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Future of Culinary Education

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Research Paper: Final Draft

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Abstract

Culinary arts schools have been created to supplement the hospitality industry's workforce need. However, in recent years with decline in enrollment and the increased number of successful chefs that do not have a culinary background poses the question of the relevance of culinary art schools. This research paper attempts to identify the significance of formal culinary education in the industry or if simply the information taught requires an update according to the recommendations of culinary professionals. The framework consists of secondary research and findings will clarify and reinforce the need for culinary art schools and the improvement of their curriculum.

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Introduction

Culinary art schools have been in existence for over century, the first worldwide school - Le Cordon Bleu was established in 1895 (Le Cordon Bleu, 2022). A few years prior, in 1879, the first recorded culinary school in the United States was the Boston Cooking School was opened (Escoffier, 2022). Within the last 30 years, there has been a shift in the popularity of the industry. Celebrity chefs, Food network, and cooking shows have increased the desire for people to become chefs. Culinary schools saw a brief increase in student interest and many for profit schools opened to meet the demand.

Recent years culinary institution has since seen a decline in enrollment. Rise of non-formally trained chefs have increased. In addition, the closures of multiple private culinary schools, such as Le Cordon Bleu US and Arts Institute of America (Culinary Sector) can indicate the decline of attractiveness. The cost of culinary school in comparison of entry level or intro level culinary do not correspond. Hence the closures of the previously stated institutions. Also, many restaurants and chefs believe that working their way up in the industry is more beneficial than attending culinary school. There lies the debate.

This poses the argument: Are culinary school necessary for the success of the hospitality industry or are culinary schools outdated and need to be reconstructed to fit their needs? Why are culinary school decreasing in enrollment? Does Covid-19 play a roll in increased or decreased desire to go to culinary school or not. Culinary art school curriculum needs to be relevant and related to the trends and demands of the industry.

Literature Review

The literature review will examine culinary arts programs in Canada, Thailand and the United States. The articles explained will supply information that support the need for

curriculum development in culinary arts upgrading. The study, by Sarayuth Chaileuangleu explores the factors affecting the culinary arts program development for professional chefs in Thailand (2020). The summary of the Council on Hospitality Restaurant and Institutional Education 2007 Annual International CHRIE conference and Exposition rationalize the importance and progression of culinary arts education. The support for closing the gap between industry and culinary arts competencies was also supported in Marinakou's article.

Culinary School Importance

Culinary art school have been established to increase proficiency in the workforce. Experienced chefs seeking employment are qualified through their education or previous experience.

Though culinary education is not required for employment in a professional kitchen, it has been shown to assist a worker with placement in a higher entry-level position and can help a worker advance more quickly (Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010). As commercial tourism is on demand, Rozilla and Azmin (2011) state that the culinary tourism demands employment of competent and well-prepared dedicated chefs, administrators, and manager in areas of hotel management, food service, restaurant operations, food manufacturing, catering and hospitality-related fields to provide the best food and service for guests and consumers. Knowledgeable employers, including chefs are in demand in all areas of the industry. The importance of culinary education is emphasized through the need for competent chefs working without on-the-job training. Businesses lack ample resources to spend on training chefs or kitchen staff basic kitchen knowledge (Nornazira, et al., 2019). Chailenuangleu (2021) states that personal chef competency is key but in addition to knowledge, skills and attitudes that play in overall

performance of chef instructors. The transfer of knowledge from instructor chef to student is important. This topic will be discussed further.

Pastry art is a subsection of culinary arts education. The need for this educational field to continue is vital for its success. Unlike other sectors of culinary arts, pastry is based on methods of preparation and techniques specifically learned. These can be taught on the job but companies do not have enough time to train on the spot. Competencies are needed for success in the industry. Easier and highly recommended to hire someone with experience rather than not. Nornazira et al. stated that they emphasize competencies especially with pastry chefs, they stressed the expectations anticipated from the chefs is high. For example, a plated dessert is a combination of skills, technical training, timing and an eye for design that takes culinary knowledge, competencies and acquired skills. Culinary arts skills can be taught on the job, but previous knowledge is ideal and desired. Culinary professionals emphasize the need for technical skills to become a master, proper training and education is a strong foundation for successful futures (Nornazira, et al., 2019).

Traud (2016) stated that Thomas Keller, famed chef/owner of the French Laundry and Per Se, believes in the value of culinary programs and education and foresees the progressive culinary education of the future incorporating the best chefs from the industry.

Workers more knowledgeable from technical and trade schools are happier in professions due to the increased knowledge they have in their field (Antun, 2005).

Students who graduate from technical institutions having learned the skills industry employers have identified as workplace entry skills experience higher levels of job satisfaction. The act of being satisfied with one's job usually translates into being satisfied with one's career. Career satisfaction results in employees being more fully

committed to their job and their employer (Russell, 1991) (Antun, 2005). This higher level of commitment usually results in employees staying at their job for longer periods of time. The opposite of this situation results in employees being dissatisfied with their jobs and careers. Those employees are far more likely to leave the company they are employed by and seek alternative employment. (Antun, 2005)

Recent article suggest that students going into the industry do not have enough industry skills needed before entering the workforce (Askren, 2021). In Joe Askren's article, he states that it is challenging for employers to find well rounded, competent employees without changing the way students are taught.

Updated Curriculum Needed

As stated above, culinary schools have been established since the late 1800s (Le Cordon Bleu, 2022). The evolution of the culinary arts craft started from apprenticeship programs to the Escoffier brigade system to cross train and organize the kitchen staff and finally to the evolution of culinary schools.

Culinary arts education has been unchanged for over a century (Mitchel, Woodhouse, Heptinstall, et al., 2013). The traditional way of master-apprentice model adopted since the middle ages (monkey see monkey do), has been the standard teaching in this profession for many years. Apprenticeship models are on the job trainings rather than classroom settings. More recently the competency based (mastery) learning emerged resulting in current culinary art programs curriculum today. These competency-based learnings include teaching particular skills until mastered than applying those skills into the workforce. Traditional style teaching (lecture centric) is the common style taught today which is a form of competency-based teaching. First starting with French Cuisine as the center of the culinary world, the integration of other country

cuisines as not inferior but equal to French style is an advancement of this industry. The need for alternate ways to teach correlates with the fast-growing industry. Current culinary arts teachers are two generations ahead of current students. Teachers teach how they are taught therefore must constantly upgrade their teaching styles to integrate what newer generations are used to.

In addition, the need for the shift to cater to younger generations' learning styles created a shift in the classroom is supported by:

Technology is intervention by design: the use of practical and intellectual resources to develop products and systems (technological outcomes) that expand human possibilities by addressing needs and realizing opportunities. Adaptation and innovation are at the heart of technological practice. Quality outcomes result from thinking and practices that are informed, critical, and creative. (Ministry of Education 2007:32)

Traditional classroom based culinary instruction include in person lecture, and live demonstrations. Integrating technology in the culinary classroom has proven to be a benefit to the students. The argument that chef to student in-person instruction was the only way to transmit culinary information was a result of years of passed down knowledge from the history of this profession (Mitchel, Woodhouse, Heptinstall, et al., 2013). The use of recorded demonstrations of practical culinary techniques has proven to result in the same outcome of students' ability to perform the technique (Brown, Mao, Chesser, 2013). Students can access and view cooking videos multiple times rather than a one time in-person demo. Emerging online culinary arts programs have been extremely popular with younger generations and students that have limited time due to personal time restraints. In-person instruction consists of 5-7 hours of lecture, demonstrations, and lab executions. The study by Brown, Mau, Chesser (2013), suggest

that students generally gain similar cooking skills and knowledge from both delivery methods, and video lecture is just as effective.

In addition to the need for advancement in types of teaching and integration of technology, there has been a demand in the industry to update curriculum and focus on modern trends and skills needed to be successful today. Traud (2016) suggests that there is a connection to the industry and culinary education and that one succeeds with the other. The framework and standards of culinary education needs to be addressed to strengthen the field of research as well as the future of the industry. There has been a call to deepen culinary education as in 2013, students at the CIA protested for the dilution of curriculum standards (Traud, 2016). Traud (2016) also suggests that culinary educator standards and teaching must be updated to model industry standards. He stated, “if educators are not properly obtaining professional development in correlation to their educational institution, then graduates will not be fully prepared upon entering the industry (Traud, 2016). Culinary curriculum dates back to Escoffier and classical French techniques.

Industry and educational institutions are aligned due to the skill standards that are linked to job satisfaction that are shared with culinary schools. The organizational commitment in culinary arts programs are essential for success. Graduates with mastery of required skill sets have increased job satisfaction and positive longevity in the industry. It’s the correlation between institution and industry – skilled demanded in industry is aligned with culinary arts curriculum equals higher level of graduate job satisfaction. (Antun, 2005)

Mariniakou’s (2022) study analyzed the gap between existing competencies and the curriculum with the current/future market needs in relation to the chef’s skills. With her findings the gap

between the two will be analyzed and can be developed into existing programs or trainings within sectors of the industry. Her study shows how changes can be made for future chefs to be fully utilized today. In relation, Muller (2007) stated that it is not uncommon for industry to complain about the lack of skills by graduates. They also lacked proper secondary educational language and communication skills. He also suggested that graduates need to develop problem solving skills, customer service management, service management, teamwork and people skills (Muller, 2007).

Analyzing current culinary arts programs and hospitality programs. One study by Joe Askren (2021), states that changing standard curriculum to experimental learning will benefit the students. As cited by Askren (2021) “the inclusion of apprenticeships, clinical sessions, cooperative learning experiences, field work, internships, practicals, service-learning experiences, student teaching, study abroad programs and volunteer projects – by learning-by-doing is a step towards better employers in the field.” As stated above current student learning is teacher centric, the switch towards student-based curriculum and learning and interaction is how to develop soft skills. This topic will be discussed in a later section. Current curriculum is in line with industry. According to the Council on Hotel Restaurant and Institutional Education (CHRIE) summit – two to four culinary arts degrees have been discussed on which curriculum is important and relevant. It has been evident that major soft skills along with critical thinking, good social skills, self-confidence and work ethic are necessary for the success of culinary arts school students’ success and advancement in the industry (Askren, 2021).

According to Thailand cooking schools there is a difference compared are expensive because you get what you pay for (Chaileugangleu, 2021). Higher teaching qualifications are required for private cooking schools (Chaileugangleu, 2021). Culinary school instructors within

the community college district requires an Associate's Degree in the topic of teaching with six years of industry experience or a bachelor's degree with two years of experience. Which is appropriate for the jobs offered at the community college level. Chaileugangleu mentioned that culinary arts students' success mirrors the success of their culinary instructors and also their culinary program, thus identifying that student assessments can determine what areas to improve or keep within the department (Chaileugangleu, 2021). In support of this statement, Chaileugangleu (2021), quotes Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, (2006)

“chef competency is considered a combination of knowledge skills and attitudes that plays an important roll and relates to the performance of the chef instructors and vice versa. Evidentially, this can ensure that instructional competency is concerned with professional chef competency as and effective instructional factor which can provide a chef student with access to the status of professional chef in their culinary arts career in the future. The instructional competency directly affects the learning competency because the method of instruction and abilities of instructors affect students' learning outcomes.” p.9

To be successful in this industry we need to update industry competencies to match culinary arts curriculum. Improvement in this sector is based on what is necessary in the industry. As sited by Chaileugangleu (2021) by Saucer (2018 that:

It is essential for food service operators and culinary arts educators to implement professional chef competency in the professional chef development process as they are keys for the achievement of future professional chefs, and to improve professional chef competencies and capabilities of cooking skills to meet international standards as qualified professional chefs in the food service industry. p.11

Updated curriculum along with technical and soft skills that are important, mental health of students are important as well. Student centered teaching, positive classroom environments, and the promotion of creativity is what culinary classrooms are challenged to go towards. Culinary arts education a Sweeny refers to it as CAE, the ideal classroom would involve curriculum that is stable educational foundation, lecturer's awareness for student success and overall mental health, along with industry partnership through advisory boards to facilitate professional development and paving a clear pathway for students (Sweeny, 2022).

Methodology

The methodology for this working paper consists of secondary research regarding culinary art schools' success in relation to employer satisfaction and the requirement of updating current curriculum to fit industry and hospitality needs. The research conducted support the change in culinary arts education in addition to supporting the workforce industry. Various studies, surveys, and articles from the United States, Canada and Thailand were reviewed to support and disprove the hypothesis. Culinary arts studies were limited sampling, from different areas of the world. Compiling this research identifies the need for further expansion in research in these areas.

Findings

Culinary arts schools have limited information regarding success rate of graduates in the industry. Industry favors workers with previous knowledge and understanding of industry skills but does not specify skills were obtained from formal culinary education. In addition, several of the articles in the literature review reveal the need for reformation change in curriculum (Normazira, et al., 2019; Chailenuangleu, 2021; Antun, 2005; Askren, 2021). Students heading into the workforce are expected to have more skills besides cooking or culinary skills including

management skills, managing skills, common sense, and other skills (Askren, 2021). A couple articles suggest that soft skills and communication skills were key factors needed to implement into culinary arts curricula (Muller, 2007; Antun, 2005; Askren 2021). No articles mentioned changing culinary skill curriculum, but Askren (2021) emphasized “the inclusion of apprenticeships, clinical sessions, cooperative learning experiences, field work, internships, practicals, service-learning experiences, student teaching, study abroad programs and volunteer projects – by learning-by-doing is a step towards better employers in the field.” He suggested to align real life scenarios in culinary arts education to mimic the industry today. In doing so, students are well equipped and prepared for the workforce. Counteracting the stereotype that graduates are not prepared (Askren, 2021). Industry partners have expressed their concerns that new culinary student workers are not fully prepared for work. Traud (2016) mentioned that the culinary institute addressed the change in curriculum was below current standards and they “watering down” of education and admission requirements to increase enrollment.

In addition to the updated curriculum, the articles suggested a new finding regarding culinary education instructors. In several articles, the authors indicated that culinary arts teachers need to be updated in their skills, teaching material and experience (Chailenuangleu, 2021; Sweeny, 2022; Traud, 2016). The limitation of instructor’s knowledge limits the education of the graduates and suggested that instructors require professional development or continuing education to keep relevant to industry today (Chailenuangleu, 2021; Traud, 2016).

According to the articles researched, culinary arts schools and education is important to the industry (Antun, 2005; Traud, 2016). Antun (2005 and Traud (2016) agree that graduates that master their skill sets have higher success in the industry and when curriculum is aligned with industry needs, both parties are successful. Antun (2005) adds when a student graduates with

abilities hand in hand with industry needs, they achieve a higher level of job satisfaction. Culinary schools were institutionalized to support industry needs, the articles suggest why culinary school is needed, the curriculum updates suggested, and the continuing education needed for instructors.

Limitations

Research for culinary arts programs is limited but have stated that education is linked to perceived success not guaranteed success (Johnston, 2016). Information obtained does not currently reflect the state of culinary art schools and employment post COVID-19 pandemic. Culinary art schools post pandemic may be obsolete or more important to the industry, and this information is not currently available. Articles available and approved are older and information may not be current and relevant. Significant articles in this research include articles from outside of the United States. Although culinary industry is the same, different countries can cause a discrepancy in the findings. In addition, this research paper addresses the success of culinary arts schools, there is a gap in research regarding importance of chef certifications or culinary certificates in the industry.

Implications

The study of the importance of culinary arts schools in relation to the industry is critical for the vitality for both involved. Culinary art school produce students that will affect the industry that need proficient chefs. This study reinforces the need to keep culinary schools relevant through updated curriculum including trends – gluten free, plant forward, sustainable cooking. In addition, the partnership with industry peer and industry based advisory boards are key for the both the success of graduates and the success of their future employers. As previously mentioned, all industry partners recommend soft skills, communication skills and introductory

management skills for all culinary students as they enter the workforce. It is important to implement these trainings early on in our culinary training as it was not implemented or understood as important. Understanding the needs of the industry will allow growth in both culinary arts programs and the betterment of the culinary/hospitality industry.

Conclusions

Culinary arts programs were established to meet the needs of the industry by supplying ample workers. Culinary art schools are seeing a decline in enrollment was it due to lack of relevance or need for the industry. Culinary school do play an important role in the success of the industry but as discussed before increased need for communication, management skills and other soft skills. They need to focus beyond cooking skills and more what the industry needs today. Also, post pandemic industry does not have enough time or energy to train people on the job. Jobs are readily available, but labor shortage is prevalent in this industry. On the other hand, culinary arts school are seeing a decrease in enrollment across the country. Culinary education has many factors that inhibit new enrollment, keep current students and completion rates. These factors can include allotted time to go back to school, lack of childcare or the lack of money to pay for school, and the overall need for higher education for entry level salaries. Also, further research in the completion and success rates of graduates in the industry today and the correlation with certificates and pay rates. These are areas for further research. As more culinary schools are changing their ways in teaching by introducing mental health services and promoting balance lives, it is noted to further research how those benefit and change industry. Future of the industry requires the need to adapt to the changing world starting with our culinary art schools.

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