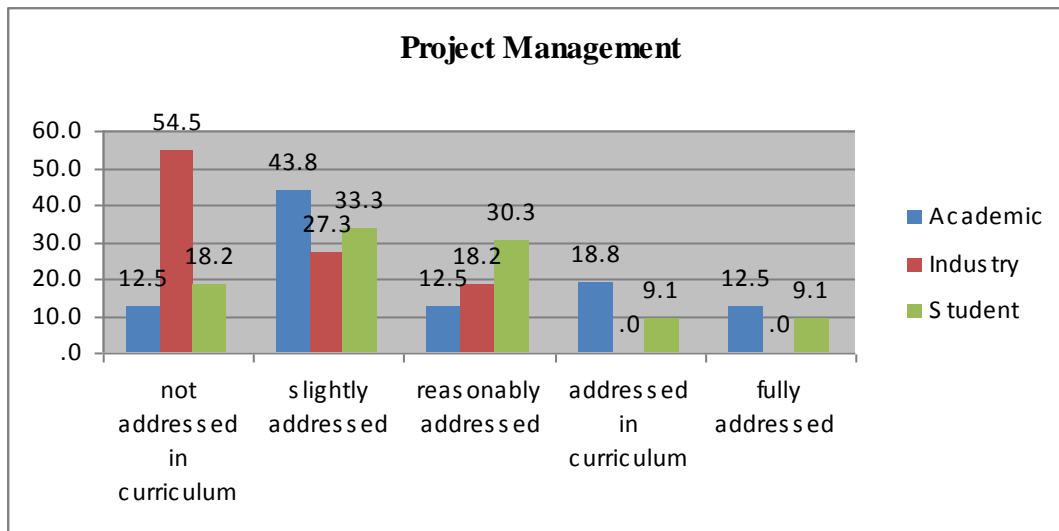


Figure 14: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Project Management”

Project management is described by Fitzsimmons and Fitzsimmons (2004) as the allocation of resources directed towards a specific objective that requires planning and an organised approach. Project planning is important for various sectors of the tourism industry. For example, a tour operator requires a minimum of three years advance planning to negotiate all the elements of the tour with various suppliers. A project leader will be required to negotiate rates and availability of seats for specific dates with airlines, transfer operators, accommodation and attractions suppliers. Regarding the skill *project management*, 54.5% of managers rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum, while 43.8% of academics and 33.3% of students indicated that project management was slightly addressed. Managers perceived that project management was neither addressed nor fully addressed in the curriculum. A very low percentage, almost 12.5% and 9.1% of academics and students respectively, rated this skill as being fully addressed in the curriculum. The low ratings accorded to project management are surprising since most of the tasks within the tourism industry require this skill.

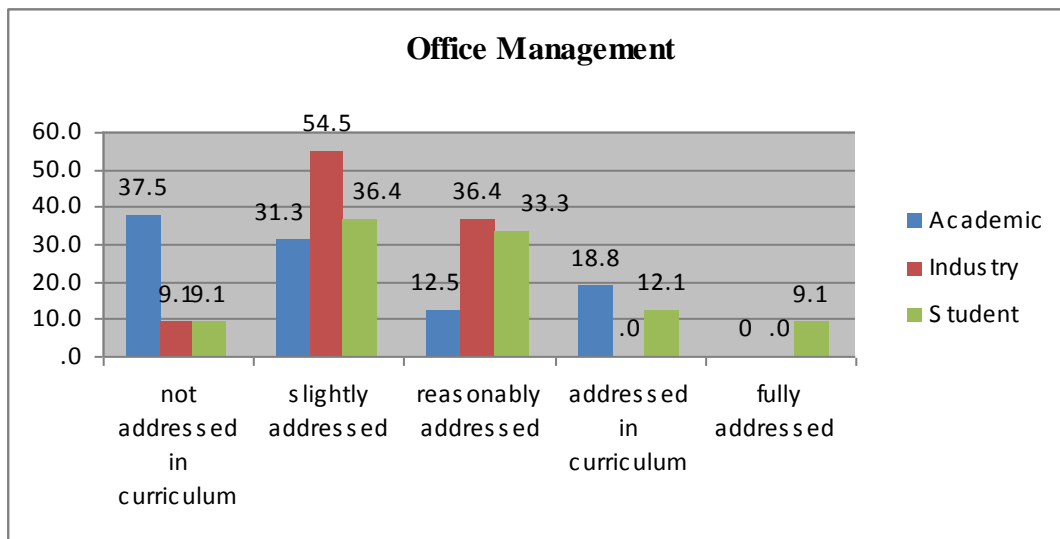


Figure 15: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Office Management”

Tourism jobs require daily administrative duties that may be regarded as office management. For example, tour operations and travel counsellors require the completion of various documents such as booking cards, arranging visas, passports, car hire, accommodation, airline tickets and tours. A booking file needs to be opened for each client and needs to be followed up daily. Therefore it is important that graduates are able to manage themselves in an office environment once employed. Regarding the question about *office management*, 54.5% of managers and 36.4% of students rated this skill as slightly addressed in the curriculum, while 37.5% of academics indicated that office management was not addressed in the curriculum. There was consensus among academics and managers that this skill was not fully addressed in the curriculum.

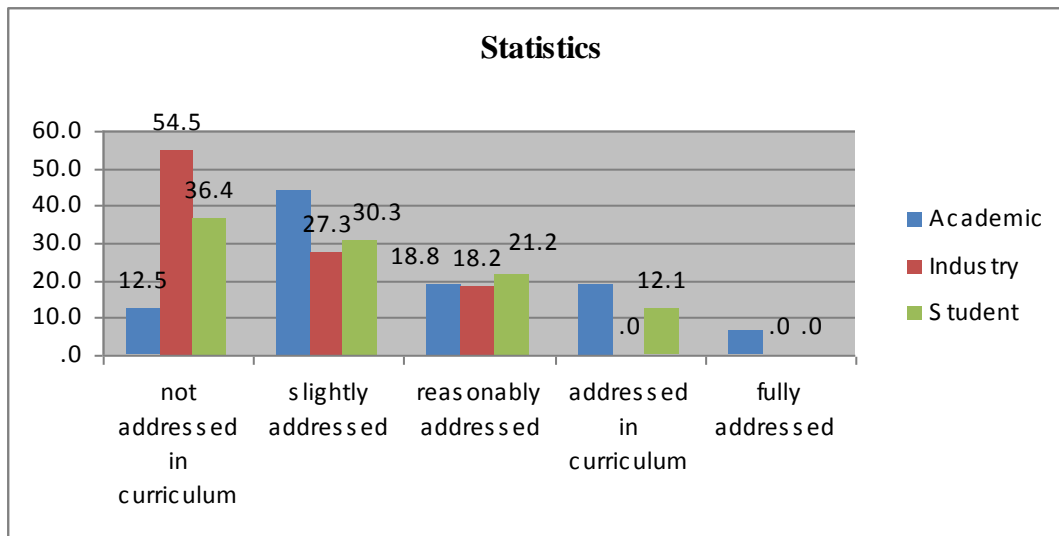


Figure 16: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Statistics”

Buglear (2000) explains that travel and tourism products are luxury goods and services that are purchased from discretionary income and that demand for them are sensitive to consumer confidence and taste. Companies need to respond to changing markets, otherwise they could be out of business, and at the same time organisations need to anticipate the consequences for their operations by studying their markets and monitoring their operations by gathering numerical facts or statistics (Buglear, 2000). When the question was asked about the skill *statistics*, 54.5% of managers and 36.4% of students rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum. Only 18% of academics indicated that statistics was addressed in the curriculum while less than 6% indicated that this skill was fully addressed. There was consensus between managers and students that statistics was not fully addressed in the curriculum. This finding is interesting in light of the low ratings for this skill item. All three groups believe that this component receives inadequate coverage in the tourism curriculum. Knowledge of statistics is essential for tourism organisations to understand the different markets in terms of demographics, affordability, interests, foreign tourist arrivals, local citizens travelling abroad, length of stay and average spending.

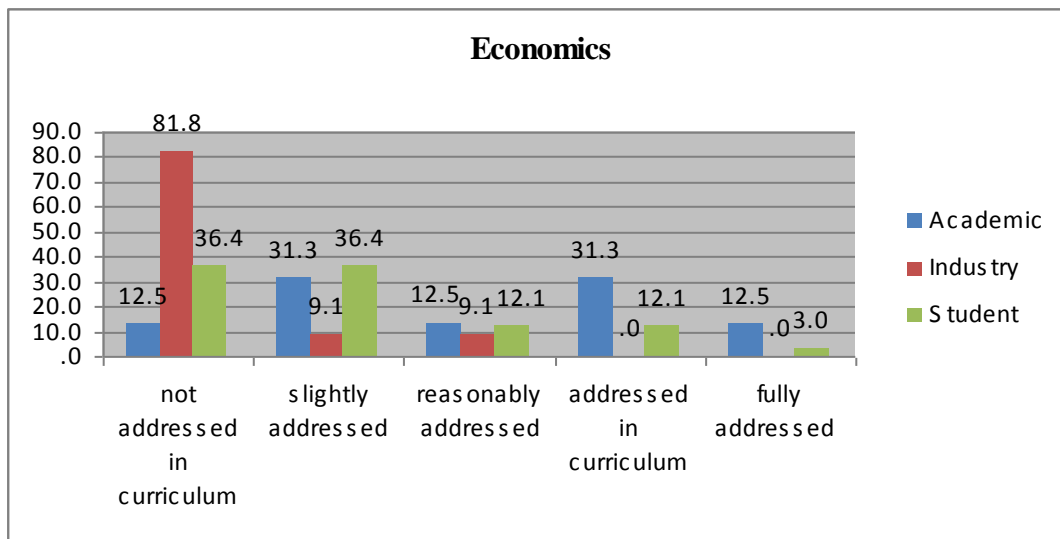


Figure 17: The extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Economics”

Chon and Sparrowe (2000) define economics as the “science relating to the production, distribution, and use of goods and services”. Bull (1995) explains that economics plays a role in planning, management and marketing in travel and tourism organisations and destinations. The skill *economics* showed notable differences among the three groups. Over 81.8% of managers rated economics as not addressed in the curriculum. Only 31.3% of academics indicated economics as addressed in the curriculum. Only 36.4% of students rated this skill as slightly addressed and 3% of students viewed economics as fully addressed in the curriculum. The overall perceptions show varying differences among the three groups. According to Chon and Sparrowe (2000), travel and tourism activities are classified as luxury activities and are first to be cut from tight budgets. This obviously affects local and international tourism businesses. Again it is surprising that this skill is not adequately covered in the tourism curriculum.

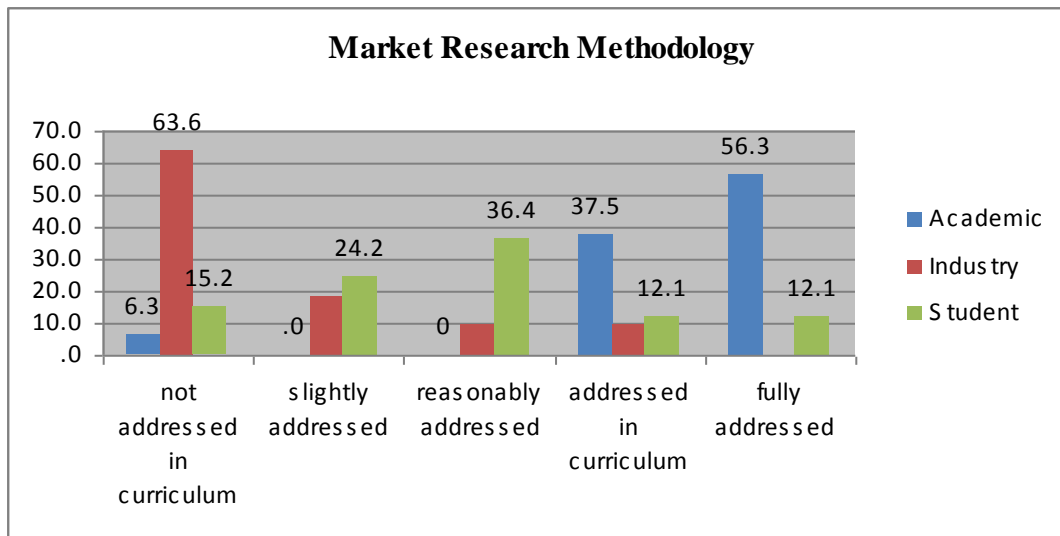


Figure 18: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address the skill “Marketing Research Methodology”

It is important for tourism intermediaries and suppliers to understand their target markets and to avoid spending large amounts of money without proper research. According to George (2007), marketing research assists in gathering and analysing information and data about customers and markets and this information is essential for managers to understand the markets they wish to serve. In the skill of *marketing research methodology* about 63.6% of managers rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum, in comparison 56.3% of academics indicated marketing research methodology as fully addressed while 36.4% of students rated this skill as reasonably addressed. There is a gap of 7.30% between the perception of managers and educators and a percentage gap of 19.9% between educators and students. The differences in the perception of the three groups are very significant. The perception of fully addressed by academics may be informed by the different concentration of their programmes and the qualifications they offer. In this study academics participated from Universities of Technology, who mainly offer tourism diplomas and may not cover marketing from a research perspective, while Traditional Universities may offer this skill at a degree level. The perception from industry of not fully addressed may be informed by employing a mix of diploma and university graduates who may or may not have covered this skill in their qualification.

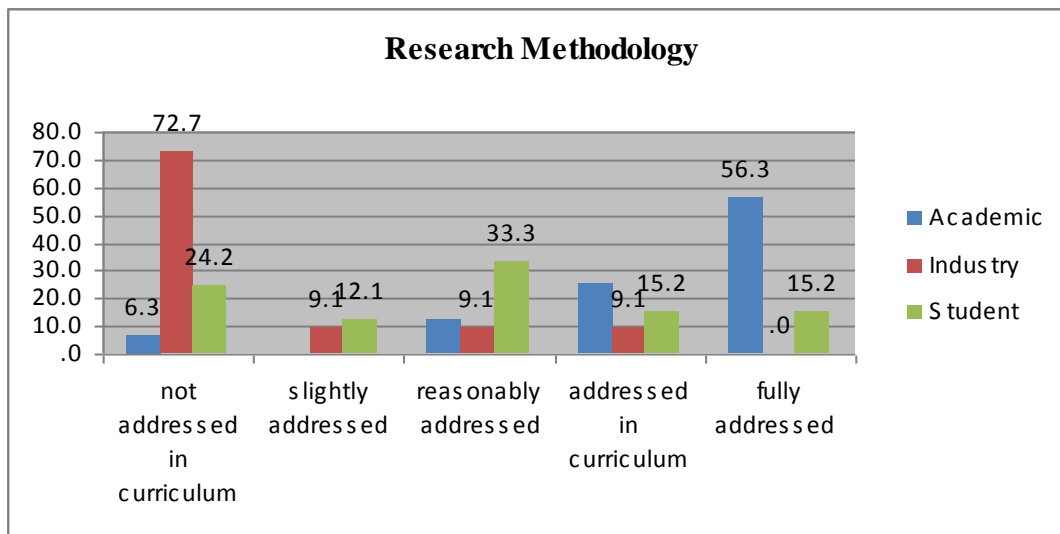


Figure 19: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Research Methodology”

As with marketing research, research methodology is a skill one acquires that assists in undertaking empirical research in different fields of study. Regarding the question about *research methodology*, 72.7% of managers rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum, while 56.3% of academics felt that this skill was fully addressed and only 33.3% of students indicated that research methodology was reasonably addressed in the curriculum. The results show notable differences among the perceptions of the three groups in terms of addressing this skill. The possible difference in opinion of managers and academics could be that the academic component felt satisfied that research methodology was taught and examined adequately in terms of the academic requirements of the university but graduates may lack the ability to apply the research methodology skills in industry. Another problem can be attributed to students who graduate with a diploma from the Universities of Technology, since research methodology is only offered at Bachelor of Technology level and not at diploma level.

5.3 Perceptions about Tourism Specific Education Skills

The tourism industry differs considerably in terms of size and operations (Cooper, Westlake and Shepherd, 1996). This diversity has implications for curriculum development in terms of generic or industry specific programmes. It is difficult to predict which specific skills should be incorporated within a curriculum. According to Cooper *et al.* (1996), difficulty exists in developing links with one sector of the tourism industry without alienating the needs of another. However, these skills are essential to close the divisions between generic courses and specific courses. Tourism specific education should incorporate skills that are closely related to the daily operations of the industry. This study tested the following skills items: ticketing and fares, geographical knowledge, development of tourism packages, product development, knowledge of eco resources, environmental legislation and legal frameworks, narration and interpretation skills, environmental assessments, site guiding, tourism development, hospitality operations and knowledge of outbound tourism attractions. As mentioned earlier, the researcher only discussed skills items that have notable gaps between the perceptions of the three groups.

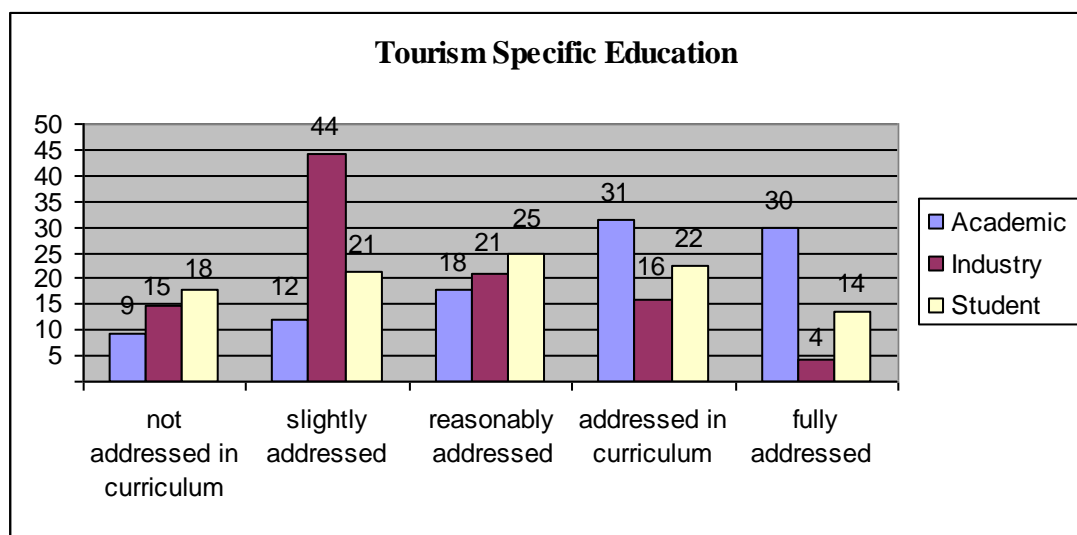


Figure 20: Average result for skills items tested in tourism specific education cluster

Figure 20 provides a visual comparison of mean scores for each of the twelve sub-skills items tested. (Detailed graphs for the sub-skills items not discussed in the study are available in Annexure I.) To determine whether or not notable differences exist

between managers, educators and graduate employees (students), the researcher compared the ratings of the three groups in relation to each skill to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the tourism curriculum. From the 12 skills items tested 44% of the managers from the industry component rated that these skills were slightly addressed, while 31% of academics and 22% of students rated tourism specific skills as addressed in the curriculum. Overall a closer comparison of the individual sub-skills that was listed under tourism specific skills indicated some similarity by all three groups. However, some of the opposing perceptions will be discussed below.

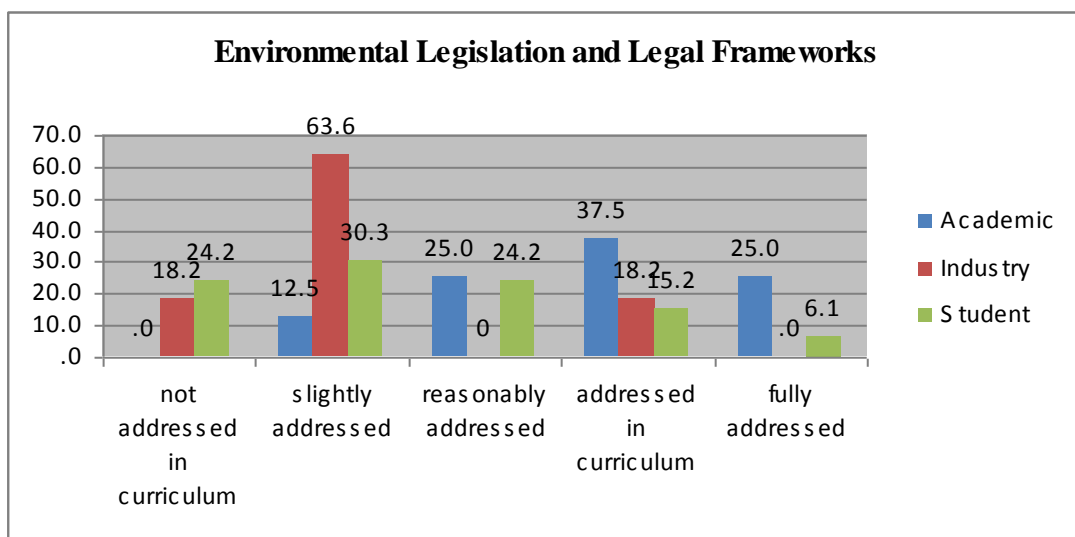


Figure 21: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address” Environmental Legislation and Legal Frameworks”

Environmental legislation and legal frameworks in this study focus on ecotourism. Ecotourism according to Myburgh and Saayman (2002) is gaining popularity at a time of growing environmental degradation and a worldwide threat to nature conservation. It is for similar reasons that environmental legislation and legal framework skills need to be incorporated into tourism curricula. In South Africa responsible guidelines were developed between 2001 and 2002 to provide national guidance and indicators to determine the progress towards the responsible tourism principles included in the 1996 White Paper (Spenceley, Goodwin and Maynard, 2004). When the question was asked regarding the skill *environmental legislation and legal frameworks*, 63% of

managers and 30.3% of students rated this skill as slightly addressed. Only 37.5% of academics indicated that this skill was addressed in the curriculum. Managers and students did not completely support that environmental legislation and legal frameworks were fully addressed in the curriculum. Only 6.1% students and 0% of managers rated this skill as fully addressed. The low rating accorded to this skill is not surprising as fewer students may be studying ecotourism.

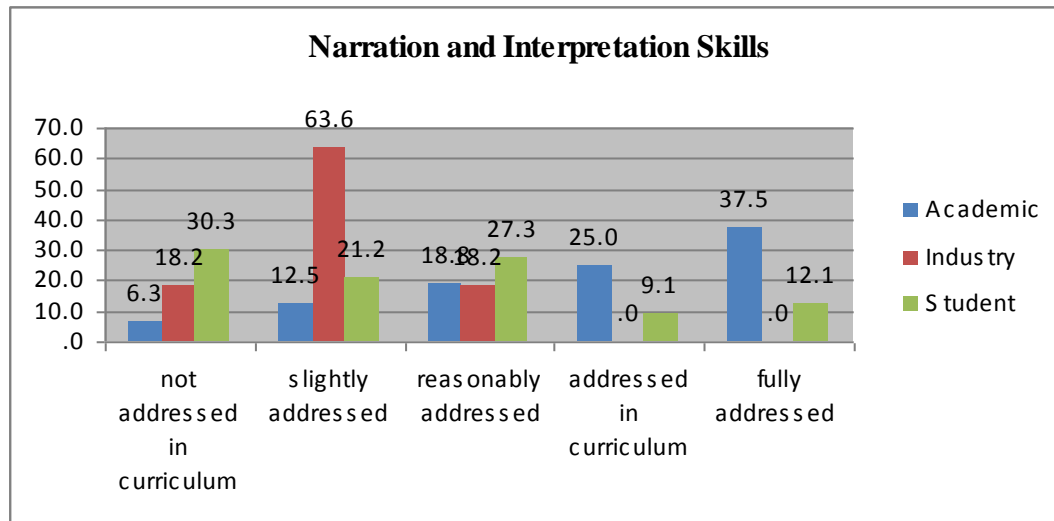


Figure 22: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Narration and Interpretation”

One of the key aims of ecotourism is to promote responsible travel, therefore education and interpretation forms the foundation of this aim (Diamantis, 2004). Furthermore, ecotourism operators are seen to be in a good position to offer environmental and cultural interpretation (Diamantis, 2004). Regarding the question about *narration and interpretation skills*, 63.6% of managers rated this skill as slightly addressed, whereas 37.5% of academics felt that narration and interpretation skills were fully addressed in the curriculum. Only 27.3% of students indicated that this skill was reasonably addressed in the curriculum. The results show varied perceptions among the three groups, 0% of managers rated this skill as being addressed or fully addressed in the curriculum. This skill is important for students studying tourism, as it could provide an entrepreneurial opportunity for graduates who may wish to enhance this skill to operate as independent field guides.

5.4 Perceptions about Tourism Electives

Tourism electives allow students a choice of subjects. This freedom to choose electives may provide the student a foundation for specialisation. It could also prepare students for a particular sub-sector, paving the way for a more informed graduate. Steinberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003) in their study regarding a global tourism curricula propose that tourism institutions choose their own electives to keep curriculum country specific without losing the importance of thinking globally and acting locally. This study tested the following skills items under the tourism elective education cluster: sports tourism, event management, lodge/guest house management, resort management, hotel management, tour operating business, visitor attraction management, destination management, conference planning, destination marketing, nature based tourism, heritage tourism and marine and coastal management. However, the researcher chose to discuss skills items that showed notable gaps only.

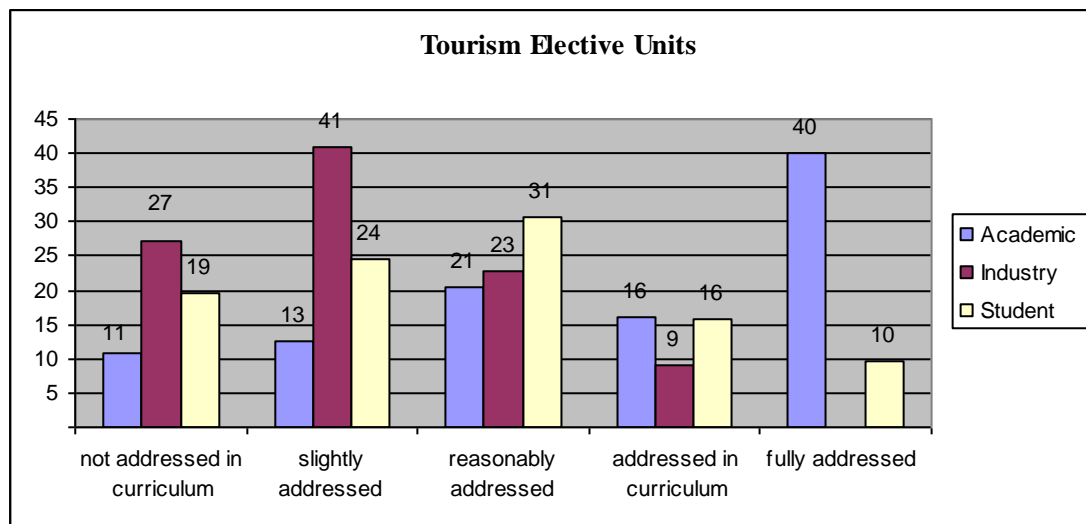


Figure 23: Average result for skills items tested in tourism elective units educational cluster

Figure 23 above provides a visual comparison of mean scores for each of the thirteen sub-skills items tested. *(Detailed graphs for the sub-skills items not discussed in the study are available in the Annexure J.)* To determine whether or not notable differences exist between managers, educators and graduate employees (students), the researcher compared the ratings of the three groups in relation to each skill to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the tourism curriculum. From the 13 skills items tested 41% of the managers from the industry component rated that

these skills were slightly addressed, while 40% of academics indicated that tourism elective units were fully addressed in the curriculum and 31% of students rated tourism elective units as reasonably addressed in the curriculum.

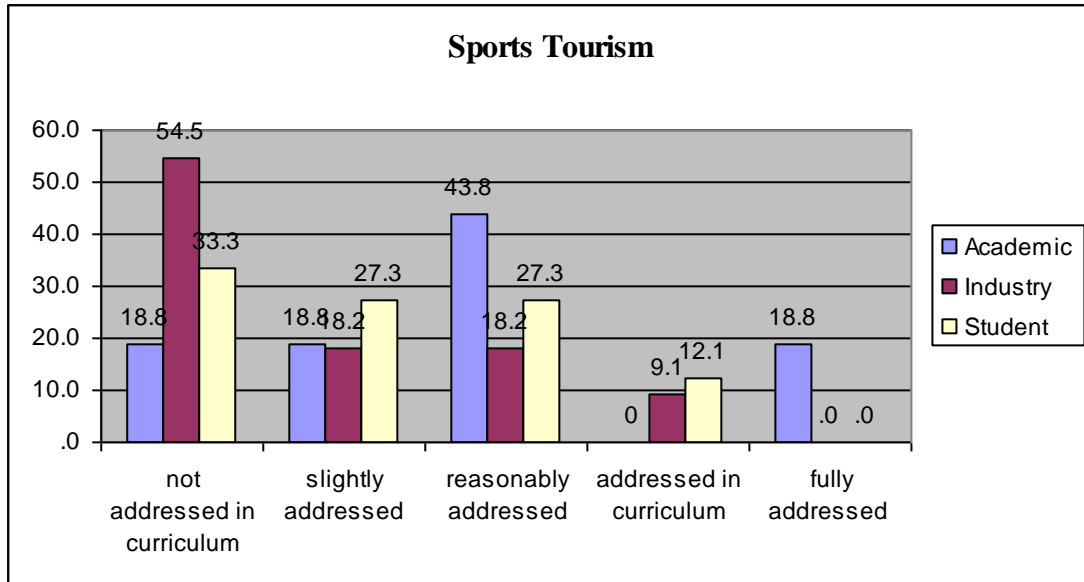


Figure 24: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Sports Tourism”

International sporting events are a major boom to the tourism industry. They create direct and indirect employment for the host country. Sporting events also promote local and international investments for infrastructural developments. According to Hinch and Higham (2004), sport tourism justifies scholarly attention as new insights can be gained by focusing on sport and tourism. According to them this approach offers the opportunity to examine untested assumptions, improve professional practice and improve information between sport and tourism managers. When the question about *sports tourism* was asked, 54.5% of managers indicated that this skill was not addressed in the curriculum, while 43.8% of academics and 27.3% of students rated sports tourism as reasonably addressed in the curriculum. However, there was consensus between managers and students that sports tourism was not fully addressed in the curriculum. They both rated 0% for the skill sports tourism implying that it was not fully addressed in the curriculum. The ratings accorded for this skill is surprising, especially in a South African context after winning the bid to host the world cup

soccer event. It is surprising that this skill has not been adequately addressed in the tourism curriculum, except in the form of a case study for classroom discussion.

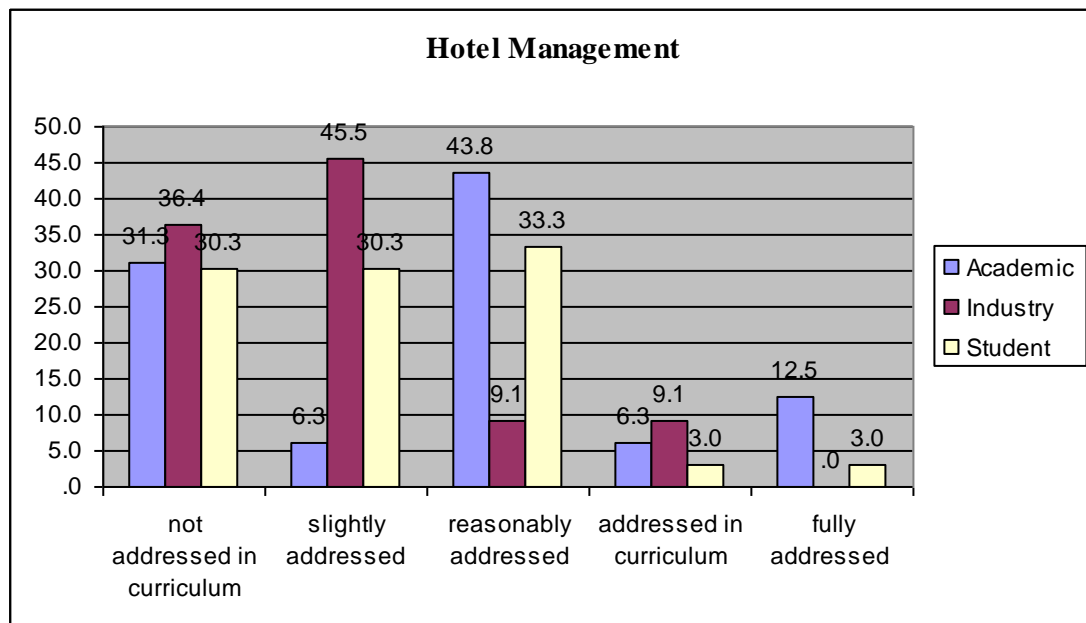


Figure 25: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Hotel Management”

Hotel management can be classified into two categories: administration department, or back of the house, and service departments, or front of the house (Chon and Sparrowe, 2004). The hotel industry requires managers with specific skills to manage different departments. The hotel management structure includes: general manager, food and beverage manager, catering manager, restaurant manager, reservation manager, housekeeping manager, front office manager, and sales manager and marketing manager (Chon and Sparrowe, 2004). Regarding the question on *hotel management*, 45.5% of managers indicated that this skill was slightly addressed in the curriculum, while 36.4% rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum, and a very low percentage of 9.1% indicated that the skill was addressed and no managers rated this skill as fully addressed; Slightly over 43.8% of academics rated this skill as reasonably addressed, however, 31.3% indicated it is not addressed and only 6.3% felt that it was addressed in the curriculum. Although 33.3% of students rated hotel management as reasonably addressed and 30.3% indicated that it was slightly addressed, more than 30.3% rated this skill as not addressed in the curriculum. To support the perceptions of managers and students only, 3% of students rated this skill

as fully addressed in the curriculum. The hotel sector is the largest employer within the tourism sector (Howell, 1993). It is surprising that this skill is not adequately addressed in the tourism curriculum.

5.5 Perceptions about Technical Training

Four sub skills were tested under the technical training educational cluster: internet, email, information and communication technology, and industry driven courses. This study discussed industry driven courses only as this is the only skill that shows the most gaps in terms of the perceptions of the three groups. According to Singh, Singh and Singh (2006), information technologies are instrumental in re-engineering of the travel and tourism business. According to them the effective use of related technologies is fundamental to the tourism sector of the 21st century.

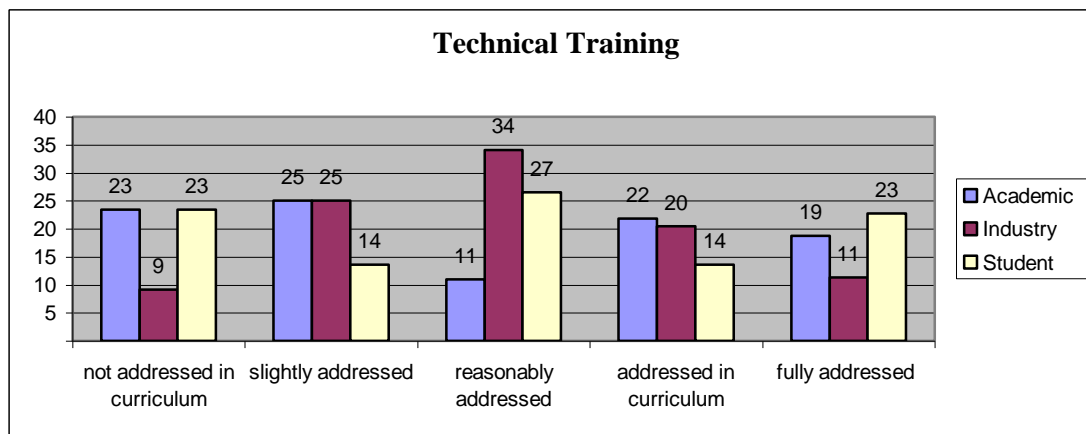


Figure 26: Average results tested for technical training educational cluster

Figure 26 provides a visual comparison of mean scores for each of the four sub-skills items tested. (*Detailed graphs for the sub-skills items not discussed in the study are available in Annexure K.*) To determine whether or not notable differences exist between managers, educators and graduate employees (students), the researcher compared the ratings of the three groups in relation to each skill to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the tourism curriculum. From the four skills item tested 34% of the managers from the industry component rated these skills as reasonably addressed, while 25% of academics rated this skill as slightly addressed and 27% of students indicated that technical training was reasonably addressed in the curriculum. Overall a closer comparison of the individual sub-skills that were listed

under tourism technical training indicated some similarity by all three groups in terms of being considered adequately covered within the tourism curriculum.

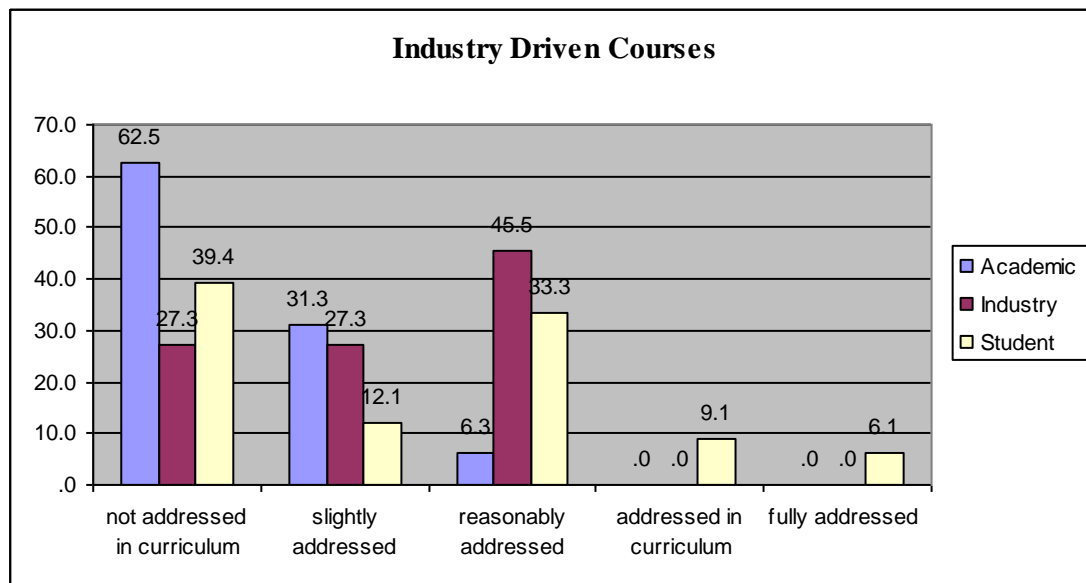


Figure 27: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Industry Driven Courses”

Industry driven courses are important and may be incorporated within the tourism curriculum and offered as electives. Choosing industry driven courses as electives may encourage students to prepare themselves for a particular industry. When the question was asked about *industry driven courses*, over 62.5% of academics and 39.4% of students indicated that this skill was not addressed in the curriculum, while 45.5% of managers rated industry driven courses as reasonably covered. The ratings accorded to this skill is a clear indication that it is not adequately covered in the tourism curriculum. This is not surprising, because many students who graduate with tourism qualifications are unsure of the specific industry they will enter. This may be one reason why industry perceives graduate employees as not fully prepared for the industry.

5.6 Perceptions about Personal Skills

Personal skills are essential for staff dealing with customers on a daily basis; this is a common feature within the tourism industry. According to Rowe, Smith and Borein (2002), personal skills cannot be taught through a single training session but are gradually acquired through work experience. This study tested the following personal skills: problem solving skills, decision making, analytical skills, foreign language skills and professionalism. The researcher chose to discuss problem solving skills and foreign language skills only as these skills showed a notable gap between the perceptions of the two groups.

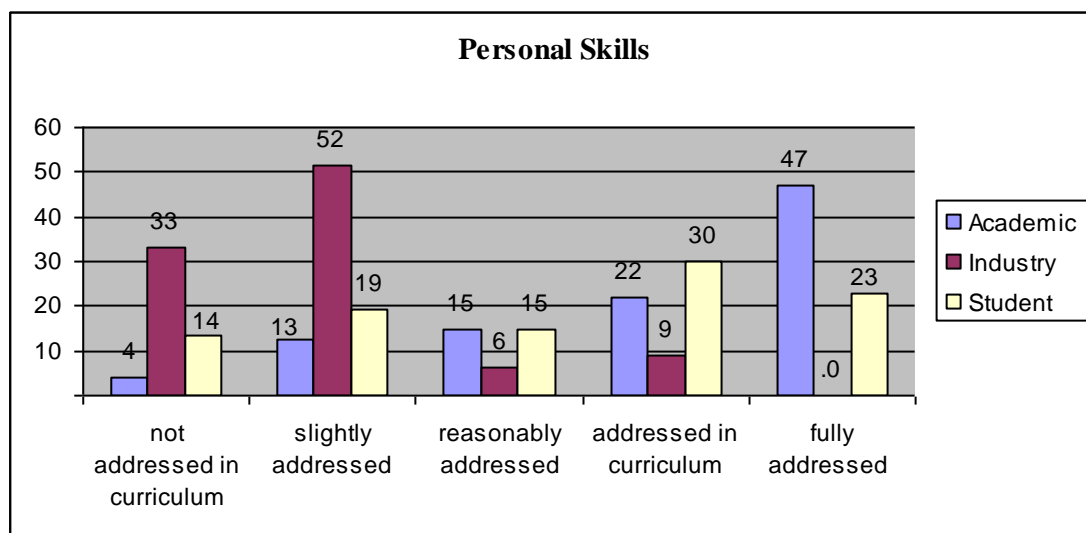


Figure 28: Average result of skills items tested for personal skills educational cluster

Figure 28 provides a visual comparison of mean scores for each of the five sub-skills items tested. *(Detailed graphs for the sub-skills items not discussed in the study are available in the Annexure L.)* To determine whether or not notable differences exist between managers, educators and graduate employees (students), the researcher compared the ratings of the three groups in relation to each skill to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the tourism curriculum. From the five skills items tested 52% of the managers from the industry component rated these skills as slightly addressed, while 47% of academics indicated that personal skills were fully addressed in the curriculum, while 30% of students rated personal skills as addressed in the curriculum. Overall a closer comparison of the individual sub-skills that were

listed under personal skills shows some similarity among all three groups. Two of the sub-skills with opposing perceptions between the three groups will be discussed below.

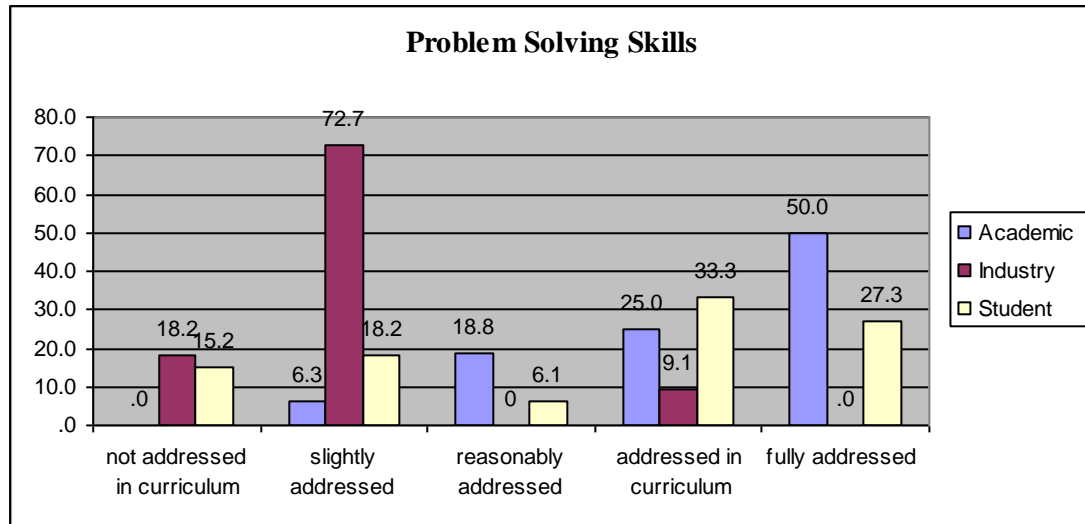


Figure 29: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Personal Skills”

It is essential that tourism staff acquire problem solving skills as they will often be confronted with various challenges, especially those who are in direct contact with customers. For example, staff employed with airlines may have to deal with passengers when flights are cancelled due to bad weather or technical reasons. In this case staff will need to be tactful, because a standard operating procedure manual may not cover all the possible answers when one is approached by disgruntled passengers. In such situations the ability to solve problems without constantly seeking advice from supervisors will be necessary. It may be necessary for airline reservation staff to find alternate flights for passenger connecting with international flights. When the question was asked about *problem solving skills*, 72.7% of managers indicated that this skill was slightly addressed in the curriculum, while 50% of the academics rated problem solving skills as fully addressed. Only 33.3% of students felt that the skill was addressed in the curriculum. There is a significant difference of 27.7% between industry managers’ perception compared to academics and a difference of 39.4% between managers’ perception compared to students in terms of the extent to which problem solving skills are addressed in the curriculum. It is surprising that this skill is

not adequately addressed in the tourism curriculum. Graduate employees will be required to solve problems when employed in the tourism industry.

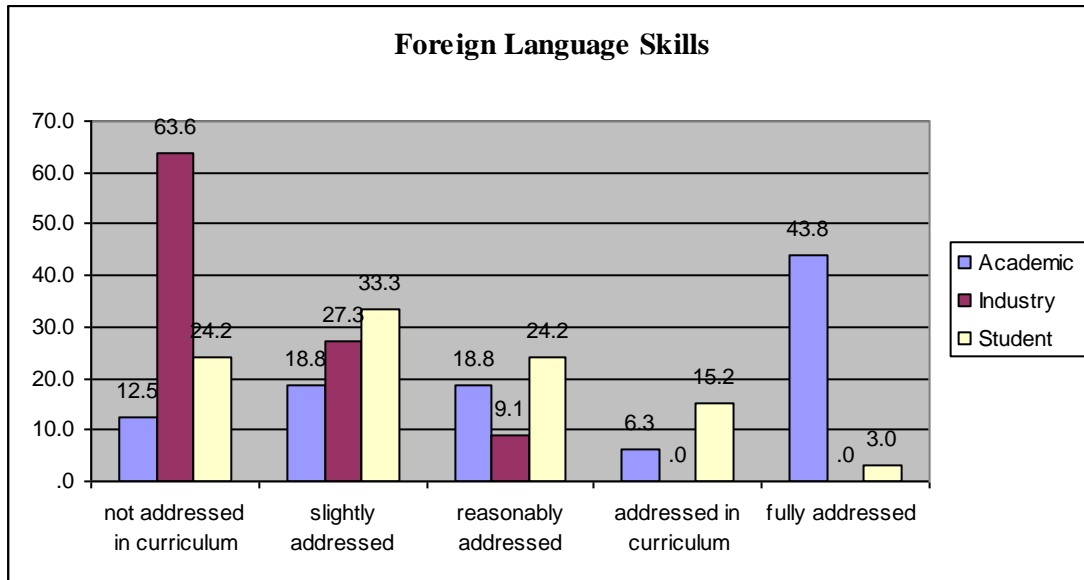


Figure 30: Extent to which curriculum is perceived to address “Foreign Language Skills”

According to Davidson (1997), countries that wish to attract overseas visitors should value foreign language skills. Language barriers may pose challenges for tourists and front line personnel who lack this skill. Regarding the question on foreign language skills, 63.6% of academics indicated that foreign skills are not addressed in the curriculum, while 43.8% of academics rated this skill as fully addressed. Overall only a slight percentage 6.3% of academics felt that the skill was addressed in the curriculum and 3% of students and no managers supported that foreign language skills were fully addressed in the curriculum.

5.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the quantitative results of the critical skills as rated by academics, managers and graduate employees (alumni). A comparison of mean scores for each of the sub-skills items was tested to determine whether or not notable differences exist between managers, educators and graduate employees (students).

The researcher compared the ratings of the three groups in relation to each skill to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the tourism curriculum. The researcher further chose to discuss skills items that showed significant differences between the three groups.

The results showed significant differences among the perceptions of the three groups for most of the sub-skills. Human Resources, Business Education Skills and Personal Skills presented most differences among the groups, while Tourism Elective Units and Tourism Specific Education seemed to be less significantly different in terms of the groups' perceptions. The critical skill that elicited consensus among the three groups was Technical Training which was considered adequately addressed. A notable observation in the perceptions of the three groups for the majority of the skills items was the recurring rating of "not fully addressed in the curriculum."

Further examinations of the peaks of the average result (*peak is the highest average taken of a particular bar graph Annexure M.*) of the individual subsector skills from the graphs reveal the following information: from the 22 skills items discussed in this study 11 of the skills items were perceived by managers as not addressed in the curriculum and a further ten skills items were perceived by managers to be slightly addressed in the curriculum. This is a key finding within the study and is consistent with the views of other researchers cited in this study that education and industry need to work closely when designing tourism curricula. This working relationship will ensure that tourism curricula are responsive to the needs of industry.

Two skills rated by academics peak (*this is the highest average taken of a particular bar graph Annexure M.*) from the analysis, one being fully addressed (leadership and management) and the other not being fully addressed (industry driven courses). The details are available in Annexure M. This is a surprising result, it would be expected that academics confidently rate more skills as fully addressed.

The fundamental differences in perception between the managers and educators could be attributed to the generic nature of the tourism curriculum and the fact that tourism is multidisciplinary by nature. Education is not preparing graduates for a specific sector, which is why managers may perceive graduate employees as not being

adequately prepared. For example, if a graduate was being prepared specifically for an airline job and completed courses such as fares and ticketing, airline reservations systems and departure control, together with customer and personal skills, such a graduate may be rated as adequately prepared. As an evolving phenomenon tourism is made up of subjects from many other disciplines. Tourism is also dynamic by nature and covers several topics for discussion because it is spread across many subsectors, therefore academics are being challenged to touch on these skills within limited time frames and are thus not able to hone in these skills fully. As previously indicated, industry is represented as a unified whole in this study and the disparate nature of variance within industry should not be forgotten. The possible conclusions will be covered in more detail in the next chapter, when the findings, conclusions and recommendations are discussed.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the conclusions of the research findings and discussions in relation to gaps between tourism curricula and industry needs. Recommendations for tourism curriculum improvement and future research are also discussed in this chapter.

6.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to identify whether the provision of higher education travel and tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal. Ultimately, the research sought to evaluate any distinguishable skill gaps within the tourism curriculum as perceived by tourism educators at public higher education institutions, industry managers who employ these graduates and graduate employees from these institutions.

The study made use of the “triangulation approach”. Section A and C of the questionnaire (Annexures D, E, F) addressed the qualitative questions and Section B of the questionnaire addressed the quantitative questions.

The study addressed the following selected main themes of curriculum appropriateness:

- Industry Perceptions of the Tourism Curriculum
- Academic Perceptions of the Tourism Curriculum
- Graduates’ Perception of the Tourism Curriculum
- Perceptions about sectors of Graduate Occupations
- Tourism Curriculum Development and Improvement Process

Section B of the questionnaire addressed skills items:

Academics, Managers and Graduates were asked to rate sixty skills items as being either not addressed in the curriculum or fully addressed in the curriculum using a Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, where 1 referred to “not addressed in curriculum” and 5 equals “fully addressed in curriculum.”

Section C of the questionnaire – General

- Participants were required to comment on tourism curricula and the needs of industry. The information from this section was incorporated into the qualitative discussions of section A.

6.3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section will be discussed in two parts: section A will discuss the themes and section B will discuss the skills items rated by the three groups.

6.3.1 RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

The first objective was **to examine industry perceptions of the tourism curriculum**. A majority of managers from the tourism industry expressed dissatisfaction with the tourism curriculum offered at higher education institutions. Managers perceived that the curriculum was not meeting the industry’s need. They believe a great deal of work is required to bridge the gaps between education and industry. Similar views were shared by eight of the eleven respondents from industry. Only one of the managers was completely satisfied, while the other two felt that they were “mostly” satisfied, however, they did recommend improvements. The results showed that closer collaboration is needed by industry and education to close these gaps. The findings are consistent with Cooper, Shepard and Westlake (1996), Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1997), and Riley, Ladkin and Szivas (2002). In their studies, the concerns are the diversity that exists in the tourism industry, its

fragmented nature and the lack of agreement between government, industry and academics as to what constitutes a tourism industry, thus creating difficulty in respect of training and education. Another finding was that most of the managers rated the curriculum to be over theoretical. This point was consistent with Cooper *et al.* (1997), who found that employers emphasise the student's practical skills in the expectation that these be general and transferable, whilst educators tend to create tourism-oriented materials of a more theoretical nature.

Objective two of this study was **to examine academics' perception of the tourism curriculum**. There were mixed perceptions among the academics. Ten of the academics perceived that the tourism curriculum meets industry needs while six academics indicated that they were partially satisfied and therefore recommended that closer collaboration with industry was essential when designing curriculum. The findings in this study are consistent with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Human Resource Report South Africa (DEAT, 2008) that proposes that education and industry must join forces to promote and sustain the relevance of training. The report also encourages partnerships between industry, educators and trainers to promote transformation with regard to access to industry relevant content and industry's participation to enhance the design and delivery of educational programmes (tourism HRD SA). Also, Steinberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003) found that a curriculum should be based on the expressed needs of the industry as opposed to the judgements of tourism educators. They further explain that this approach will better meet with the industry needs.

Objective three of the study was **to examine the graduates' perception of the tourism curriculum**. It was found that many of the graduate employees perceived that their tourism course was too general and recommended that it should be more industry related. Graduates also perceived the tourism programmes offered by higher education institutions as too theoretical. The graduate perceptions were cross checked against the perceptions of industry managers and the results showed that both graduates and managers shared similar perceptions. This result could be explained in terms of the views of Cooper *et al.* (1997). In their study, they explain that constructing a tourism education system needs to take into account the diversity and multiplicity of players involved and they explain that a single perspective approach

will not be successful. According to them, the design of curricula contents must match up to the expectations of education recipients, employers and educational professionals. The findings of this study coincide with those mentioned in the literature. In fact, an earlier study conducted by Jenkins (1997) found that little attention was given to the needs of companies and organisations supplying tourism services by pioneering institutions. According to Jenkins (1997), this lack of concern by the universities for the industry's needs and the industry's failure to appreciate the difference between tourism education and tourism training promoted misunderstandings. Another challenge industry employers face is the difficulty in judging the quality of different tourism courses because there is no benchmark against which evaluation is made (Jenkins, 1997).

Objective four was **an attempt to identify the sectors of graduate occupations by examining the perceptions of academics and graduate employees**. The results showed that there was little evidence that alumni were being tracked. This point was consistent with Ladkin (2005). In her study, she recommended that tracking alumni provides important information on labour market behaviour and labour mobility. However, a notable observation was tourism graduates being employed as teachers. This was identified by cross checking the jobs graduates occupy by matching the job profile of alumni (collected in the questionnaires) from these institutions. This is a method of cross checking tourism curriculum and tourism occupations and revealed two very important findings. One is tourism students occupying teaching positions and the other being front desk officer and house keeping. Tourism graduates occupying teaching position may open up debates into educational practices in South Africa. Tourism graduates do not have teaching diplomas. One reason for tourism students occupying teaching positions may come as a result of the recent introduction of tourism in the secondary schools, and current qualified teachers lacking tourism content or discipline knowledge. The cross checking of curriculum and job occupations reveals that diploma and degree students occupying positions as front desk officer and house keeping positions leaves one with questions as to whether graduates from Further Education and Training (FET) colleges may be equally or better prepared for such positions. A concern is diploma/degree students spending three to four years studying and occupying a position that may require less preparation time for industry. This point is consistent with Petrova and Mason (2004).

In their study they found that travel and tourism graduates are challenged in securing jobs in the travel and tourism industry, as their degrees have low recognition among travel and tourism employers. These results can also be confirmed with the study conducted by Baum (1993) relating to human resources in the tourism industry. In his study, Baum explains that the nature of the tourism industry results in a wide range of jobs in terms of their technical demands, their educational requirements, their location, their conditions and the kind of person that will be attracted to employment in them. He further maintains that it is not possible to list all the employment categories within a typical tourism industry and it is this diversity that cannot be easily described that creates difficulty in identifying training needs. Referring to Riley, Ladkin and Szivas (2002), they unanimously agree that diversity exists in the tourism industry and therefore suggest that a framework be established to express both differences and similarities within the diverse range of occupations and operating units. Cooper, Fayos-Sola, Hawkins and Spivack (1996) also confirm these findings. In their study regarding quality in tourism training and education, they explain that the rise in tourism demand in many countries encouraged uncoordinated development initiatives including education and training that led to fragmentation. They further claim that it is this fragmentation that causes confusion for tourism employers attempting to ascertain what skills have been acquired by those in training, thus representing an obstacle to the students' professional mobility.

Objective five of this study was **to examine the tourism curriculum development and improvement process**. The findings revealed inconsistencies in departments of the same institutions in terms of curriculum review practice. There were several contradictions indicating that departments may not have followed or are not following guiding policies that warrant regular reviews. These findings are consistent with the views of other studies mentioned in the literature. Steinberg, Slabbert and Saayman (2003), in their study regarding a global tourism curriculum emphasise that the tourism curriculum must be periodically reviewed in order to maintain its relevance in a fast changing environment. They further propose that it is imperative that educators constantly monitor the pulse of the industry to keep their programmes responsive to the needs of industry as well as to the expectations of students.

6.3.2 RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

In examining this objective, the average for all the skills items was calculated using (SPSS) to identify meaningful differences between the respondents' perceptions in terms of the critical skills items that was listed under each educational cluster. Academics, Managers and Graduates were asked to rate 60 skills items as being either not addressed in curriculum or fully addressed in curriculum using a Likert scale. The scale ranged from one to five, where one referred to "not addressed in curriculum" and five referred to "fully addressed in curriculum." The critical skills were grouped under the following educational clusters:

- Human resource skills;
- Business education;
- Tourism specific education;
- Tourism elective units;
- Technical training;
- Personal skills.
-

The ratings for the **human resource skills were examined** to determine the extent to which each skill is addressed in the curriculum as perceived by the three groups. From the critical skills items tested the results show that managers from the industry component contended that these skills were slightly addressed, while academics and students felt that these skills were reasonably addressed in the curriculum. (Refer Figure 3.)

The results for the **business education** cluster showed that managers from industry felt that these skills were not addressed in the curriculum, while some academics rated the skills under this cluster as fully addressed. At the same time graduates indicated that the skills were reasonably addressed. There was no consensus among the group in terms of the skills under this cluster as being fully addressed. (Refer Figure 11.)

The findings for **tourism specific education** showed that managers from the industry component felt that the skills items under this cluster were slightly addressed, while

academics and students rated tourism specific skills as addressed in the curriculum. The results showed that students and industry were not convinced that the skills items were fully addressed. (Refer figure 20.)

In examining **tourism elective units**, the results showed that from the 13 sub- skills items tested managers felt that these skills were slightly addressed, while some academics indicated that the skills items under this educational cluster was fully addressed. Students rated tourism elective units as being reasonably addressed in the curriculum. (Refer figure 23).

The findings for **technical training** showed that managers and students felt that technical skills were reasonably addressed, while some academics rated technical training as slightly addressed in the curriculum. A closer comparison of the individual sub-skills under the technical training educational cluster indicated some similarity among the three groups as being addressed in the curriculum. (Refer Figure 26.)

In examining the ratings for the skills items under the educational cluster for **personal skills**, the results showed that managers from the industry component felt that personal skills were slightly addressed, while academics felt differently as they indicated that these skills were fully addressed in the curriculum. A low percentage of students rated personal skills as addressed in the curriculum. (Refer Figure 28.)

A notable observation in the findings among the three groups was the recurring rating of “not fully addressed” in the curriculum. Although all the respondents did not unanimously rate the skills items as not fully addressed in the curriculum, one would expect that the groups should at least agree that most of the skills are fully addressed; however, some respondents from all three groups consistently rated skills items in this column as “not fully addressed” in the curriculum. The overall results showed significant differences among the perceptions of the three groups for most of the sub-skills within the six educational clusters. An examination of the peaks of the average result of the individual subsector skills from the graphs showed that 11 skills items from the 22 skills items discussed in this study was perceived as not addressed in the curriculum and a further ten skills items were perceived as slightly addressed by the managers of the industry component. Two skills items by academics showed a peak

when the graphs were examined. Leadership and Management were rated as fully addressed and Industry Driven Courses were rated as not addressed in the curriculum. (See Annexure M.)

6.4 CONCLUSION

Overall the results of this study indicated that gaps do exist in the tourism curriculum. The findings of the qualitative results showed differences in the perceptions of the three groups in terms of the extent to which the tourism curriculum meets the needs of industry. A majority of managers from the tourism industry expressed dissatisfaction with the tourism curriculum offered at higher education institutions. The overall results of comparative ratings for individual skills items within the educational clusters also showed significant differences among the perceptions of the three groups in terms of how well these were being addressed in the curriculum.

There were mixed perceptions among the academics. Ten academics from a total of 16 perceived that the tourism curriculum meets industry needs while six academics indicated that they were partially satisfied and therefore recommended that closer collaboration with industry was essential when designing curricula. The results showed that there was little evidence that alumni were being tracked. The findings revealed inconsistencies from departments of the same institutions in terms of curriculum review practice. The cross checking of alumni job profiles after graduation revealed that tourism students are being employed as teachers, while the curriculum does not attempt to train teachers for secondary schools.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study indicate that closer collaboration is required between industry, academics and graduate employees when designing the tourism curriculum. The issue of too much theory and far less practical has to be re-examined. Academics and industry must join forces to sustain the relevance of the curriculum and the needs of industry. This must be an ongoing process, with specific aims and time frames to action suggestions for changes. However, these recommendations demand time and resources. It is also a huge challenge that cannot be undertaken in an isolated,

fragmented manner. It is therefore recommended that a national council for tourism education and training be established to drive such a process as also proposed by other researchers cited in this study. It is only when considering the size of the tourism industry, the number of different sub-sectors, its multidisciplinary nature, the number of different disparate education providers, and the number of different courses on offer, that one fully realises the extent of this fragmentation and the dire need for such a council to bring all the stakeholders under one umbrella to solve its problems. Finding solutions should not be confined to educators and industry only, government should also take a lead by providing the platform, funding and necessary resources, since tourism is an important economic activity that creates employment and contributes to the country's gross domestic product.

6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following recommendations for future research are based on the findings of this study:

- In this study the researcher only focused on graduate employees, academics and managers from the province of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). A similar study can be conducted at a national level.
- There needs to be an investigation into the effectiveness of a National Tourism Council for Education and Training in South Africa.
- The progress of tourism graduate employees needs to be identified by checking the strengths and weakness of tourism Higher Education Qualifications that enhance or inhibit this progress.
- Job expectations of tourism students before and after graduation need to be examined.
- A model could be developed and used to balance the onsite practical component of tourism subjects without solely depending on work integrated learning.
- A model could be developed and used to maximise the full potential of work integrated learning.

6.7 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This study has identified that there are differences between the perceptions of education providers, managers and graduate employees in terms of the gaps that exist in the tourism curriculum. It is hoped that this study contributes to an understanding of the challenges that are necessary to bridge the gaps in perception between these groups to maximise the full potential of learning so that industry can have a quality workforce in the future.

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ANNEXURE A Consent Letter to Programme Director and Academics

Dear Programme Director (HEAD of Department) and Tourism Academics

I am undertaking a Masters in Technology degree in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism, Durban University of Technology, under the supervision of Dr Sioux McKenna. My research investigates the gaps between tourism education and industry need in KwaZulu-Natal.

The aim of the research is to examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees and whether the provisions of higher education tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs. Identifying this “gap” will inform the development and modification of tourism education programmes to meet the needs of industry.

The objectives of the study are thus:

1. To examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees in various sectors of the tourism industry in KwaZulu-Natal.
2. To identify gaps between public higher education and training provided to the tourism workforce and industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal.

Your institution has a high reputation in this field, and I would be very grateful if you were willing to participate in this study by allowing me to interview you. I hope that, with your assistance, the results of this study will be useful to providers of tourism education.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time without any adverse consequences. Confidentiality will be maintained and no person will be identified in the study. No particular comments or views will be ascribed to particular institutions. It is anticipated that this study will not present any risk to you.

You may direct any questions to me, Sean Jugmohan, 033 8458810 / 0847277009 seanj@dut.ac.za. or to my research supervisor, Dr Sioux McKenna, mckenna@ukzn.ac.za.

If you are willing to participate, please email me – seanj@dut.ac.za – and let me know. I will then email you a questionnaire. You can type your responses directly on the questionnaire, save it and return it to the email address below.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sean Jugmohan, Graduate student

seanj@dut.ac.za

0847277009 – 031 4091202

ANNEXURE B Consent Letter to Human Resources Managers

Dear Human Resource Managers

I am undertaking a Masters in Technology degree in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism, Durban University of Technology, under the supervision of Dr Sioux McKenna. My research investigates the gaps between tourism education and industry need in KwaZulu-Natal.

The aim of the research is to examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees and whether the provisions of higher education tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs. Identifying this “gap” will inform the development and modification of tourism education programmes to meet the needs of industry.

The objectives of the study are thus:

3. To examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees in various sectors of the tourism industry in KwaZulu-Natal.
4. To identify gaps between public higher education and training provided to the tourism workforce and industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal.

As a stakeholder in the tourism industry, your valuable input will be appreciated in achieving the above objectives. I hope that, with your assistance, the results of this study will be useful to providers of tourism education and industry.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time without any adverse consequences. Confidentiality will be maintained and no person will be identified in the study. No particular comments or views will be ascribed to particular institutions. It is anticipated that this study will not present any risk to you.

You may direct any questions to me, Sean Jugmohan, 033 8458810 / 0847277009 / seanj@dut.ac.za or to my research supervisor, Dr Sioux McKenna, mckenna@ukzn.ac.za.

If you are willing to participate, please email me – seanj@dut.ac.za – and let me know. I will then email you a questionnaire. You can type your responses directly on the questionnaire, save it and return it to the email address below.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sean Jugmohan, Graduate student

seanj@dut.ac.za

0847277009 – 031 4091202

ANNEXURE C Consent Letter to Tourism Graduate Employee

Dear Tourism Graduate Employee

I am undertaking a Masters in Technology degree in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism, Durban University of Technology, under the supervision of Dr Sioux McKenna. My research investigates the gaps between tourism education and industry need in KwaZulu-Natal.

The aim of the research is to examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees and whether the provisions of higher education tourism courses are adequately meeting industry needs. Identifying this “gap” will inform the development and modification of tourism education programmes to meet the needs of industry.

The objectives of the study are thus:

5. To examine the education, skills and training required of tourism employees in various sectors of the tourism industry in KwaZulu-Natal.
6. To identify gaps between public higher education and training provided to the tourism workforce and industry needs in KwaZulu-Natal.

As a stakeholder in the tourism industry, your valuable input will be appreciated in achieving the above objectives. I hope that, with your assistance, the results of this study will be useful to providers of tourism education and recipients.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any time without any adverse consequences. Confidentiality will be maintained and no person will be identified in the study. No particular comments or views will be ascribed to particular institutions. It is anticipated that this study will not present any risk to you.

You may direct any questions to me, Sean Jugmohan, 033 8458810 / 0847277009
seanj@dut.ac.za or to my research supervisor, Dr Sioux McKenna,
mckenna@ukzn.ac.za

If you are willing to participate, please email me – seanj@dut.ac.za – and let me know. I will then email you a questionnaire. You can type your responses directly on the questionnaire, save it and return it to the email address below.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Mr Sean Jugmohan, Graduate student

seanj@dut.ac.za

0847277009 – 031 4091202

ANNEXURE D Managers Questionnaire

**SURVEY TO INVESTIGATE THE GAPS BETWEEN TOURISM
EDUCATION PROVISION AND INDUSTRY NEED IN KWAZULU-NATAL.**

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire forms an important part of my study about the tourism curriculum and industry needs. As I indicated in the letter I sent you, your participation is voluntary and your identity will be kept confidential. This survey is an attached word document and will take about half an hour to complete. You can type your responses directly on the questionnaire, save it and return it to the following e-mail address: seanj@dut.ac.za.

**SECTION A - CURRICULA / WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING /
EMPLOYMENT**

1. Have you ever been part of an advisory committee for tourism education at a university?

Please elaborate.

2. Are you satisfied with the skills that tourism graduates bring to your organisation?

Please explain.

3. In your opinion do you think that the tourism curriculum offered at higher education institutions adequately meets industry need?

Please explain.

4. If your answer to question 3, above, was 'No', how can industry assist in curriculum development to meet the needs of industry?

Please elaborate.

5. Does your organisation offer work integrated placements for tourism students?

Please specify.

6. Do you think that work integrated learning adequately prepares students for the realities of work in the tourism industry?

Please explain.

7. What kinds of technology are needed in your industry?

Please specify.

8. Do you think tourism graduates are sufficiently prepared in terms of using technology?

Please explain.

9. Do you think that tourism programmes should incorporate industry driven courses. (for example, courses developed by and/ or taught by industry)?

Please elaborate.

10. Do you consider that advisory committees (from a cross section of the industry that advise universities on curriculum issues) are sufficient to solve the diversity that exists in the development of tourism education?

Please elaborate.

SECTION B - EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS

B1. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, graduates with tourism qualifications are adequately prepared in the following skills for work in the tourism sector.

HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Completely prepared
Customer Service					
Customer Guest Relations					
Leadership and Management					
Communication Skills					
Etiquette and Protocol					
Coaching and Mentoring					
Supervision					
Handling difficult people					
Public Relations Skill					

B2. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, graduates with tourism qualifications are adequately prepared in the following skills.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Completely prepared
Business Management					
Financial Management					
Marketing					
Sales Skills					
Project Management					
Office Management					
Developing Business Plans					
Entrepreneurship					
Statistics					
Economics					
Marketing Research Methodology					
Management Theories					
Tourism Law					
Research Methodology					

B3. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, graduates with tourism qualifications are adequately prepared in the following skills.

TOURISM SPECIFIC EDUCATION

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Completely prepared
Ticketing and Fares					
Geographical Knowledge					
Development of Tourism Packages					
Product Development					
Knowledge of Ecological Resources					
Environmental Legislation & Legal Frameworks					
Narration & Interpretation Skills					
Environmental Assessments					
Site Guiding					
Tourism Development					
Hospitality Operations					
Knowledge of Inbound Tourist Attractions					
Knowledge of Outbound Tourist Attractions					

B4. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, graduates with tourism qualifications are adequately prepared in the following skills.

TOURISM ELECTIVE UNITS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Completely prepared
Ecotourism					
Sports Tourism					
Event Management					
Lodge/Guest house Management					
Resort Management					
Hotel Management					
Tour Operating Business					
Visitor attraction Management					
Destination Management					
Conference Planning					
Destination Marketing					
Nature based Tourism					
Heritage Tourism					
Marine and Coastal Management					

B5. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, graduates with tourism qualifications are adequately prepared in the following skills

TECHNICAL TRAINING

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Completely prepared
Internet					
E- mail					
Information and communication technology					
Industry driven courses					

B6. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, graduates with tourism qualifications are adequately prepared in the following skills.

PERSONAL SKILLS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Completely prepared
Critical thinking ability					
Problem solving and identification					
Decision making skills					
Analytical Skills					
Foreign Language					
Professionalism					

C - GENERAL

C1. Please add any other comments that you may wish to make about Tourism curricula and the needs of Industry.

ANNEXURE E Academic Questionnaire

**SURVEY TO INVESTIGATE THE GAPS BETWEEN TOURISM
EDUCATION PROVISION AND INDUSTRY NEED IN KWAZULU-NATAL.**

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire forms an important part of my study about the tourism curriculum and industry needs. As I indicated in the letter I sent you, your participation is voluntary and your identity will be kept confidential. This survey is an attached word document and will take about half an hour to complete. You can type your responses directly on the questionnaire, save it and return it to the following e-mail address: seanj@dut.ac.za.

**SECTION A - CURRICULA / WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING /
EMPLOYMENT**

1. Are you satisfied that your curriculum meets the needs of industry?

Please elaborate.

2. If not, how can universities develop a curriculum that meets the needs of industry?

Please explain.

3. How often does your department review the tourism curriculum?

Please explain.

4. How do academics keep themselves informed of current industry developments?

Please elaborate.

5. Who is responsible for ensuring that your programme is updated taking into account the needs of industry?

Please elaborate.

6. Do you consider that advisory committees (from a cross section of the industry) are sufficient to ensure that the diversity that exists in tourism development is addressed in the curriculum?

Please explain.

7. Does your curriculum offer tourism elective modules (for example modules that are specifically developed by industry)?

Please elaborate.

8. What kinds of technology are taught in your curriculum?

Please elaborate.

9. Do you think that your curriculum is on par with industry needs in terms of technology?

Please elaborate.

10. Does your programme have a work integrated learning component?

Please explain.

11. Do you think that work integrated learning adequately prepares students for the realities of work in the tourism industry?

Please explain.

12. Do you think that tourism programmes should incorporate industry driven courses (for example, courses developed by and / or taught by industry)?

Please explain.

13. Which sectors are the main employers of your students?

Please specify.

14. Which occupations do your graduates enter after qualifying with a tourism diploma/degree?

Please elaborate.

SECTION B - EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS

B1. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your curriculum addresses each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not addressed in curriculum	Slightly addressed in curriculum	Reasonably addressed in curriculum	Addressed in curriculum	Fully addressed in curriculum
Customer Service					
Customer Guest Relations					
Leadership and Management					
Communication Skills					
Etiquette and Protocol					
Coaching and Mentoring					
Supervision					
Handling difficult people					
Public Relations Skill					

B2. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your curriculum addresses each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not addressed in curriculum	Slightly addressed in curriculum	Reasonably addressed in curriculum	Addressed in curriculum	Fully addressed in curriculum
Business Management					
Financial Management					
Marketing					
Sales Skills					
Project Management					
Office Management					
Developing Business Plans					
Entrepreneurship					
Statistics					
Economics					
Marketing Research Methodology					
Management Theories					
Tourism Law					
Research Methodology					

B3. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your curriculum addresses each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

TOURISM SPECIFIC EDUCATION

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not addressed in curriculum	Slightly addressed in curriculum	Reasonably addressed in curriculum	Addressed in curriculum	Fully addressed in curriculum
Ticketing and Fares					
Geographical Knowledge					
Development of Tourism Packages					
Product Development					
Knowledge of Ecological Resources					
Environmental Legislation & Legal Frameworks					
Narration & Interpretation Skills					
Environmental Assessments					
Site Guiding					
Tourism Development					
Hospitality Operations					
Knowledge of Inbound Tourist Attractions					
Knowledge of Outbound Tourist Attractions					

B4. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your curriculum addresses each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

TOURISM ELECTIVE UNITS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not addressed in curriculum	Slightly addressed in curriculum	Reasonably addressed in curriculum	Addressed in curriculum	Fully addressed in curriculum
Ecotourism					
Sports Tourism					
Event Management					
Lodge/Guest house Management					
Resort Management					
Hotel Management					
Tour Operating Business					
Visitor attraction Management					
Destination Management					
Conference Planning					
Destination Marketing					
Nature based Tourism					
Heritage Tourism					
Marine and Coastal Management					

B5. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your curriculum addresses each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

TECHNICAL TRAINING

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not addressed in curriculum	Slightly addressed in curriculum	Reasonably addressed in curriculum	Addressed in curriculum	Fully addressed in curriculum
Internet					
E- mail					
Information and communication technology					
Industry driven courses					

B6. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your curriculum addresses each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

PERSONAL SKILLS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not addressed in curriculum	Slightly addressed in curriculum	Reasonably addressed in curriculum	Addressed in curriculum	Fully addressed in curriculum
Critical thinking ability					
Problem solving and identification					
Decision making skills					
Analytical Skills					
Foreign Language					
Professionalism					

C - GENERAL

C1. Please add any other comments that you may wish to make about Tourism curricula and the needs of Industry.

Thank You

ANNEXURE F Graduate Questionnaire

SURVEY TO INVESTIGATE THE GAPS BETWEEN TOURISM EDUCATION PROVISION AND INDUSTRY NEED IN KWAZULU-NATAL

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. The questionnaire forms an important part of my study about the tourism curriculum and industry needs. As I indicated in the letter I sent you, your participation is voluntary and your identity will be kept confidential. This survey is an attached word document and will take about half an hour to complete. You can type your responses directly on the questionnaire, save it and return it to the following e-mail address: seanj@dut.ac.za.

SECTION A - DEMOGRAPHICS

Please place an (x) in the appropriate box.

A1. Please state your gender.

Male	1	
Female	2	

A2. What is your age?

Under 25	1	
25 years – 34 years	2	
35years – 44 years	3	
45 years – 54 years	4	
55 and over	5	

SECTION B – EDUCATION AND TRAINING NEEDS

B1. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your studies prepared you for each. Place an X in the appropriate box.

HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Fully prepared
Customer Service					
Customer Guest Relations					
Leadership and Management					
Communication Skills					
Etiquette and Protocol					
Coaching and Mentoring					
Supervision					
Handling difficult people					
Public Relations Skill					

B2. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your studies prepared you for each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

BUSINESS EDUCATION

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Fully prepared
Business Management					
Financial Management					
Marketing					
Sales Skills					
Project Management					
Office Management					
Developing Business Plans					
Entrepreneurship					
Statistics					
Economics					
Marketing Research Methodology					
Management Theories					
Tourism Law					
Research Methodology					

B3. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your studies prepared you for each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

TOURISM SPECIFIC EDUCATION

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Fully prepared
Ticketing and Fares					
Geographical Knowledge					
Development of Tourism Packages					
Product Development					
Knowledge of Ecological Resources					
Environmental Legislation & Legal Frameworks					
Narration & Interpretation Skills					
Environmental Assessments					
Site Guiding					
Tourism Development					
Hospitality Operations					
Knowledge of Inbound Tourist Attractions					
Knowledge of Outbound Tourist Attractions					

B4. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your studies prepared you for each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

TOURISM ELECTIVE UNITS

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Fully prepared
Ecotourism					
Sports Tourism					
Event Management					
Lodge/Guest house Management					
Resort Management					
Hotel Management					
Tour Operating Business					
Visitor attraction Management					
Destination Management					
Conference Planning					
Destination Marketing					
Nature based Tourism					
Heritage Tourism					
Marine and Coastal Management					

B5. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your studies prepared you for each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

TECHNICAL TRAINING

	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Fully prepared
Internet					
E- mail					
Information and communication technology					
Industry driven courses					

B6. Please rate the following skills according to whether, in your view, your studies prepared you for each skill. Place an X in the appropriate box.

PERSONAL SKILLS

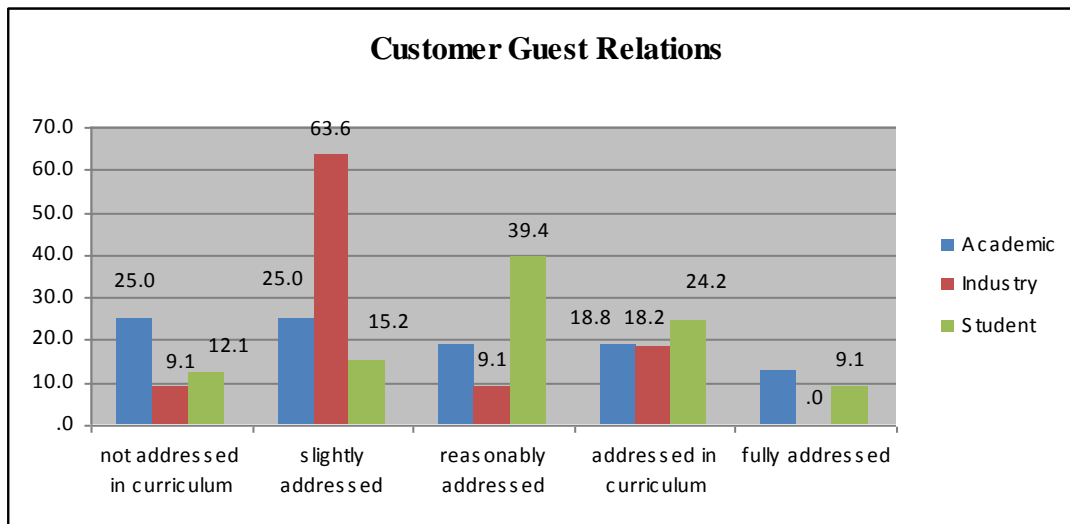
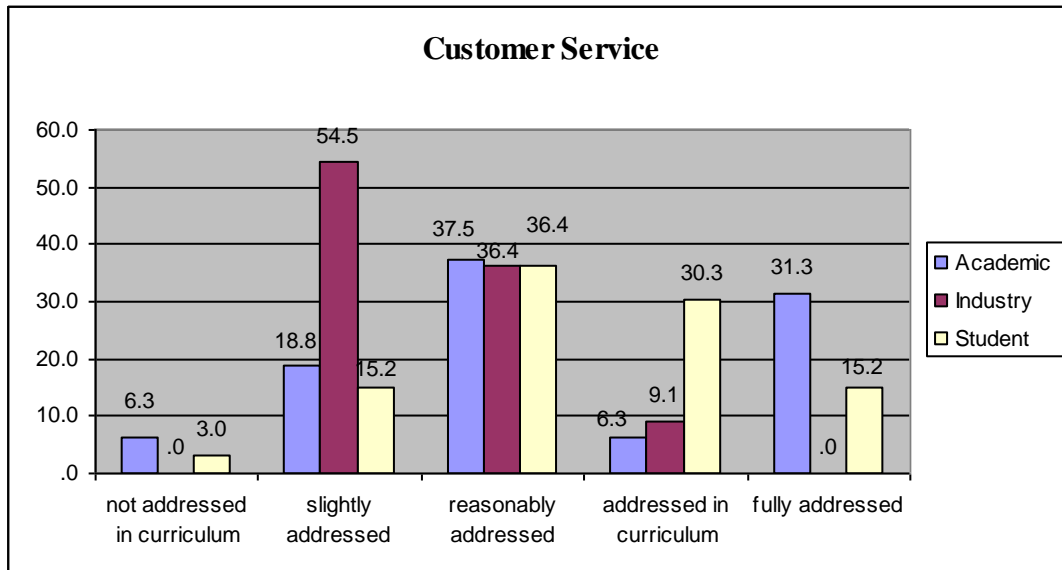
	1	2	3	4	5
	Not prepared at all	Slightly prepared	Reasonably prepared	Prepared	Fully prepared
Critical thinking ability					
Problem solving and identification					
Decision making skills					
Analytical Skills					
Foreign Language					
Professionalism					

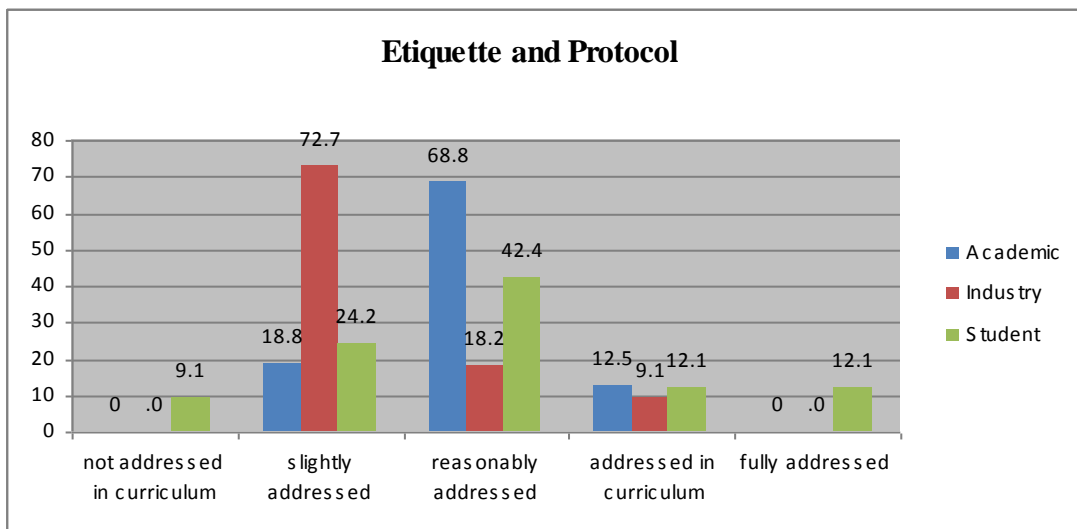
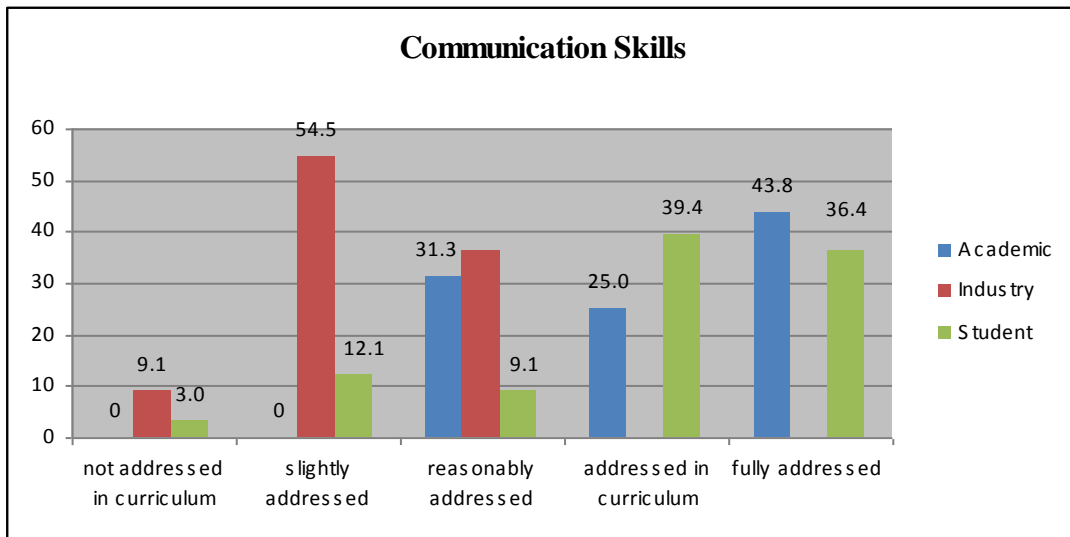
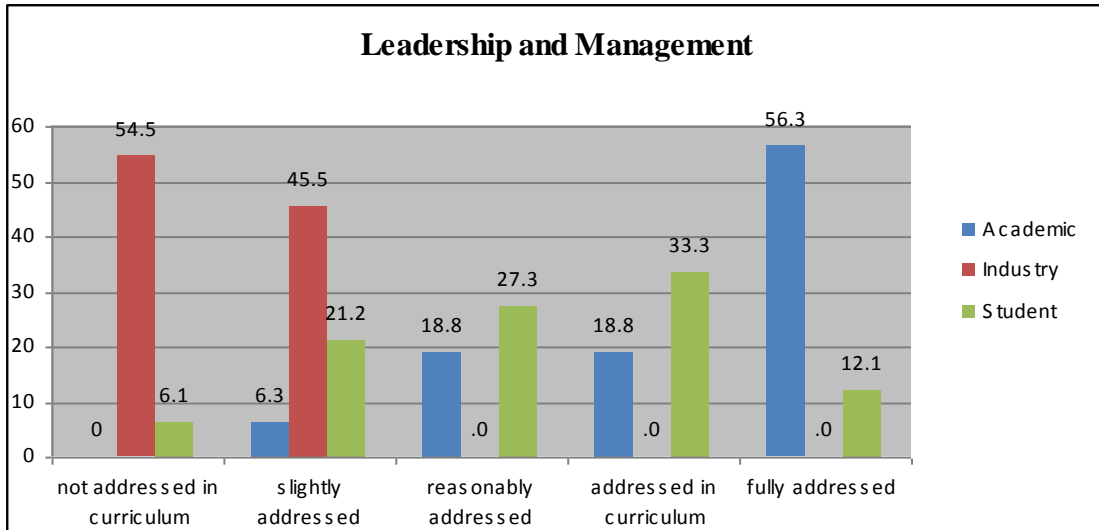
C - GENERAL

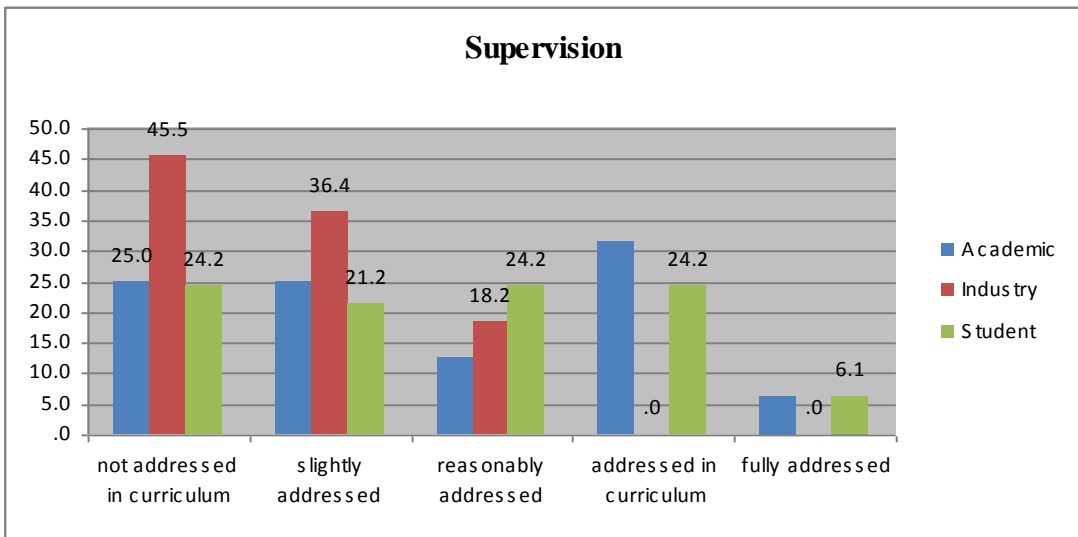
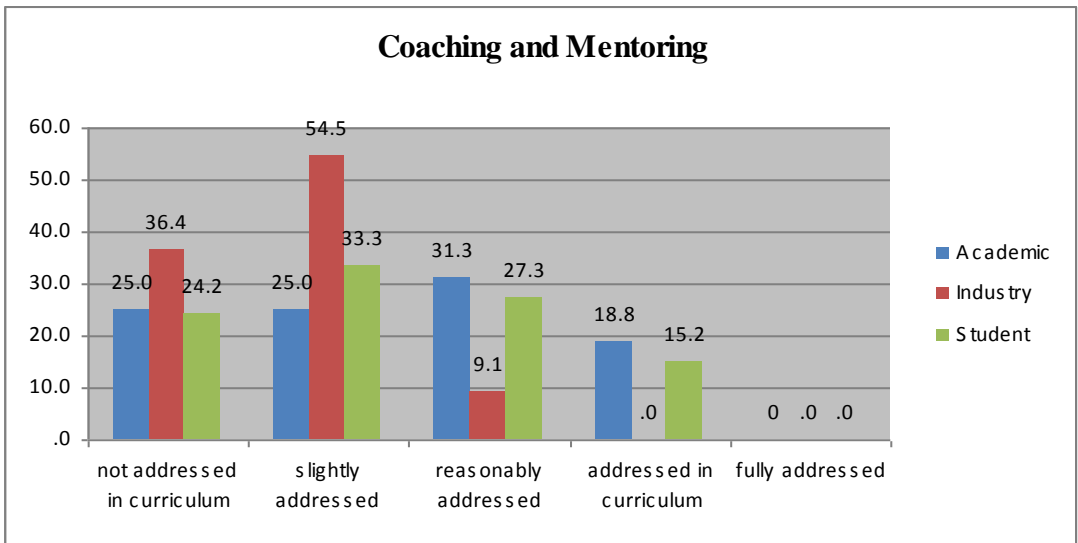
C1. Please add any other comments that you may wish to make about Tourism curricula and the needs of Industry.

Thank You

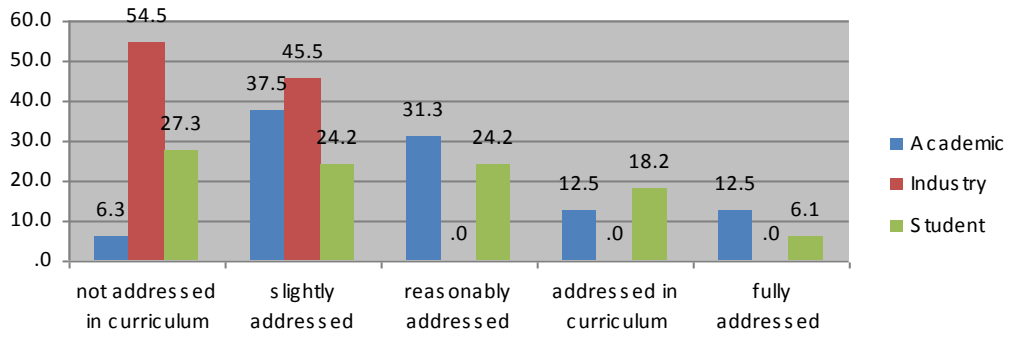
ANNEXURE G: Graphs to illustrate the extent to which the curriculum is perceived to address “Human Resources Skills”.



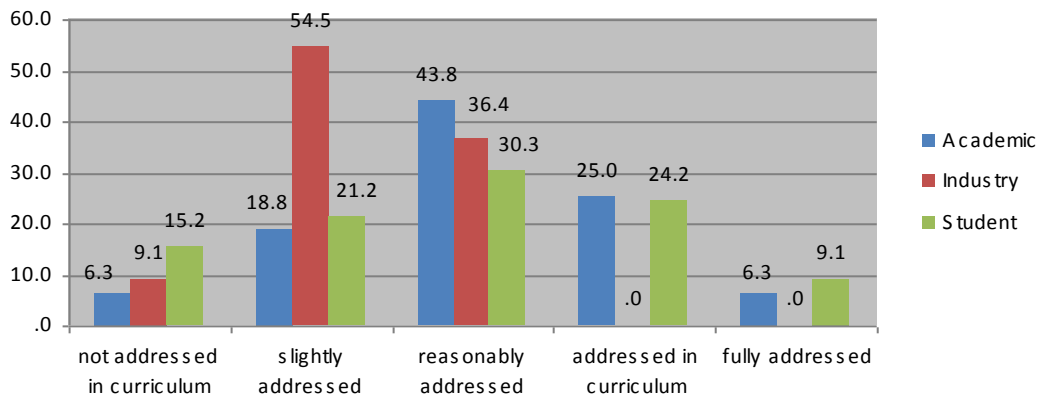




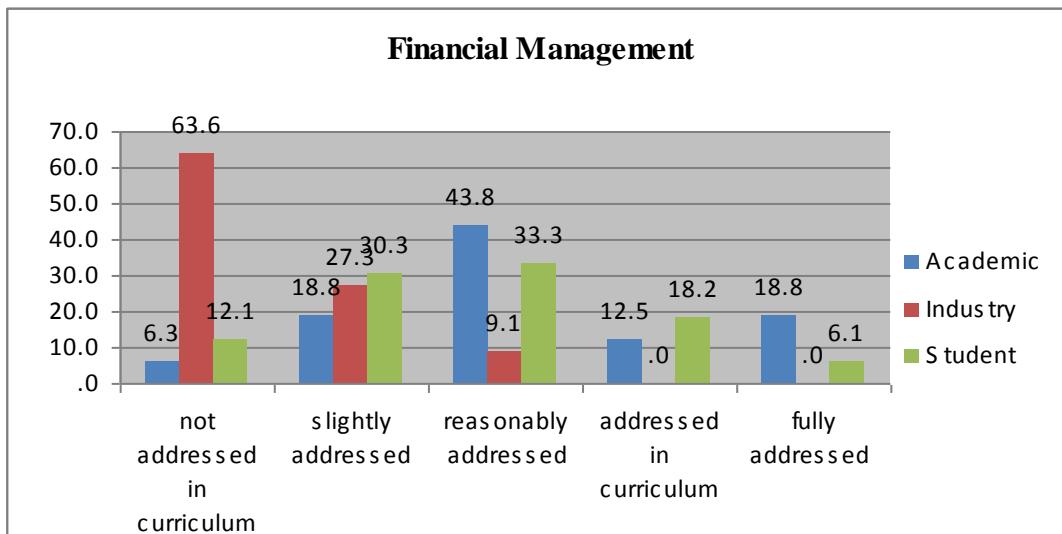
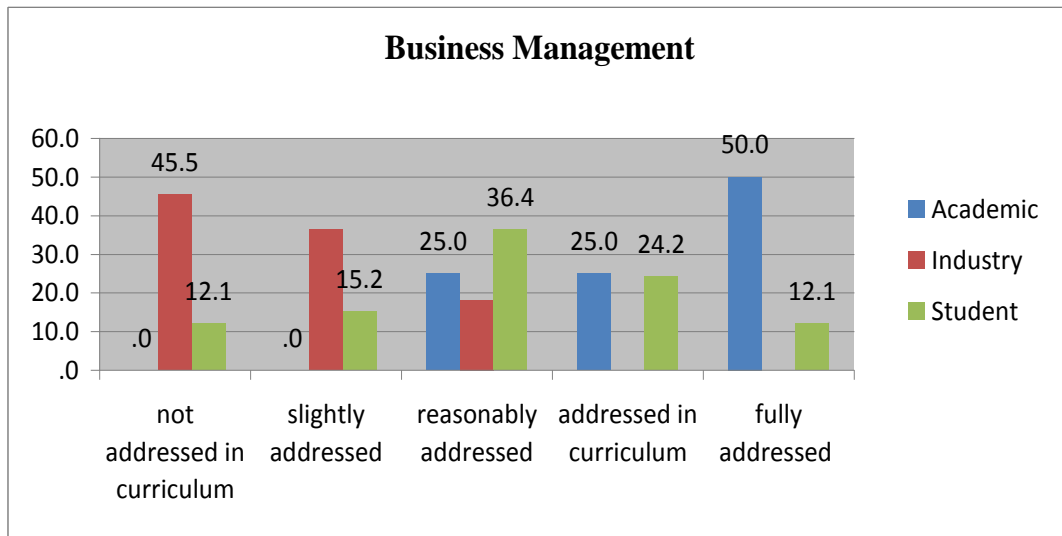
Handling Difficult People

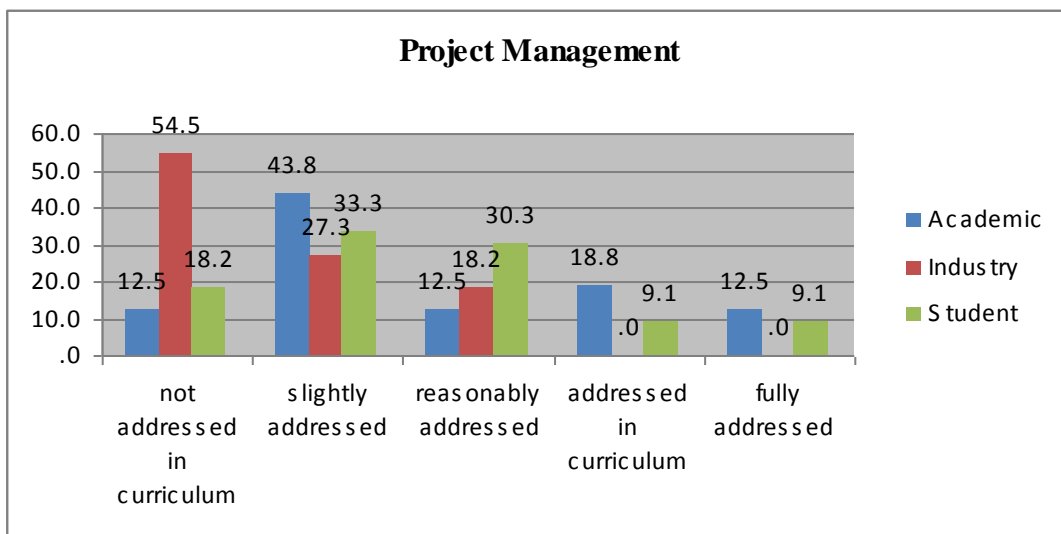
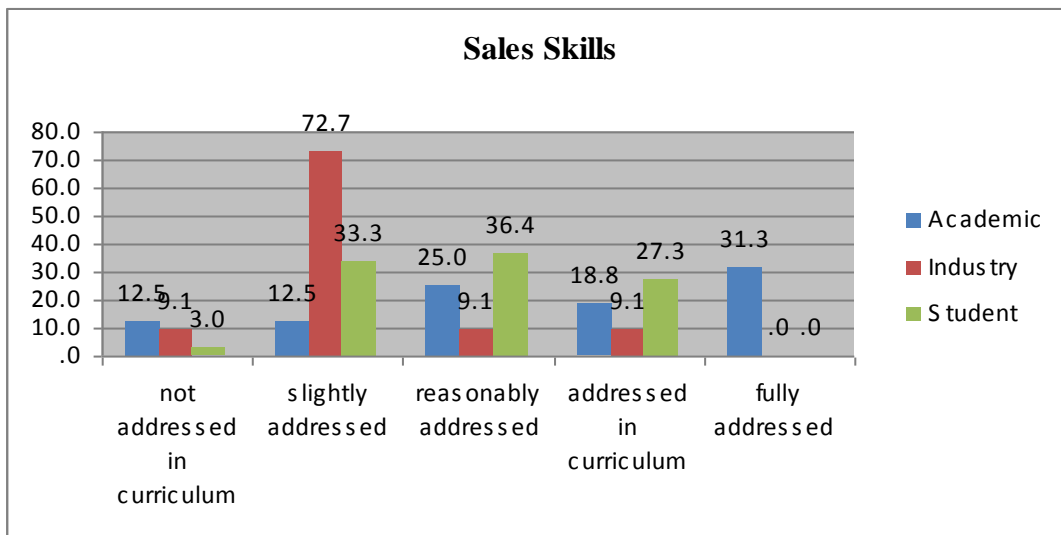
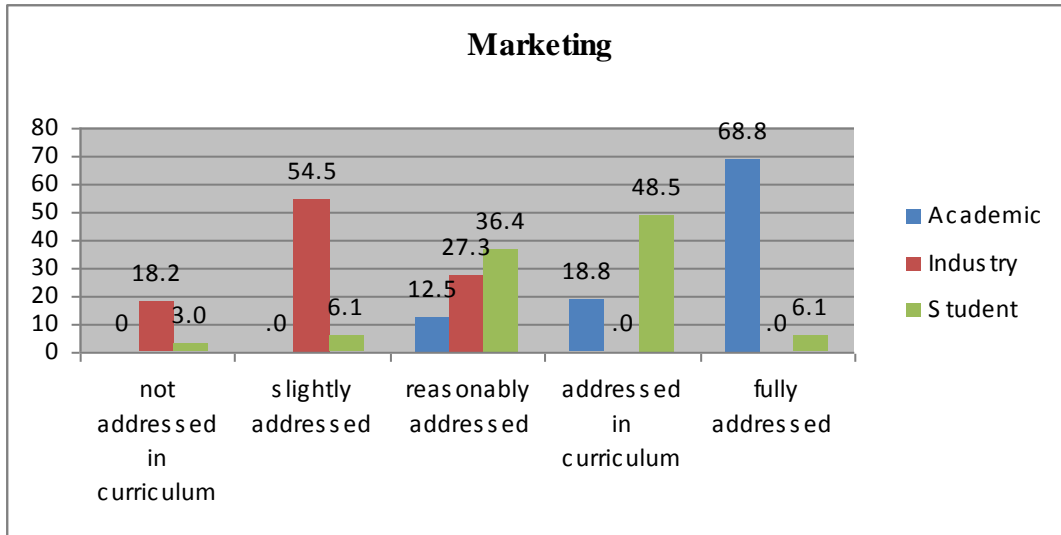


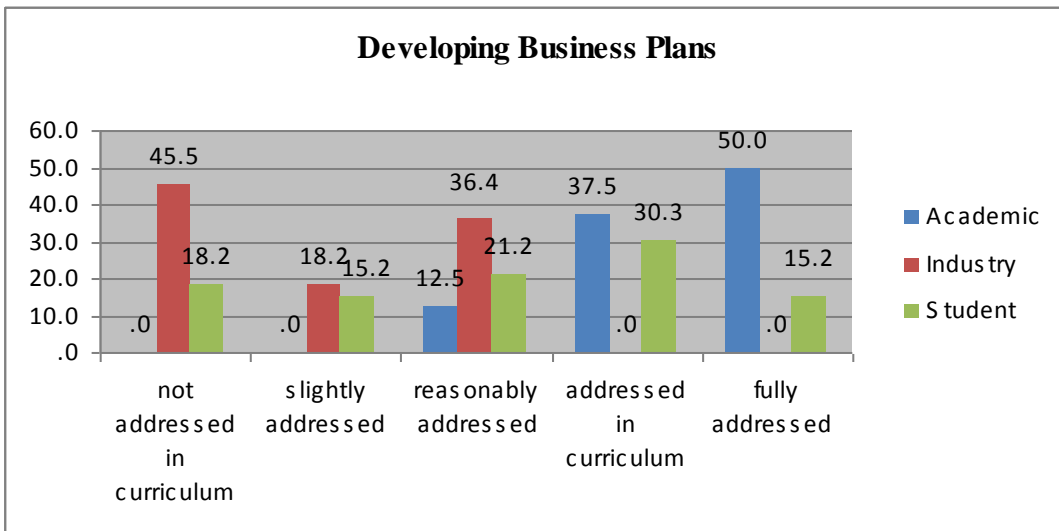
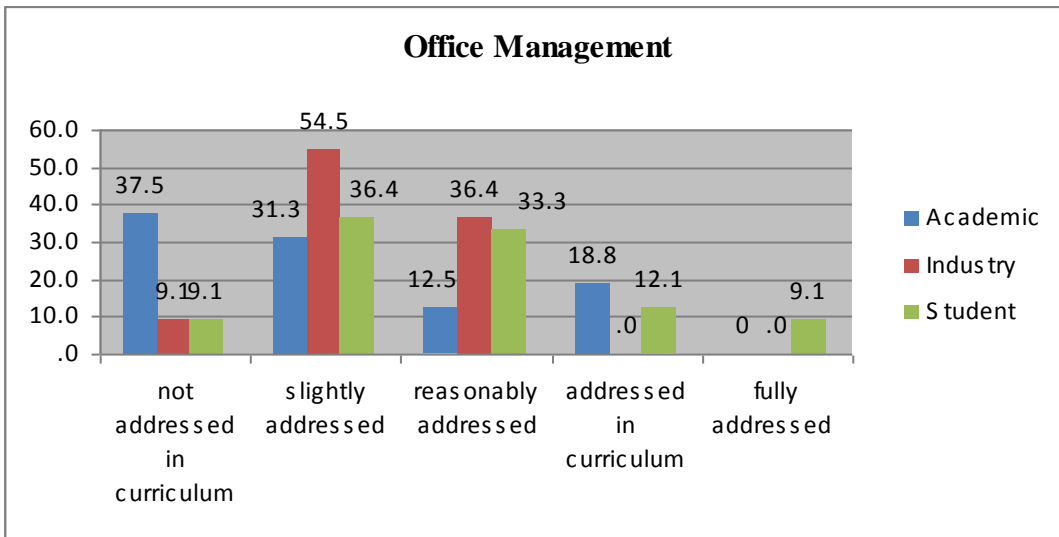
Public Relations Skill

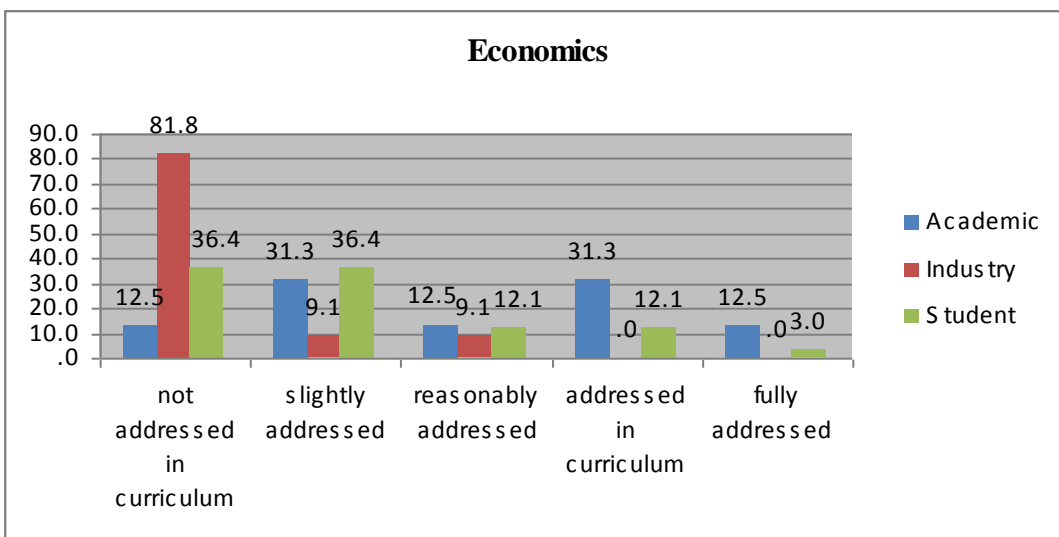
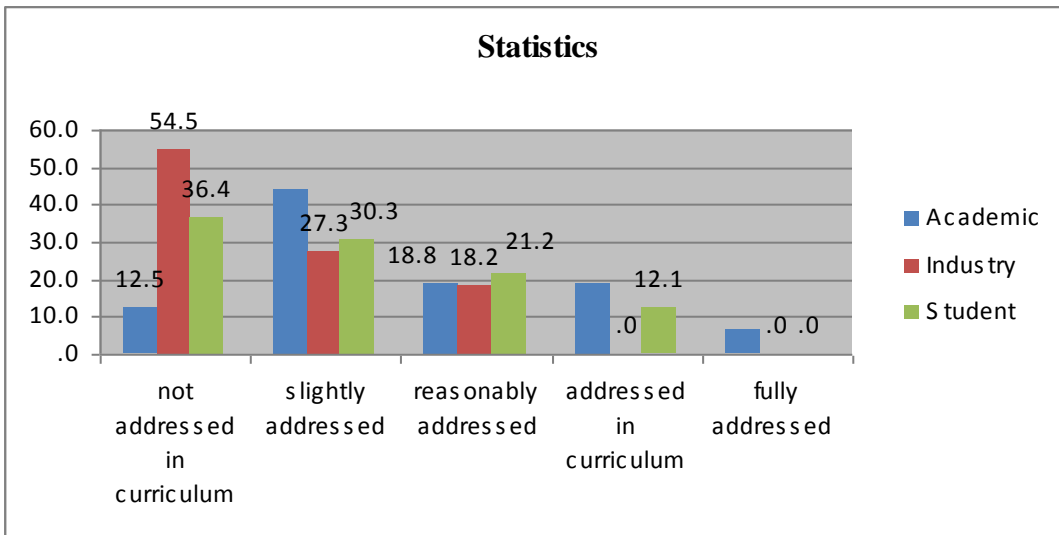
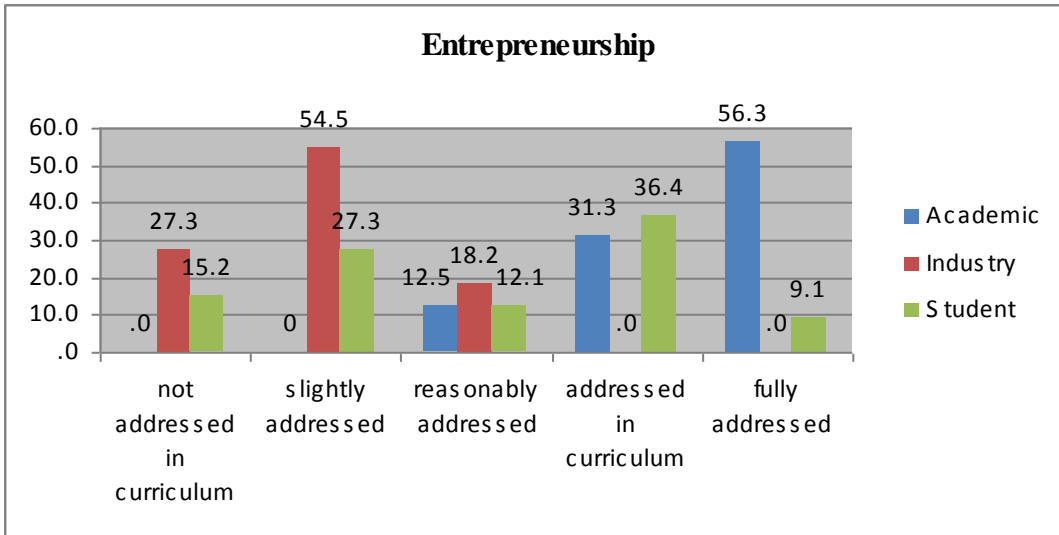


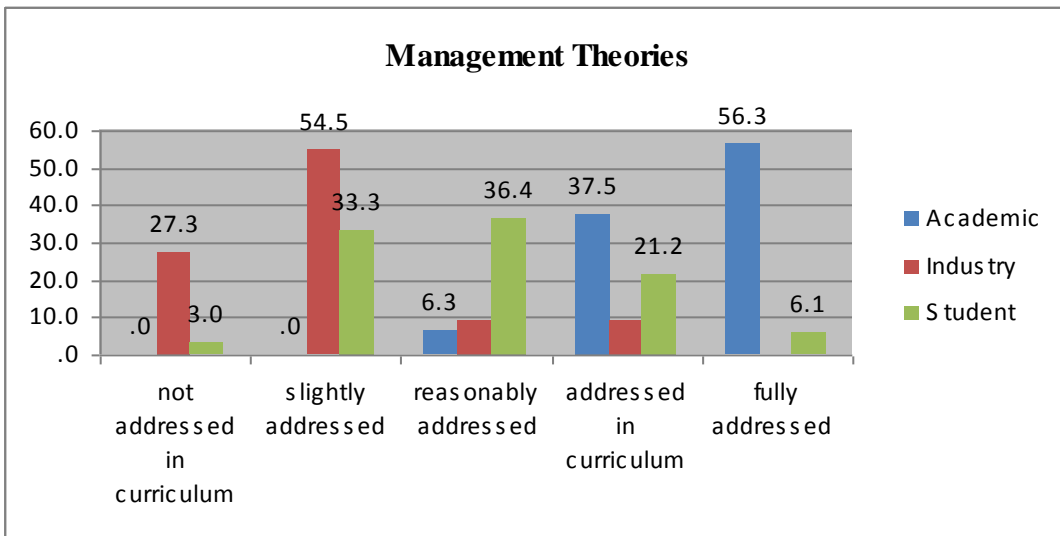
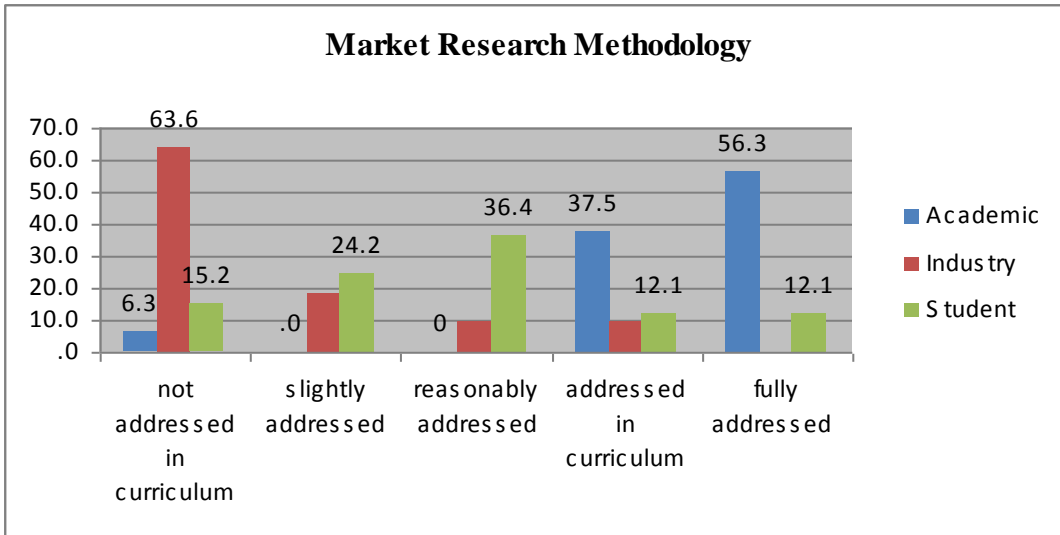
ANNEXURE H: Graphs to illustrate the extent to which the curriculum is perceived to address “Business Education Skills”.

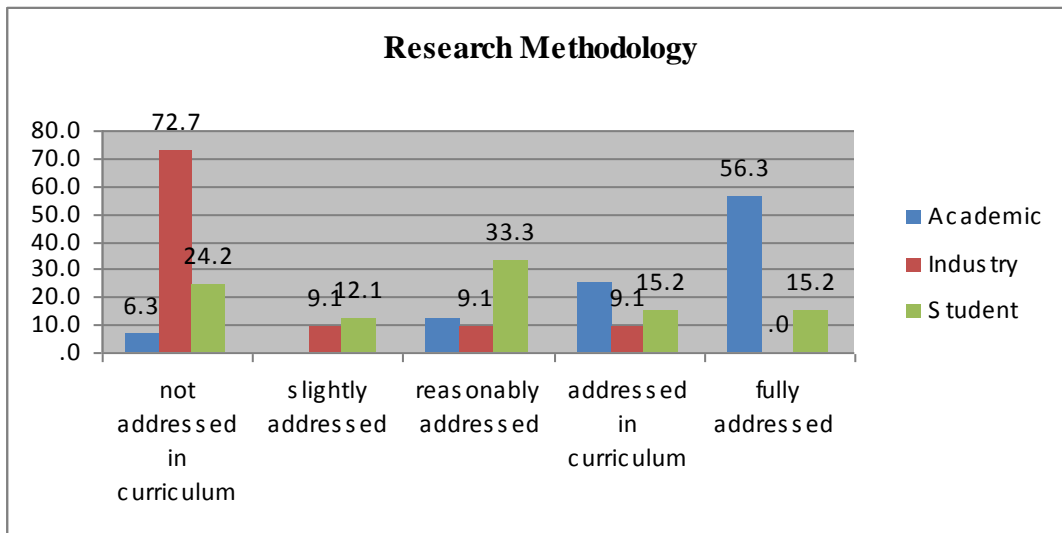
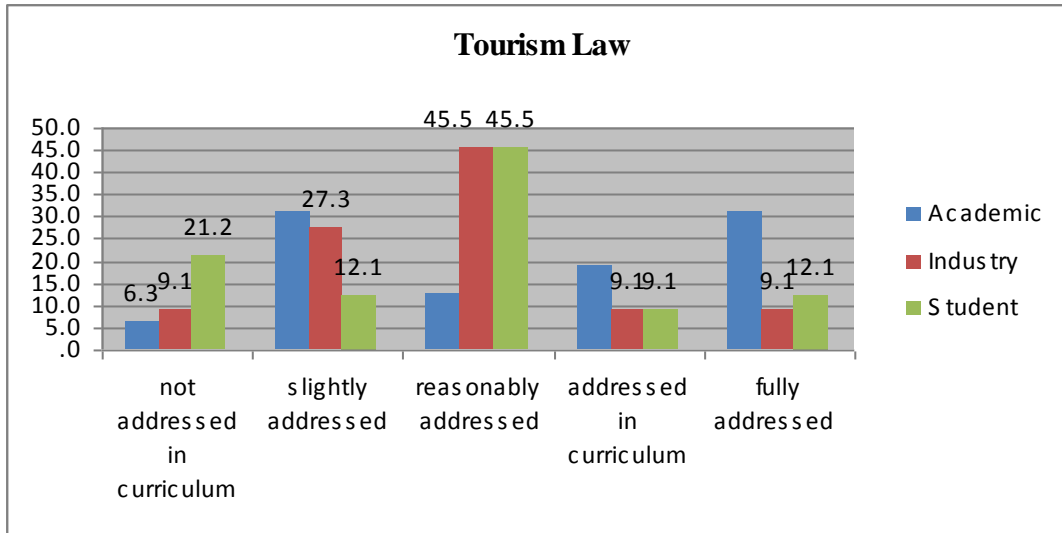




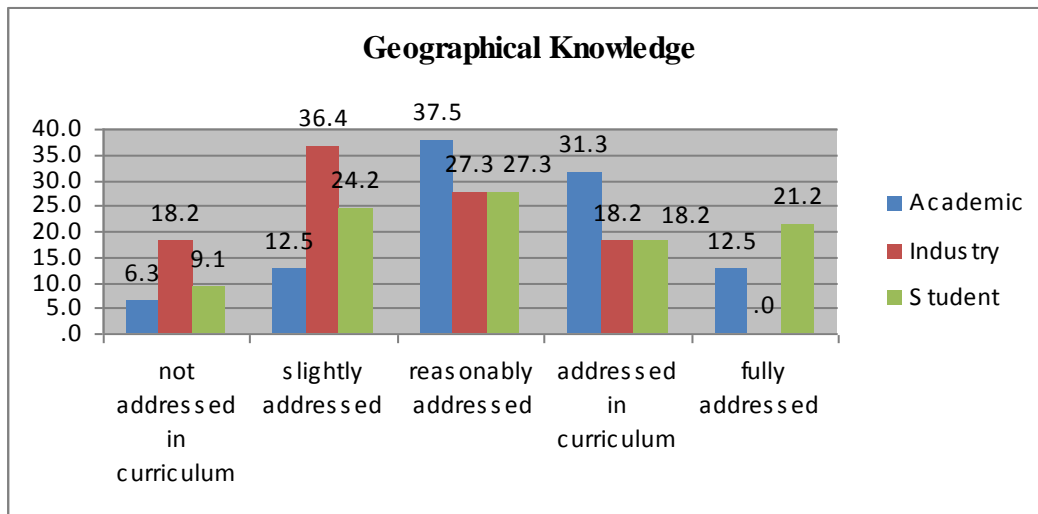
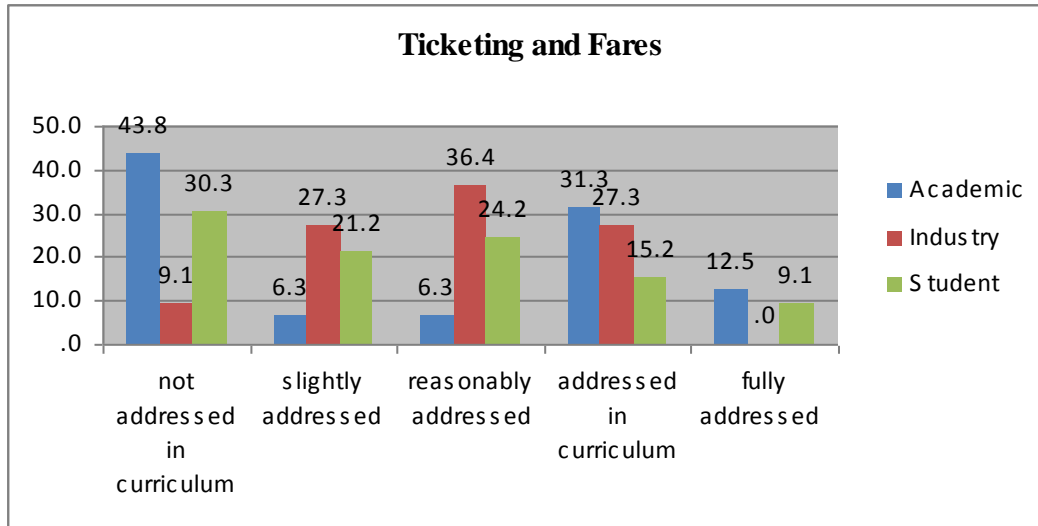


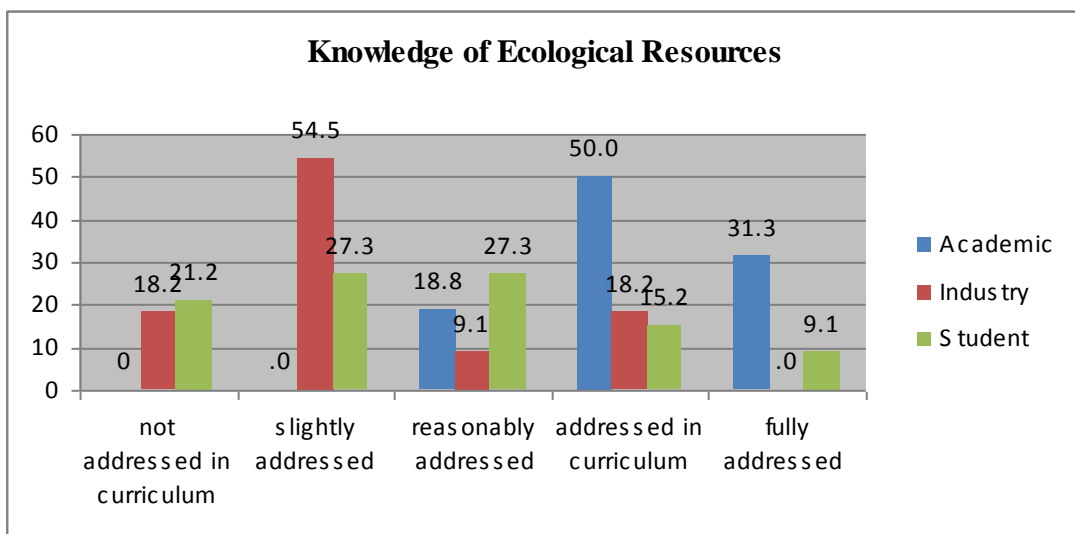
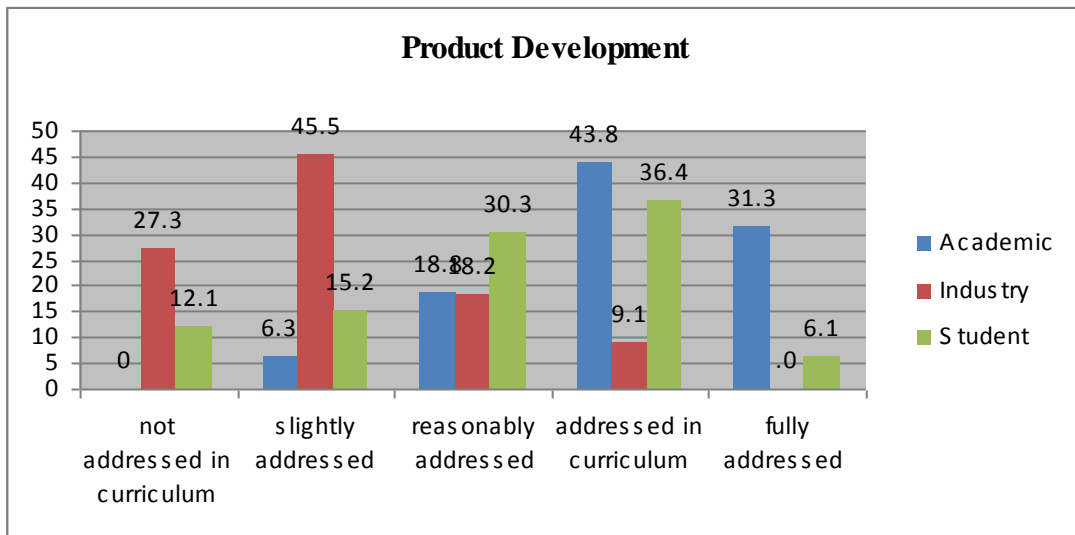
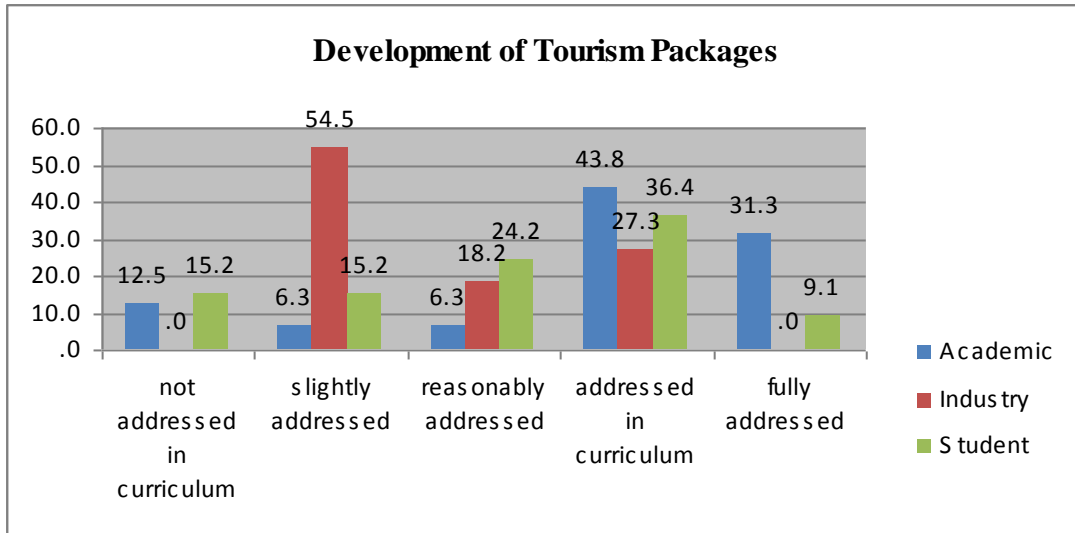




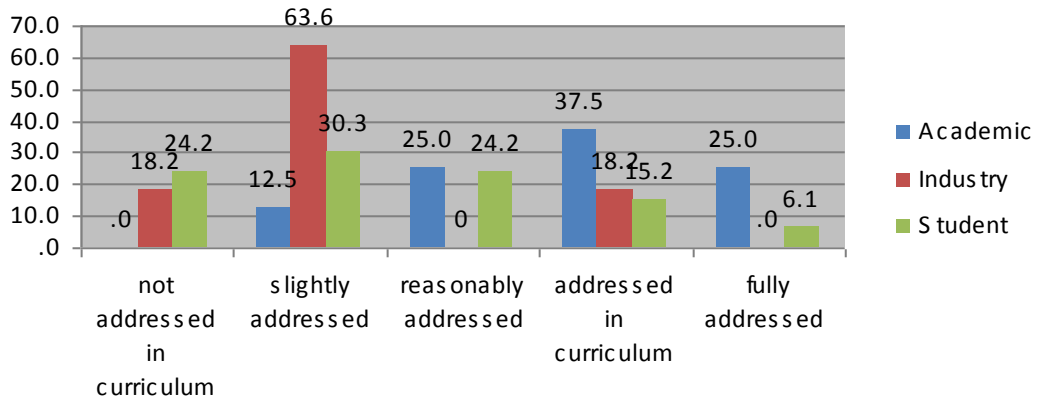


ANNEXURE I: Graphs to illustrate the extent to which the curriculum is perceived to address “Tourism Specific Education”.

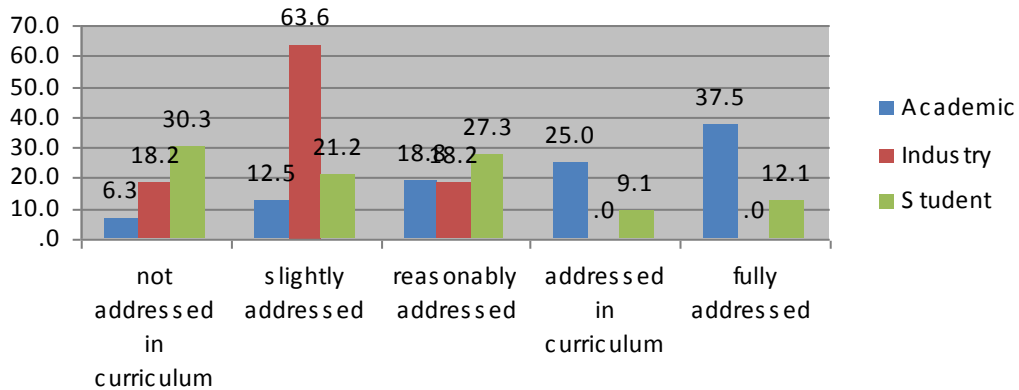




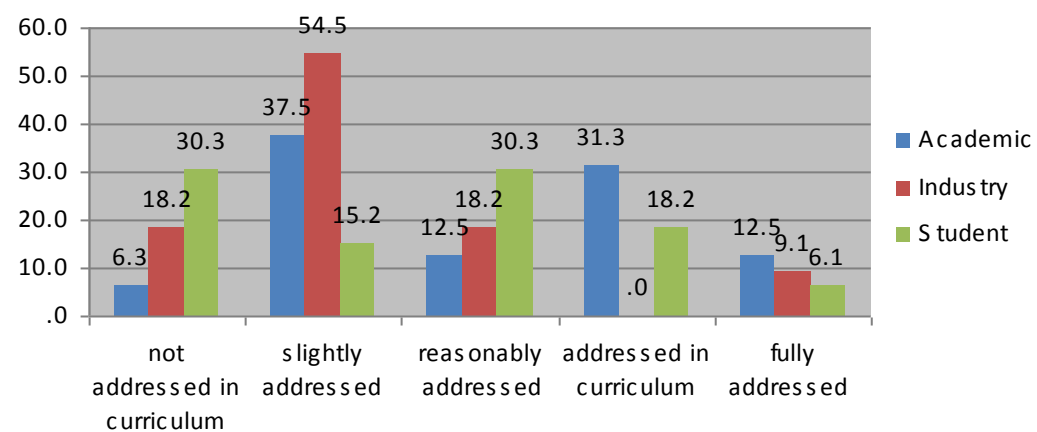
Environmental Legislation and Legal Frameworks

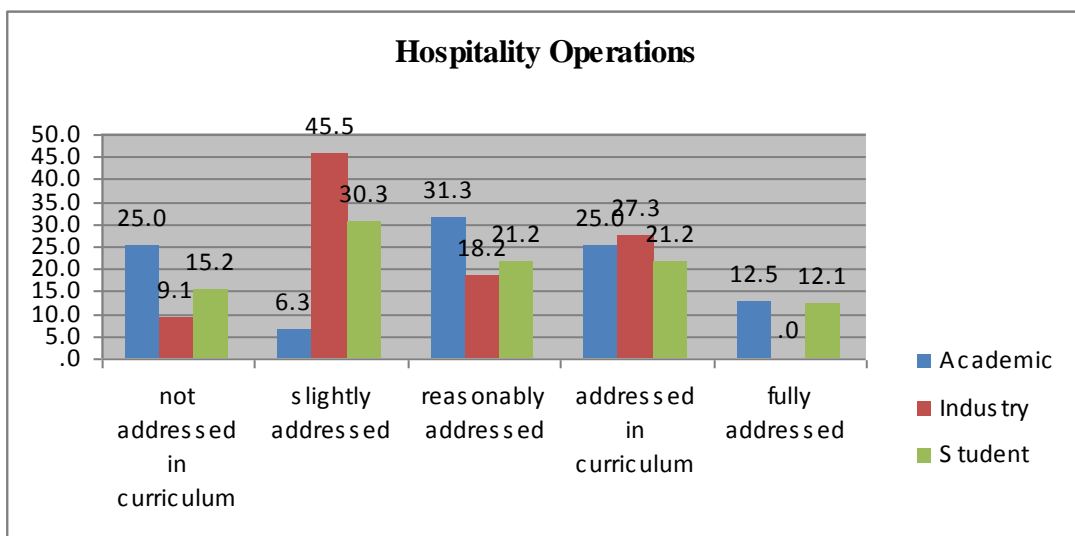
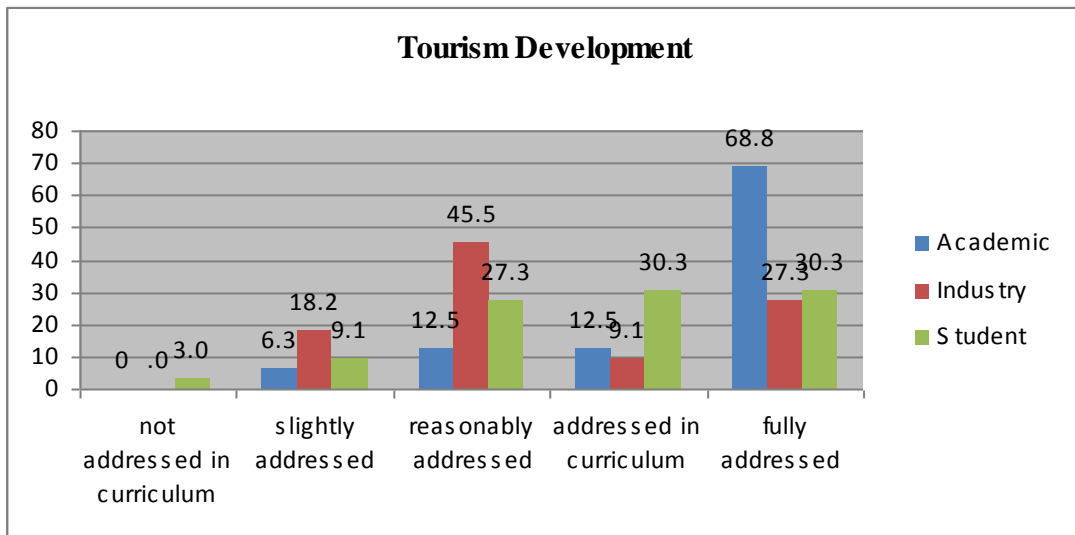
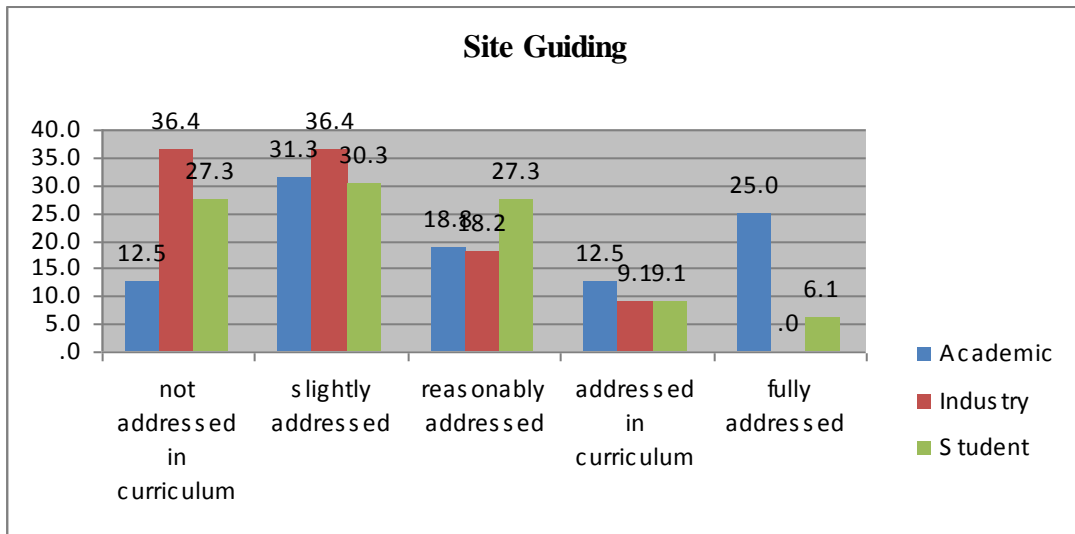


Narration and Interpretation Skills

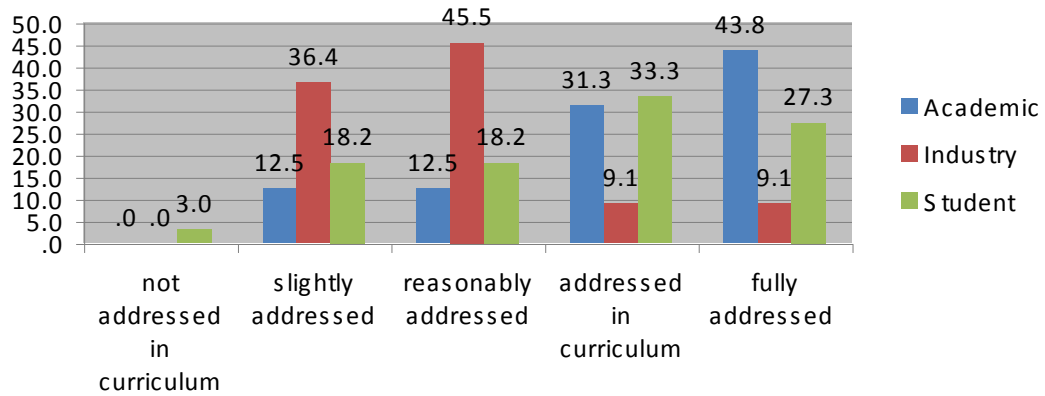


Environmental Assessment

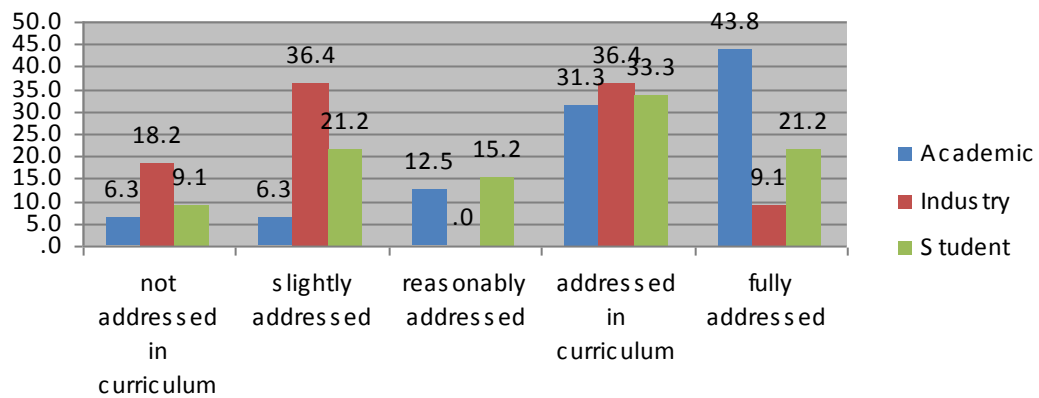




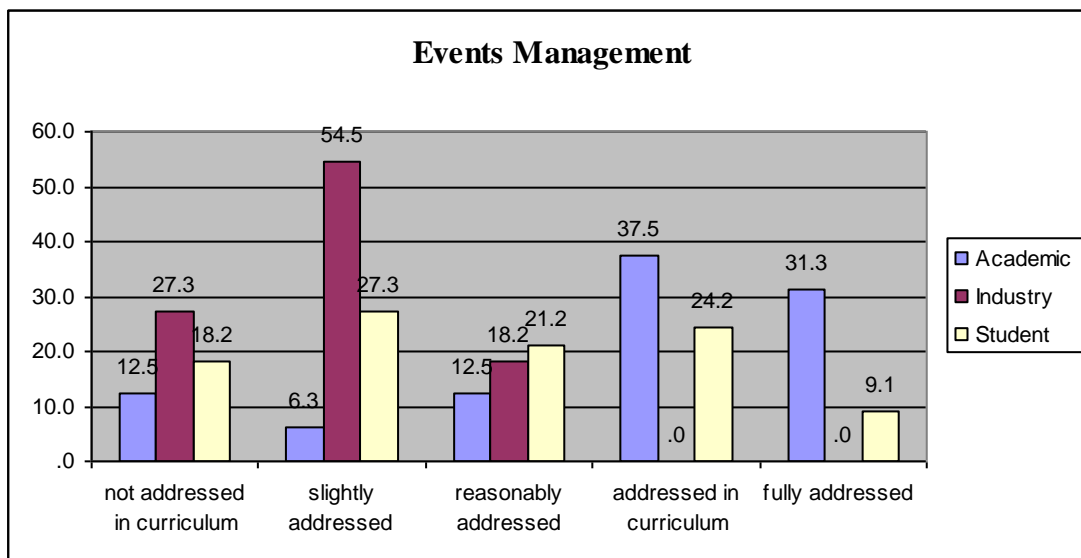
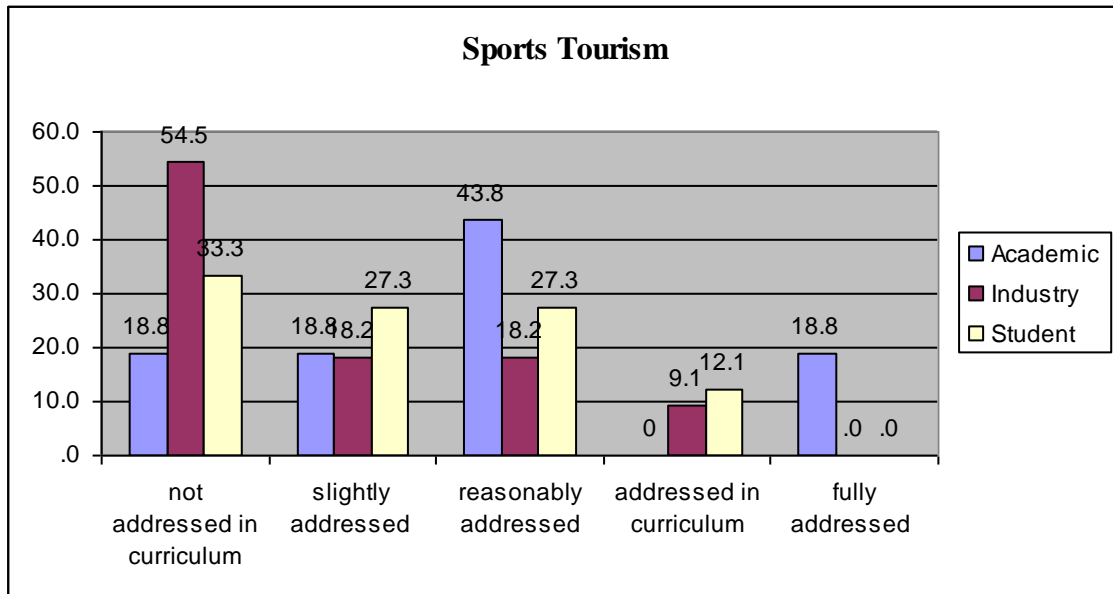
Knowledge of Inbound Attractions

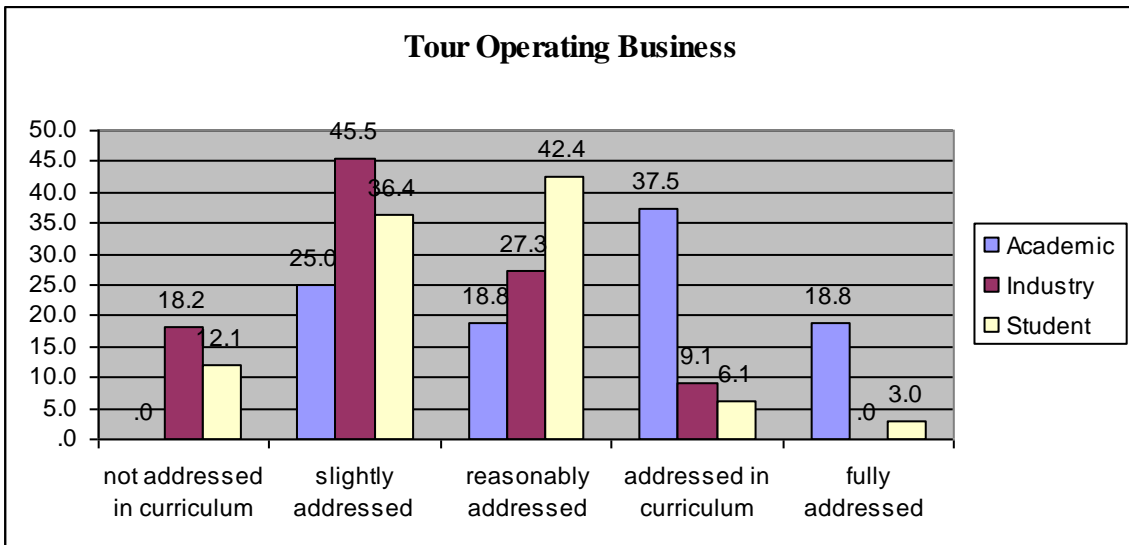
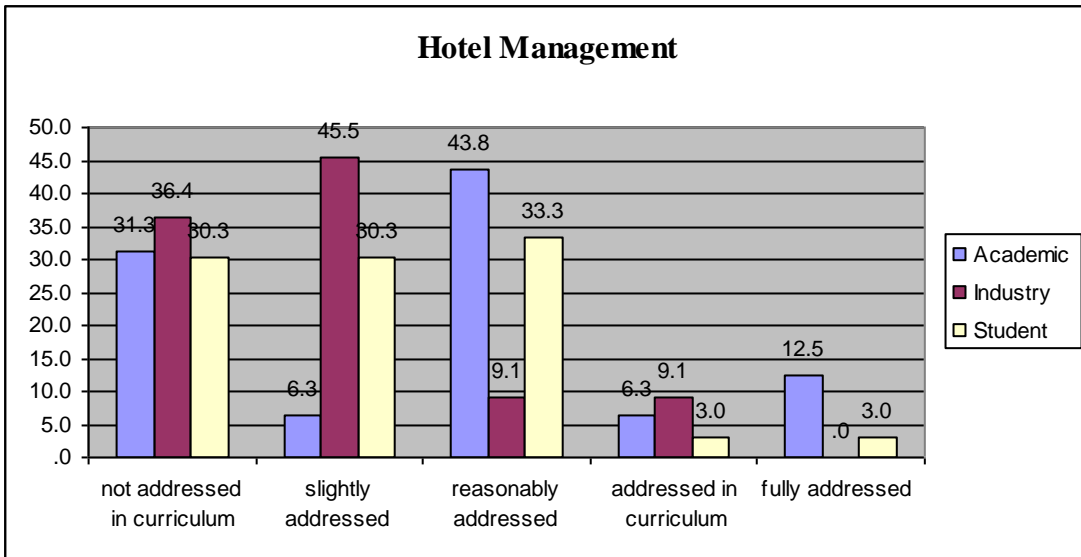
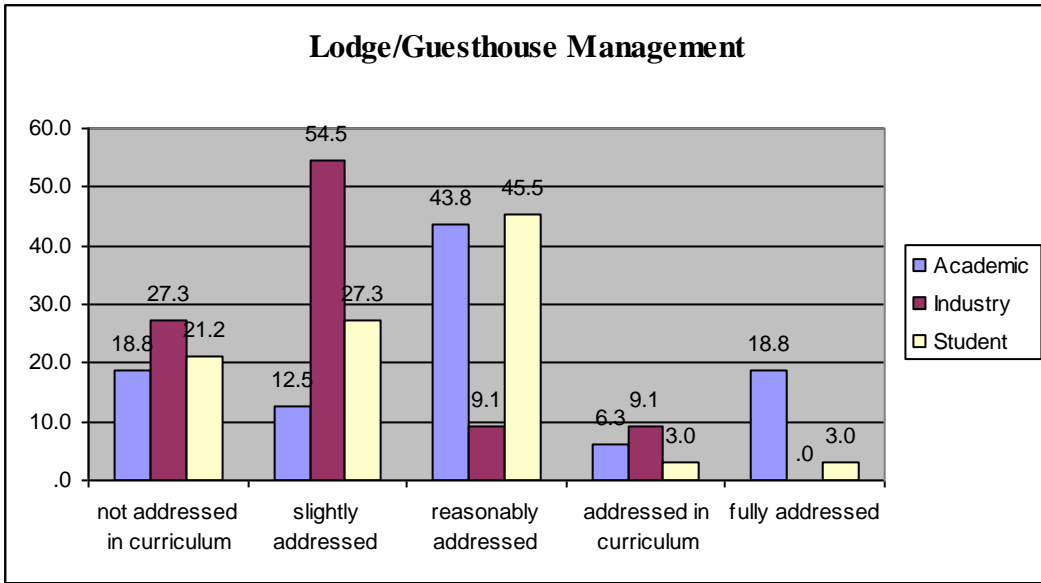


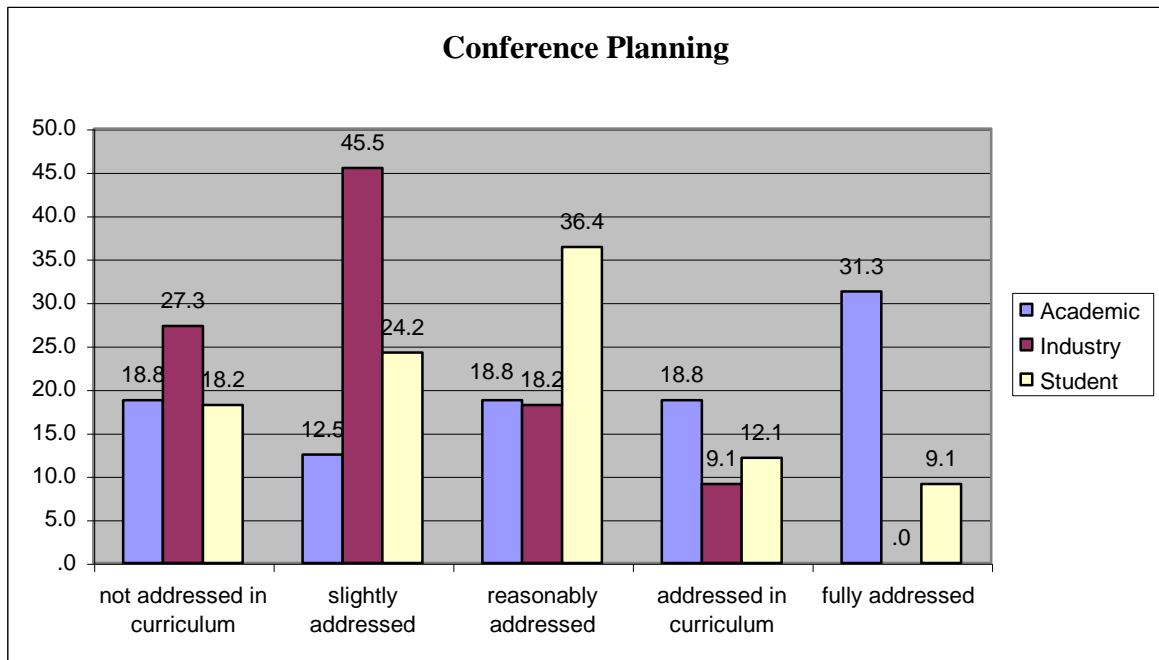
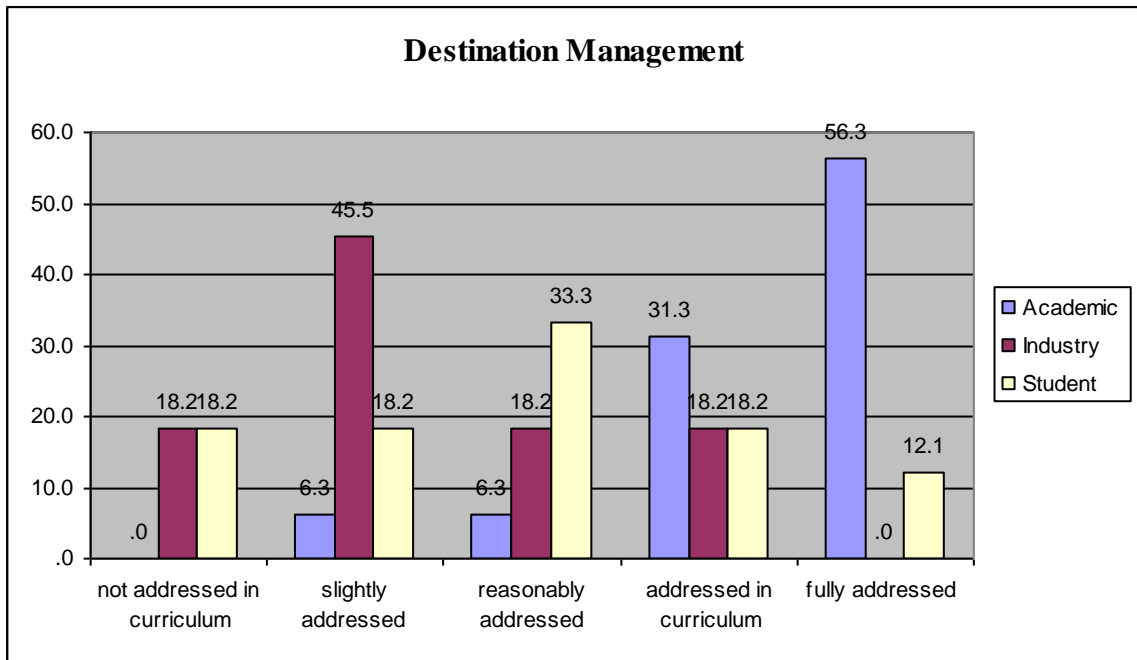
Knowledge of Outbound Attractions

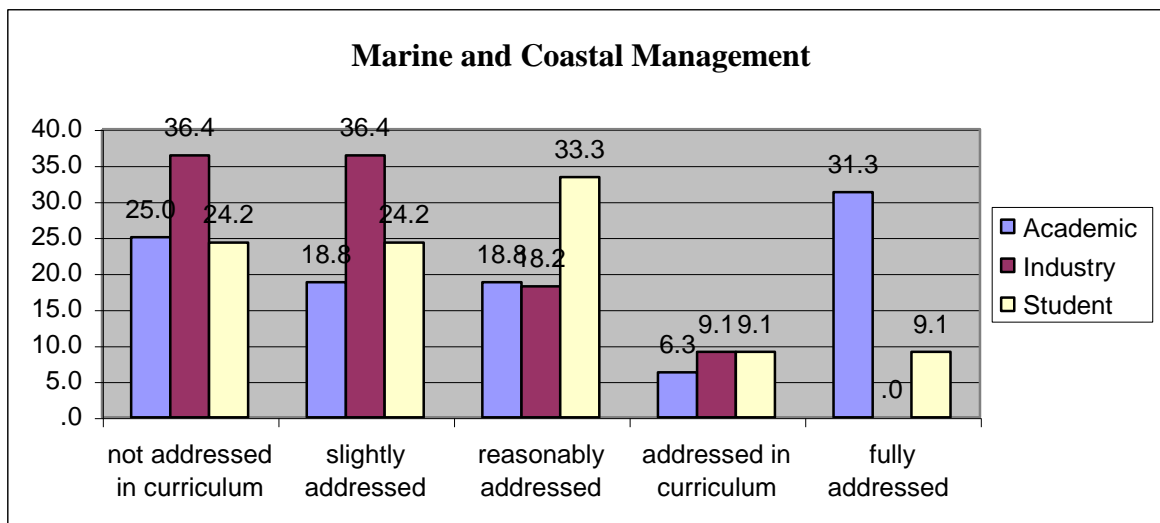
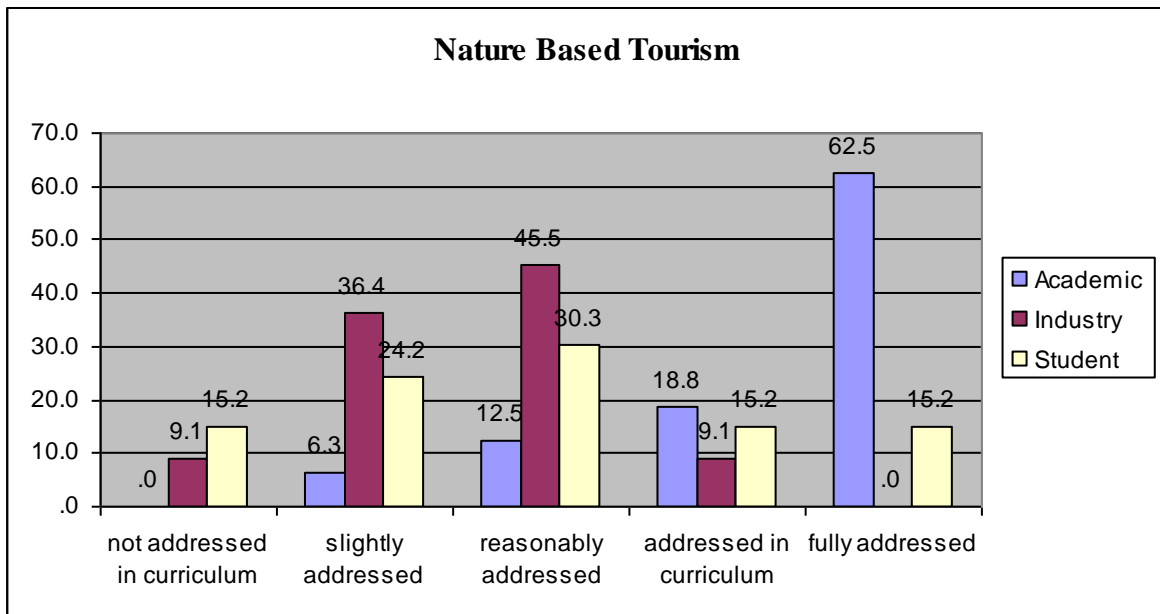
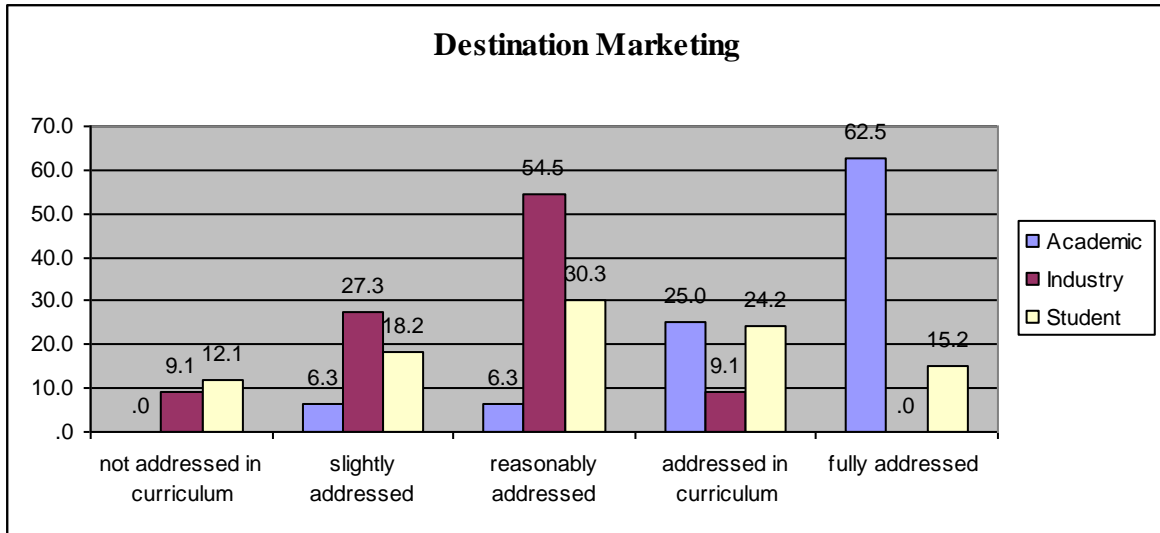


ANNEXURE J: Graphs to illustrate the extent to which the curriculum is perceived to address “Tourism Elective Units”.

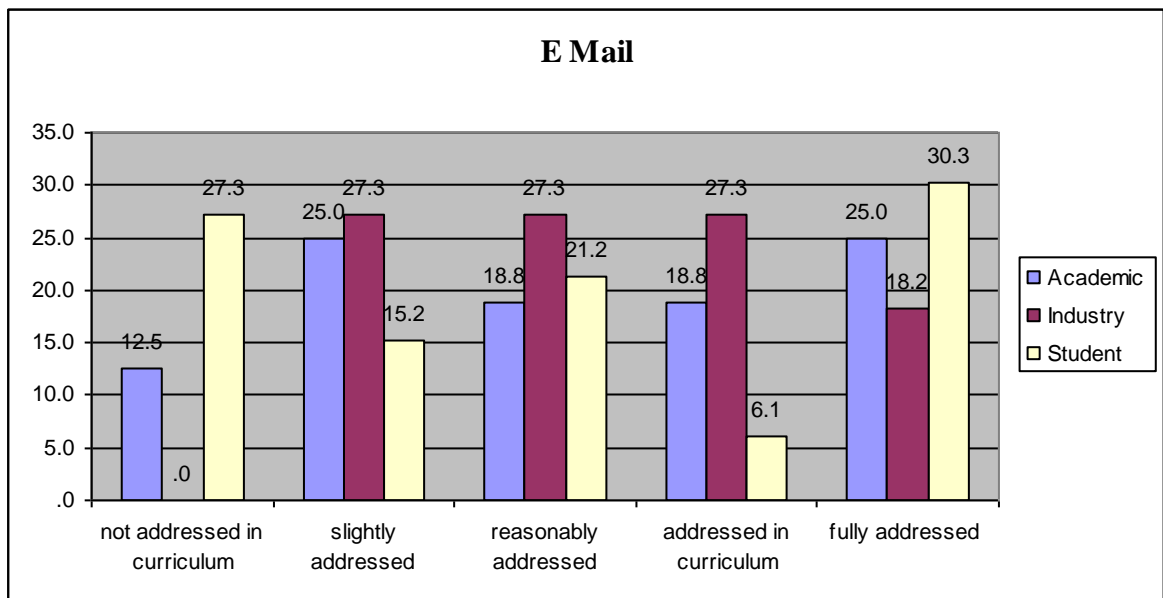
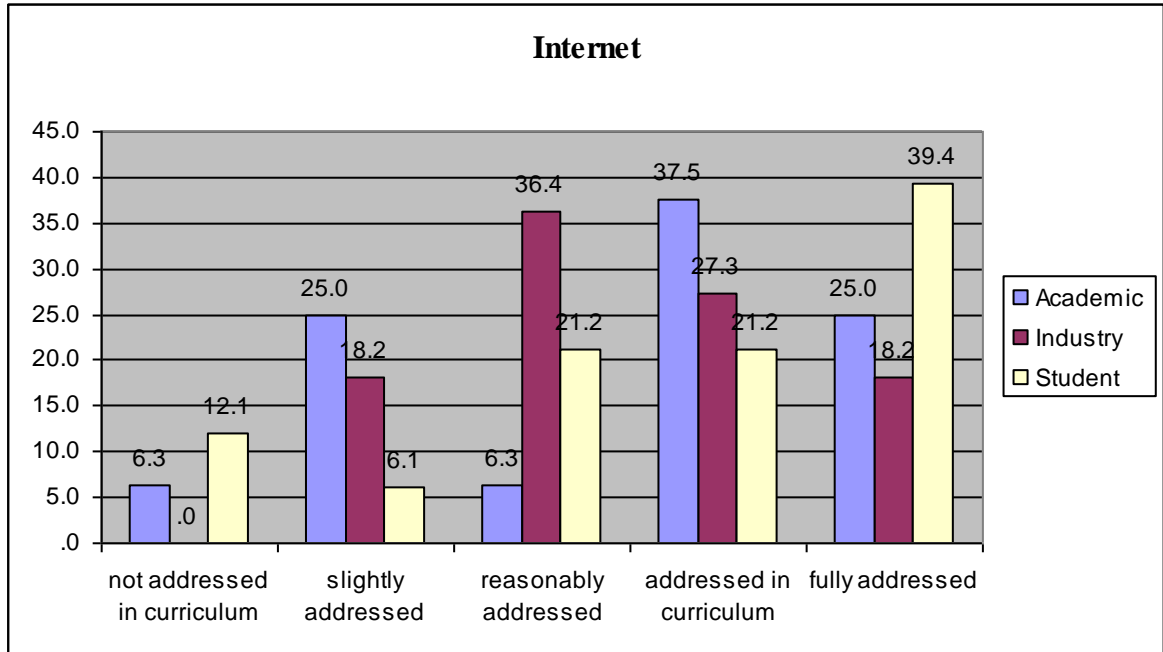


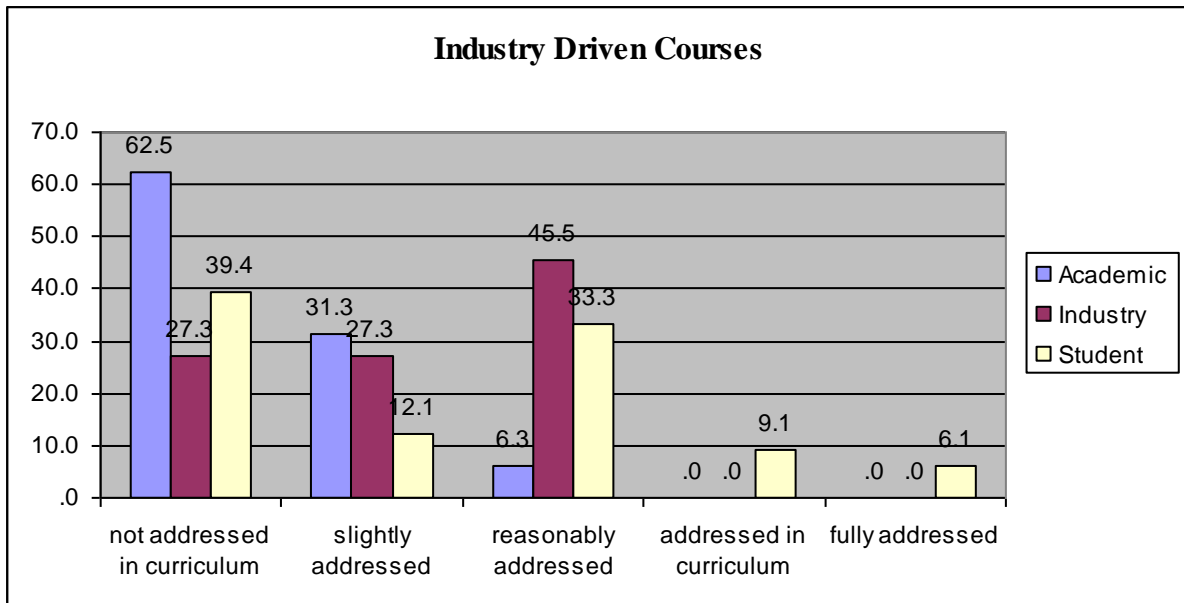
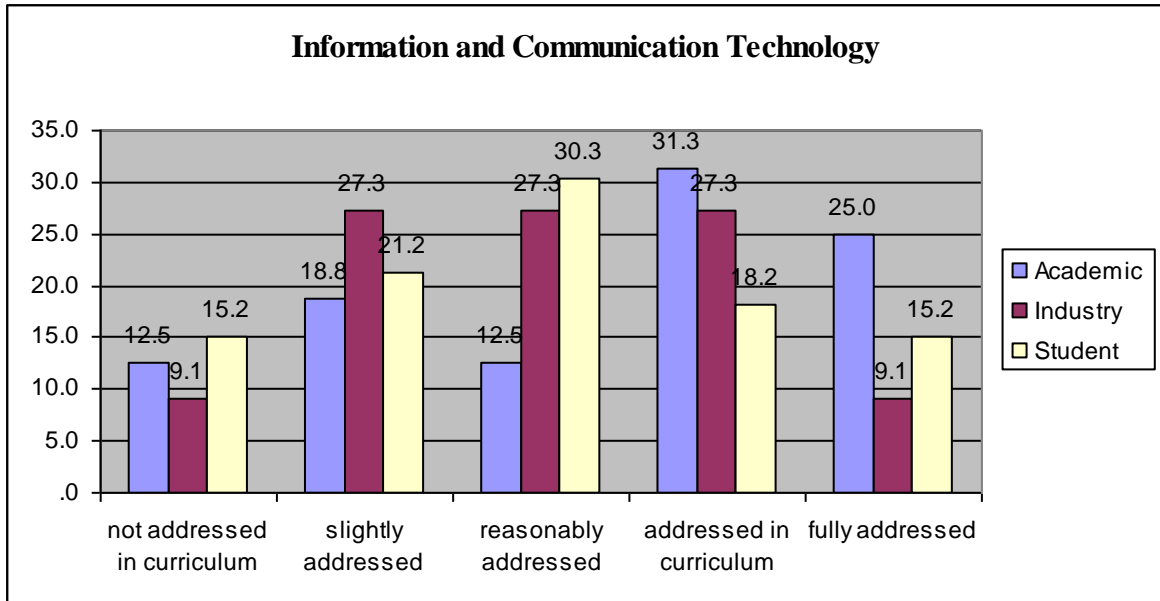




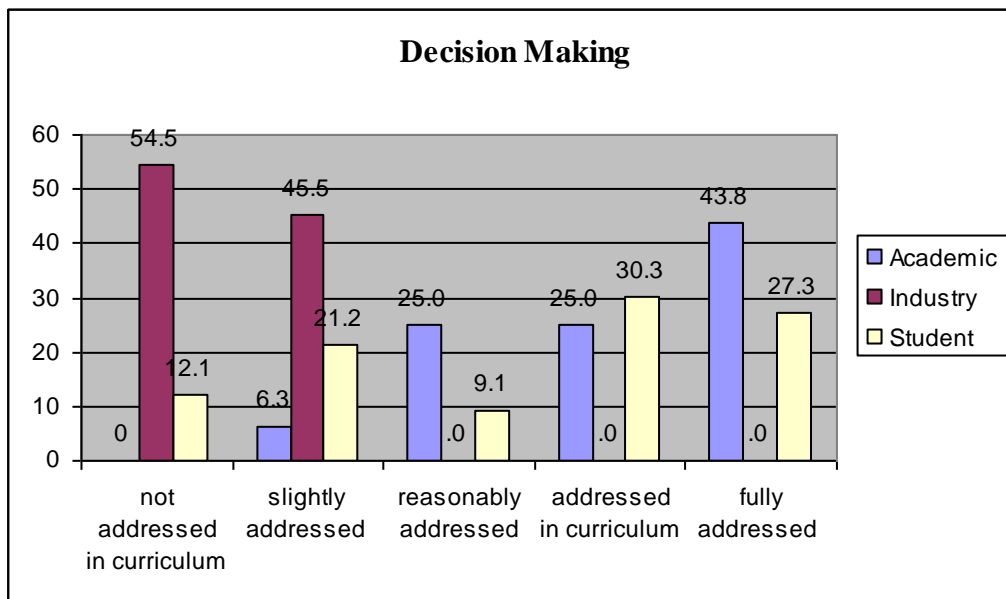
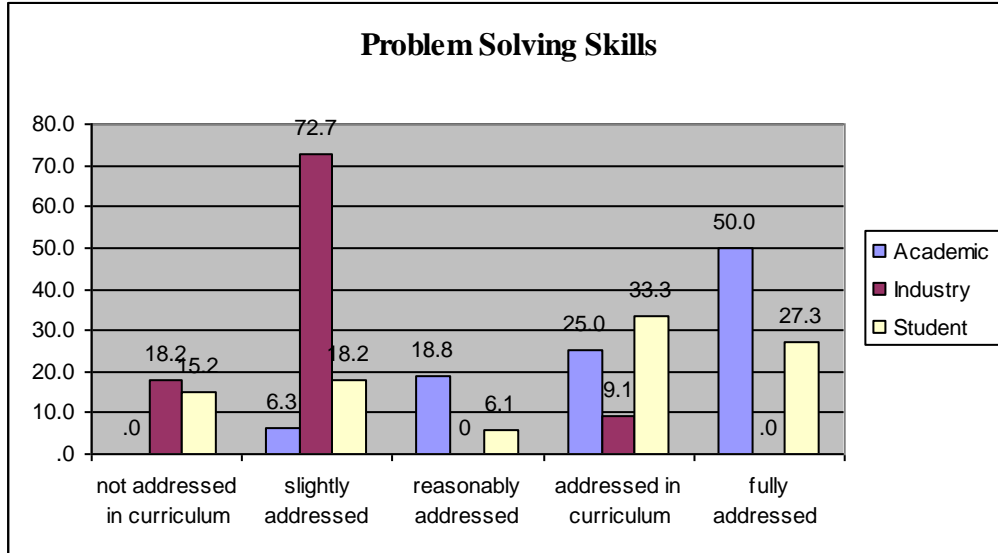


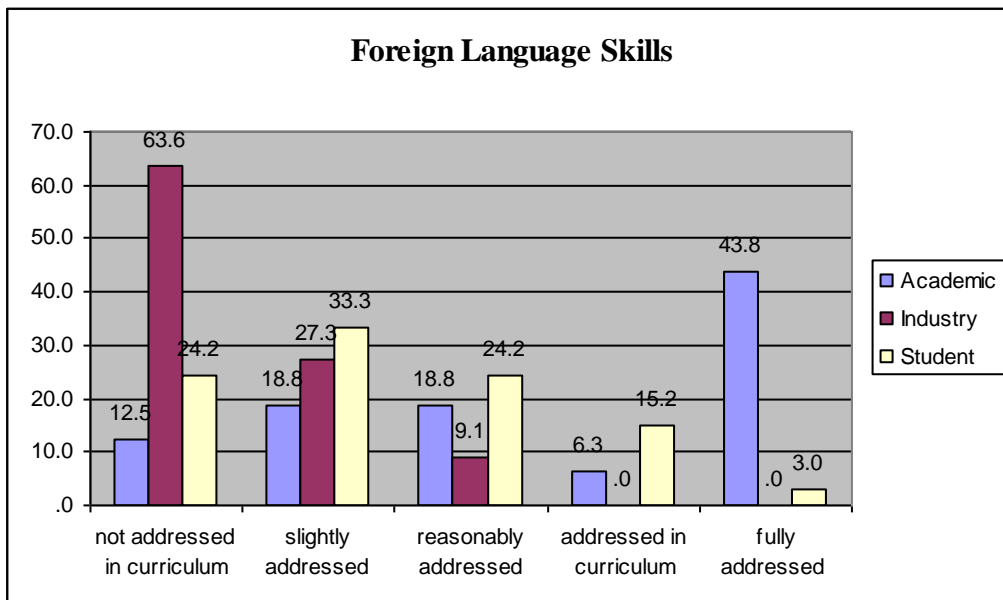
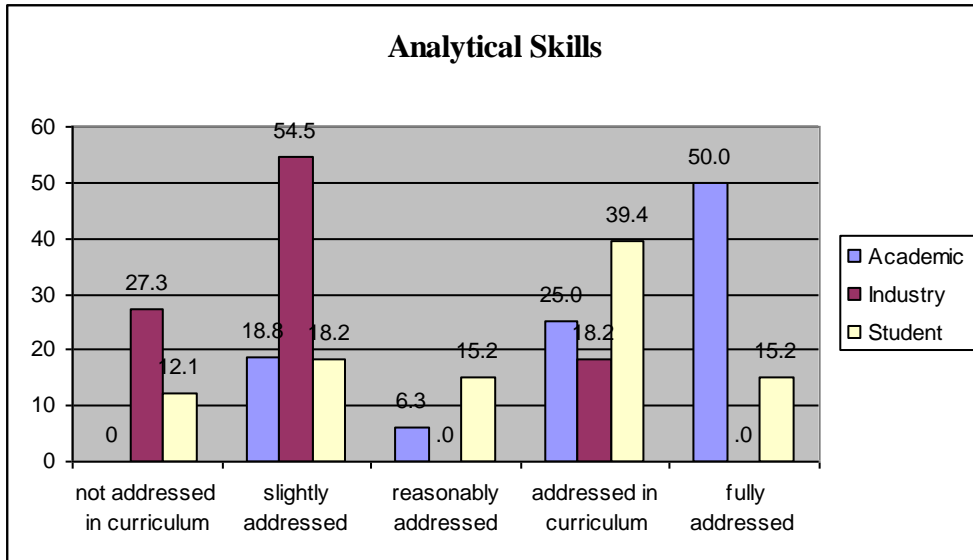
ANNEXURE K: Graphs to illustrate the extent to which the curriculum is perceived to address “Technical Training Skills”.

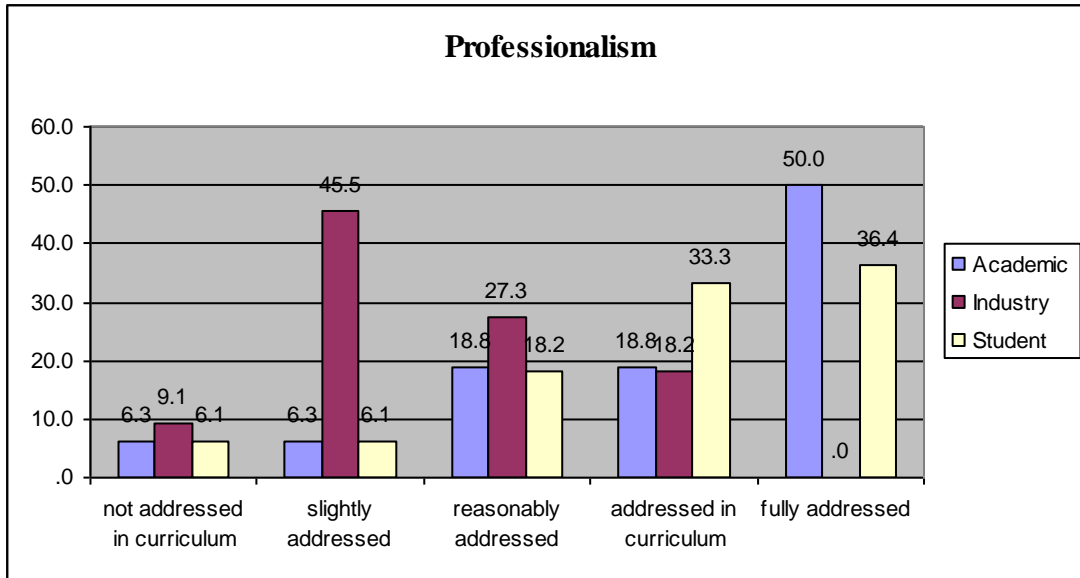




ANNEXURE L: Graphs to illustrate the extent to which the curriculum is perceived to address “Personal Skills”.







ANNEXURE M: Highest percentage results for individual skills as perceived by academics, students and industry

Academics	Students	Industry	Skills	Not addressed in curriculum % Peak	Slightly addressed in curriculum % Peak	Reasonably addressed in curriculum % Peak	Addressed in curriculum % Peak	Fully addressed in curriculum % Peak
		x	Customer Service Skills		x 54.5			
		x	Customer Guest Relations		x 63.6			
X			Leadership & Management					x 56.3
		x	Etiquette & Protocol		x 72.7			
		x	Coaching & Mentoring		x 54.5			
		x	Supervision	x 45.5				
		x	Handling Difficult People	x 54.5				
		x	Research Methodology	x 72.7				
		x	Marketing Research Methodology	x 63.6				
		x	Economics	x 81.8				
		x	Statistics	x 54.5				
		x	Office Management		x 54.5			
		x	Project Management	x 5.5				
		x	Sales Skills		x 72.7			
		x	Financial Management	x 63.6				
		x	Environmental Legislation & Legal Frameworks		x 63.6			
		x	Narrations & interpretation skills		x 63.6			
		x	Sports Tourism	x 54.5				
		x	Hotel Management		x 45.5			
X			Industry Driven Courses	x 62.5				
		x	Problem Solving Skills		x 72.7			
		x	Foreign Language Skills	x 63.6				

Note: % peak is the highest average taken from each skill item from the bar graphs.