

Review Paper

International Higher Education Cooperation in Hospitality, Tourism and Food Studies: An Experience Conducted by the Taylor's Toulouse University Center in Malaysia

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Abstract: This paper narrates the story of the international university cooperation between a French state university, University Toulouse - Jean Jaurès and more precisely, the Higher Institute of Tourism, Hospitality and Food Studies (ISTHIA) and a private university, namely Taylor's University and more precisely, the *School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts* located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. We first describe the five stages in the development of the partnership from 1986 to date with a focus on the major evolutions in both institutions and then review the current activities (joint degrees, research, exchange programs and continuing education) conducted under the aegis of the Taylor's Toulouse University Center since 2009. We outline the paradigms underlying the design of such an international academic cooperation by using this experience as a reference. Lastly, we suggest socio-anthropological models of collective initiatives to describe and account for the rationale of action by the two partners. This paper encapsulates the nature of international academic cooperation and offers food for thought to envisage other cooperation schemes in different cultural environments.

Key words: Academic cooperation, hospitality, tourism, food studies, research, players

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Introduction

International cooperation is a common trend in every domain including university life and projects. It contributes to the dissemination of knowledge, networking, research and to the building of the cross-border community of scientists as described by Robert Merton (as cited in Olivier, 2000). On a wider scale, beyond the academia, it also promotes a better understanding of other cultures and other communities. Standard cooperation focuses on student and teacher mobility, common training programs, research and knowledge sharing through publications or scientific events. This model meets the needs of cooperation schemes between mature academic institutions which have gained similar academic and scientific legitimacy. Other types of cooperation are also launched between “junior” and “mature” universities, with a view to encourage the transfer of know-how. Once this stage completed, cooperation along the lines of the former model may take place.

The cooperation between the University Toulouse – Jean Jaurès, Toulouse, France (UT2J) and Taylor’s University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (TU) began in 1986 in the field of tourism, hospitality and food studies. At the beginning, it consisted of vocational training schemes launched with a view to support the creation of a Hospitality and Catering School. But, owing to the development of the Malaysian university system and the academic shift of tourism and hospitality training in France, the nature of the partnership gradually changed.

This paper is a summary of a communication delivered during the third AsTRES symposium (Higher Education and Research Association in Tourism) held in Angers from 27th to 29th May 2013. It covers the various historical stages the partnership went through in order to adapt to the institutional evolution of each partner (Smith, 2014). It provides food for thought to reflect on existing models of international cooperation and aims at analyzing the factors that have made the partnership a success thus far. This partnership, as described in this cooperative paper, should not be taken as an example to be duplicated, but as a guide for long-lasting and multi-phased adaptable experience that can likely open up discussions on the various ways partnership activities can be structured in training programs, research, scientific events and publications.

The main purpose of this paper is to share the experience of a very long cooperation in higher education and to critically analyse the key factors of its success.

A Long-lasting Experience... Amid Differences

At a working meeting in *Asia-Euro in Tourism, Hospitality and Gastronomy*, an ambassador from the European Union delegation in Malaysia had remarked that the most astonishing about this partnership is not the duration in itself, but the fact that it had lasted so long between two widely different establishments: one being public,

the other private, which in itself could have ended in failure. There were indeed a number of factors that could have potentially led to failure. We shall examine six of them. The first one is the **private-public character** of the partnership. The Malaysian partner is a private university almost exclusively financed by student tuition fees. Their training programs are geared towards the labour market, evolve according to market needs and are *driven by the market*. On the French side, it consists of two partners: GRETA (a network of public centres for adult education) supported by the Hospitality and Catering School of Toulouse relying on human resources from other establishments and a public university. Both are state establishments, concerned with employability, but their training organization follows a *top down* logic; the training offered depends on the diplomas certified at the national level on an equal joint basis for Bac* (Diploma) and Bac +2 (Higher diploma) levels and between a university and the Higher Education and Research Ministry at Bac +3 levels and beyond. And yet, these differences have emerged as compatible; more interestingly, they have had opportunities to initiate adjustments on both sides.

The second potentially negative factor is the evolution of the establishments' statutes, as each underwent changes that occurred at different times. Cooperation started between a hospitality and catering school (Toulouse) and a strong 80-year old establishment served by a highly trained teaching staff and a junior management. Next, the French partner gained university status with the implementation of a "Maîtrise" (formerly known as Master's degree) in Hospitality, Tourism and Spa Science and Techniques in 1987 at UT2J. However, the syllabus of this new course was co-managed by the hospitality school and the university. A few years later, a new university department, the Center for Tourism and Hospitality Studies (CETIA) was created to regroup the Maîtrise, a hospitality and catering degree and DESS (Higher Education Specialized Studies). The next step was the development of the training into a 5 degree course (including 3 vocational degrees), 5 Masters degree courses and several university diplomas. In April 2012, the department became the Higher Institute of Tourism, Hospitality and Food Studies (ISTHIA).

As for the Malaysian partner, the establishment remained a hospitality and catering school until 2000. But in 1991, it was bought up by the *Taylor's Education Group*, a subsidiary of a major Malaysian bank, regrouped together with several higher education schools (commerce, information technology, communication...) and turned into a business school based on a franchising model. The first degree course was offered in 2000 in cooperation with CETIA. In 2007, Taylor's became a University College, authorized to award bachelor's degrees, and then was granted university status in 2011. While the franchising period enabled a transfer partnership, the university status allowed the move towards increasingly equal forms of cooperation.

*Bac/Baccalauréat : school leaving certificate/A levels (GB), high school diploma (US)

The third potential risk factor was problems raised by the **administrative management**. Until 1999, the cooperation was managed within a tripartite entity through SFERE (French Society for Exporting Educational Resources) which guaranteed the Malaysian partner to be provided with a new partner from the French educational system in case the current partner failed to carry on the partnership. That was the case between 1993 and 1999 due to the failed attempt of both partners (the Academy of Toulouse and Taylor's) to obtain direct management of the partnership. During that period, SFERE developed contacts with various experts from the Grenoble and Paris hospitality and catering schools, while the head of the project taught at the Toulouse hospitality and catering school and worked with SFERE on the basis of an individual contract. In 1999, a direct management agreement was signed between Taylor's and the Academy of Toulouse (GRETA and UT2J). The decision was jointly made by Nicole Belloubet, the Toulouse Academy Chief Education Officer (first to travel to Kuala Lumpur to form a clear idea of the actual partnership) and Romain Gagnard, the UT2J chancellor. The partnership which paved the way for a bachelor's degree in the field of tourism and hospitality, also provided the much needed support for Taylor's status application as *University College*. The offering of the Master's degree similarly helped Taylor's University towards attaining full university status. That particular time lag kept the partnership on the move by making transfers and exchanges all the more relevant.

The fourth obstacle was, of course, **working language**. However, one should not oversimplify the issue by reducing it to being different languages, i.e., English on the one hand and French on the other. Language is a much more complex issue in Malaysia. When the partnership first started, not every student had a good command of English and currently, there is a growing number of foreign students who are often equipped with different levels of English proficiency. It should be noted since Malaysia's independence (1957), the teaching language at primary and secondary schools has been mainly Malay (*Bahasa Melayu*). Therefore, not all students enjoyed the same command of English. Moreover, while the French experts were not really familiar with English, communication relied on the exchange of concrete teaching messages. The issue evolved when Taylor's became a full-fledged university. Teachers now have a far better command of English but the number of foreign students with uneven language levels has kept growing.

The fifth risk factor is related to **ethnicity**; a political assertion of multiethnicity on the one hand and integration as a reference model on the other. Furthermore, positive discrimination in Malaysia that favours public university placing for students from the Malay ethnic groups, led students from Chinese and Indian communities to turn to private universities whereas the French educational system relies on the principle of equal rights.

The last critical issue is related to the **training organization**. The French model relies on the linkage between Bac + 2 training programs offered in hotel catering schools and the Bac + 3 training offered at the university. However, Taylor's main model has developed along the Anglo-Saxon organization partly as a result of the colonial history of Malaysia.

The absence of a colonial past, which does not mean there are no historical links with France (Dovert, 2013) added to the specific approach of the links between higher education and vocational education (Altbach, 2012) which proved to be and is still considered as an added value as compared to the competitive offer organised along the Anglo-Saxon model starting at Bac level (Laporte & Poulain, 2013).

The Five Development Stages of the Partnership

In 1983, upon the request of the Toulouse Chief Education Officer (Daniel Levier), the Toulouse International Hospitality and Tourism Institute (IIHTT) that relied on the collaboration of the continuing education department of the Toulouse hospitality and catering school and the three Toulouse universities was established. The establishment was supervised by the GRETA Garonne and backed by the Toulouse hospitality and catering school. Its mission consisted in promoting French educational resources in the field of hospitality and tourism. Projects that assisted and contributed to the development of a number of hospitality schools abroad were launched, e.g. assistance with engineering design (Barcelone), feasibility and programming studies (for Dusit-Thani in Thailand and for the Venezuelan and Cuban governments), auditing and consulting (International Hotel and Tourism School (SHATEC) in Singapore). In 1985, the United Nations launched a tender for training small and medium-sized company managers in Malaysia. IIHTT was awarded the hospitality tourism component of the project. Thus French training set foot in Malaysia. In the course of that particular work, the IIHTT experts met a French-Malaysian couple who had settled in Kuala-Lumpur and wanted to set-up a hospitality and catering school. Thus, Michael Young and his wife started the Hotel and Catering International Management Center (HCIMC) assisted by IIHT. This was indeed a daring move, considering Malaysia was not yet established as a tourist destination.

As such, cooperation started with the opening of a hotel and catering school in 1986, which then evolved up to higher education and is today developed further in joint research activities. We shall now describe the history of the partnership that developed along five main stages.

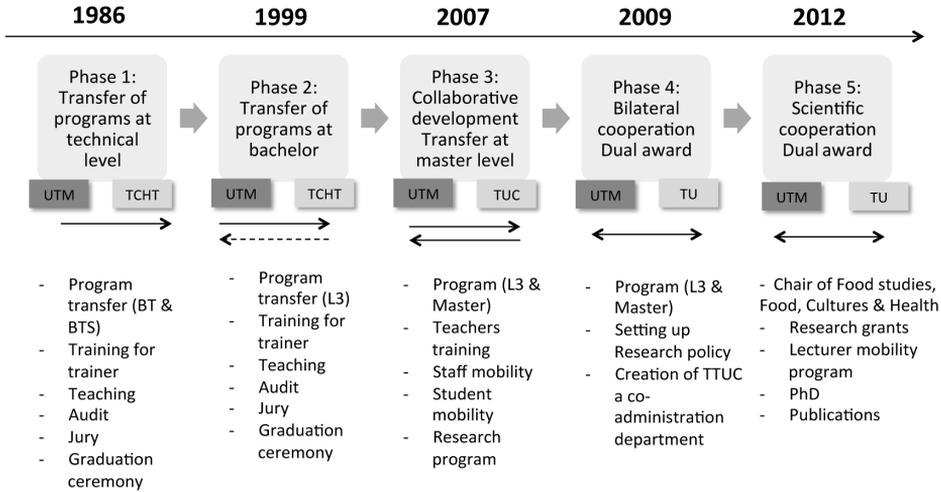


Figure 1. Five stages of developmental cooperation

Stage 1: HCIMC, a small hospitality and catering school at Kenny Hills

The philosophy behind the first stage was the transfer of know-how and methodologies. The goal was to open up a hospitality and catering school, set up in a rehabilitated house in the district of Kenny Hills, Kuala Lumpur. A consulting contract was signed: it outlined the transfer of diplomas, teachers’ training, the organization of exams and chairmanship of juries. The training offered was organised along the French model: the BTH (vocational school certificate), then the BTS (Vocational Intermediate Degree) were adapted to the context of the certificates awarded. In 1991, the buy-out of the school by the *Taylor’s Education Group*, the educational subsidiary of the Malaysian Bank of Finance (MBF), contributed to improving the professional management of the establishment; it started being part of the Malaysian institutional environment.

Stage 2: The academization of the training

One of the main features of the French model of hospitality and tourism higher education is the strong linkage existing between vocational high school training and vocational higher education (Laporte & Poulain, 2013). The BTS that specializes in these sectors was created in 1970 and later fuelled the higher education training programs of the MST (Maîtrises des Sciences et Techniques/ former Master’s degree) launched in a number of French universities in the mid-1980s. The BTS then became one of the main recruitment pools and that unique model was duplicated in Kuala Lumpur. This was a clear move away from the Anglo-Saxon model in which

students start their hotel training at the Bac level and stay three years in the same establishment until they are awarded the Bachelor's level or degree.

This cooperation took on an academic turn when a hospitality and catering vocational degree was created in 2000. This was the first Bac + 3 degree in this particular field in Malaysia and was quickly followed by a vocational degree in food systems engineering and management and a degree in tourism focusing on tourism project management by institutional and economic stakeholders. Just as France, the Hospitality and Catering School fuelled these three training courses with hospitality and tourism BTS students.

Stage 3: Creation of a Master's degree and a joint Bachelor's degree

Taylor's new status in 2006 as *University College* and the harmonization of the curriculum at the European level (the LMD reform - Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Doctorate) led to remodelling of the training offered at the degree level. As Taylor's new status allows it to award its own degrees, a mutual agreement to create joint degree programs was then made. The three-year training for Bachelor was divided to six semesters; after completing the first four, students would be awarded a BTS equivalent certificate, and the last two years will lead to the validation of a Bachelor's degree. Therefore, the partner's support changed and instead focused on two areas : quality auditing (Ray & Gordon, 2013) and teachers' training carried out by experts from the Toulouse hospitality and catering school for the first two years; auditing, training sessions, jury controls and on-site two-week seminars for Bachelor's degree level were done by CETIA experts.

The CETIA-UT2J vocational Master's Degree in International Hospitality Management (MIHM), which from 1999 onwards replaced the MSTHTT, was offered in Kuala Lumpur starting 2007. It was the first Master's degree in Hospitality to be offered in Malaysia. It welcomed students from TCHT's three Bachelor's degrees, from other Malaysian universities as well as French students from CETIA and other foreign universities. The degrees on offer were clearly market-targeted and this was reflected in the unusual teaching organization and schedules. Lectures and tutorials were held in the evenings from 6 pm to 9.30 pm two weekends a month to enable working students to attend the training. Similarly, Taylor's teachers were offered continuing education sessions at the Bachelor's degree level. This allowed 35 TCHT incumbent teachers to obtain a Bachelor's degree and 15, a Master's degree.

At this stage, the comprehensive training offered comprised the whole range of curriculum level as provided in France. French students could carry out their studies at TCHT while Malaysian students could chose to come over to Toulouse. Malaysian lecturers were also invited to teach at CETIA.

Stage 4: Institutionalization of the partnership

The objective at this stage was to accelerate the move towards cooperation: joint degree programs at all levels as well as students' and teachers' dual flow and research development. In 2009, the two partners decided to institutionalize the cooperation by setting up the Taylor's Toulouse University Center (TTUC) - a joint department run by a Board of Directors and co-supervised by the two university Chancellors. Within the new institutional framework, the partners agreed on five major objectives. The first one aimed at promoting the French higher education system in the field of tourism, hospitality and food studies in Malaysia and beyond in Asia, relying on joint degree programs. The second objective was implementing common research programs that would involve lecturers-researchers from both universities and establishing institutional linkages with other European and Asian universities. The partners also considered establishing research partnerships with the economic and institutional stakeholders of the tourism, hospitality and catering sectors. To this end, ERITA-Asia was set up as a branch of the UT2J team and has held an annual research seminar called the Asia-Euro conference (the first was held in 2004). Junior PhD students were also granted co-financed positions of junior researchers. The third objective was meant to encourage student and teacher mobility to allow both parties exposure to different social and cultural environments. Fourth, the partnership aimed at playing a major role within the MFUC (Malaysian French University Center), created in 1986 with a view of reinforcing university cooperation between France and Malaysia. Lastly, improving French and Malaysian students' employability in Asia. The whole range of university activities within this cooperation are now being operated under the supervision of the TTUC institution.

Stage 5: Heading towards research

A new milestone was reached in 2010 with the transformation of *Taylor's University College* into *Taylor's University* (full-fledged university). The Malaysian establishment was now authorized to award PhD degrees, so there was a clear shift of focus towards research.

Even though research is not new to Taylor's, it is a difficult challenge to meet, as over the past 20 years, *Taylor's University College* has built a professional culture based on teaching activities. The existing human resource team who made the school into a success story, are now being confronted with new requirements. There is a need to increase the number of PhD graduates, associate professors and professors.

Setting up research teams, identifying and mobilizing sources of funding, holding research seminars, organizing scientific events and communicating research work are some of the challenges that need to be met by the TTUC partners. It becomes even more difficult as TCHT is, by itself, a training organization, highly valued in the

field of hotel training, as in 2012 it was awarded the highest distinction, (rated tier-6 – outstanding), by the Malaysian Higher Education Board through the *Malaysian Qualification Agency*. It only started research work a few years back. In addition, the philosophy at work within the more or less Anglo-Saxon doctoral school (Airey & Tribe, 2005) and the lack of professors working in this specific field complicates the matter. It was therefore then decided to limit cooperation to PhD dissertation work carried out within the UT2J doctoral school.

ISTHIA, through the research activities conducted by lecturers-researchers within CERTOP (Research Center on Labour, Organization and Power) UMR-CNRS 5044 currently supports its partner in meeting this new challenge while allowing it to develop its own initiatives. Even though the two establishments are clearly not the same as ISTHIA started its research agenda 20 years ago, the establishment is also undergoing a change of focus from teaching to a balanced model combining teaching and research requirements. To this end, ISTHIA has developed a twofold strategy. It first assists qualified teachers (“professeurs certifiés”) to move up to Phd level, then broadens the recruitment of teachers-lecturers to other disciplines. Since its launch, it has been gradually establishing ISTHIA as a training and research institute. TCHT is also starting a similar process which, no doubt, will take a longer time. Some incumbent teachers have started on their PhD work and PhD graduates from the Anglo-Saxon world have also been recruited. However, their involvement in thesis supervision as soon as they have passed their doctorate makes the partnership even more complex and this obstacle will only be removed with lecturers from internal promotion.

Review of TTUC Activities in 2013

Cooperation developed along four main areas of activity include joint degree programs, research, mobility programs and continuing education.

Higher education joint degree programs

The initial offering included three Bachelor's degrees and one Master's degree. The first degree concerns the hotel and catering sector. The second one focuses on collective catering and engineering and the third one is a course on tourism with two specializations: business events and leisure activity management. Some of the graduates carry on with the Master's degree in International Hospitality Management.

These four training courses are joint programs, which grant students both French and Malaysian diplomas by the end of their studies. Joint degree programs are the successful outcome of several years of collective work and reflects TU's determination in keeping the French higher education brand. As a first world tourist destination, France has been developing a system of specialized higher education

training programs highly valued in Asia since the 1970s. Furthermore, the popularity of the country in terms of gastronomy validates the trainings offered. The number of students have kept growing with 578 students at Bachelor’s degree level and 129 at Master’s degree level in 2012-2013. Nevertheless, numbers now tend to level off as a result of several factors: growing competition, economic and political crises in some of the potential client countries (Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan...) as well as a much more restricted Malaysian migration policy which makes it more difficult for foreign students to obtain visas.

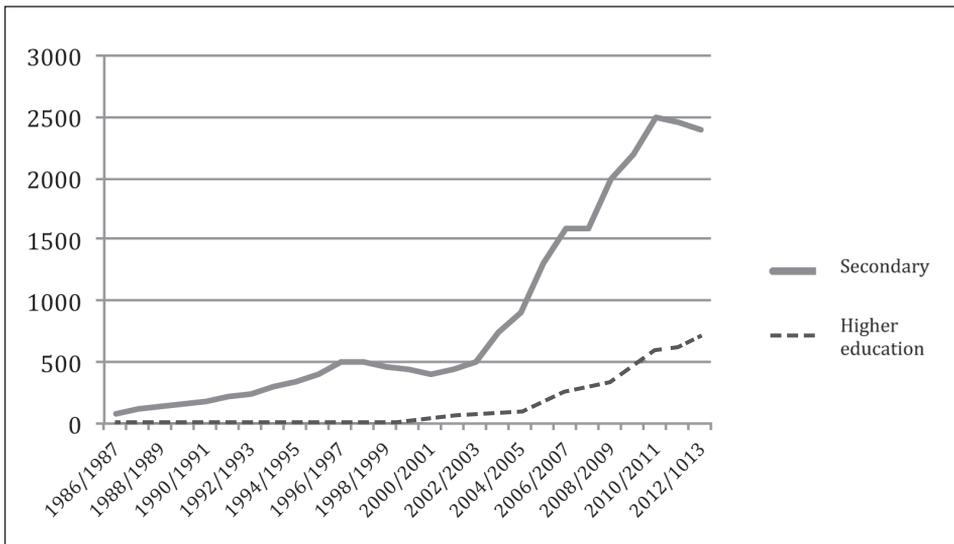


Figure 2. Increase in student numbers, 1986-2013 (TCHT-ISTHIA)

Research activities

As mentioned previously, cooperation in research first started with a branch of ERITA in Asia (ERITA-Asia). This paved the way for 6 seminars, a *PhD summer School* and five symposiums (Asia-Euro). The publication of research papers was made possible by means of special English issues in *Tourisme* from 2006 to 2011 and later, the *Asia-Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism* (APJIHT) journal published by the *Center for Research and Innovation in Tourism, Hospitality and Food Studies* (CRiT).

Taylor’s status as a full university has accelerated the growth of its research activities. In 2009, the university developed an ambitious strategic plan for research with the recruitment of PhD researchers and provision of internal funding resources. CRiT was established with aim of establishing itself as center of excellence for

research. Within this context, in August 2012, the two partners created the Chair of Food Studies: Food, Cultures and Health, chaired by Professor Jean-Pierre Poulain, socio-anthropologist and director of ISTHIA. Two other Toulouse researchers, Dr Laurence Tibère, Assistant Professor (MCF) in sociology and Dr Cyrille Laporte, PhD in sociology, have also been brought in to develop research activities. Among the chair's general objectives are the development of research in the field of food studies, greater international visibility for TU, the implementation of academic cooperation linkages with public universities over the world and the establishment of industrial partnerships.

The scientific objectives are focused on the transformation of food systems in the context of modernizing multi-ethnic societies. The chair's first research program is the Malaysian Food Barometer (MFB) that studied the evolution of Malaysian food practices. Developed in partnership with a Malaysian public university (UKM), the MFB objective is twofold: describing Malaysian food practices and analyzing them through the diversity of social status, ethnicity, sex and age group. Prospects for application are economic (understanding the evolution of the food market at home and outside the home) and public health (identifying the changes likely to affect the development of non-communicable diseases such as obesity and diabetes type 2). The MFB is cofinanced by both partners through their own resources as well as with support from the Malaysian Higher Education Ministry, the CNIEL observatory of food habits (OCHA France) and through industrial partnerships.

The Malaysian Higher Education Ministry finances a number of research programs. Hence, **CRiT** has applied for the Long Term Research Grant Scheme (LRGS) with a project entitled "Ethnic food patterns and nutritional education to cope with the rise of obesity. Socio-cultural determinants of obesity". In order to get a better understanding of obesity, the project focuses on the cognitive process leading to food decisions by outlining the socio-cultural determinants; it also explores the cognitive perception of physical activities and assesses the conditions in which health and nutrition messages are received and accepted, thus understanding the transition between knowing and acting in food behaviours, and appraising the part played by socio-cultural environments and lifestyles in food practices. These two programs clearly reflect the TTUC's new ambitions in research.

In addition, both institutions co-organize the annual Asia-Euro conférence (its 5th year in 2014). This event focuses on issues related to tourism, hospitality and food studies in a multidisciplinary perspective and welcomes over 300 participants from European and Asian countries. On the other hand, several lecturers have started their PhD dissertation work either along the Anglo-Saxon model with local universities or with the TU doctoral school, or along the French model within the TESC (Time, Spaces, Societies, Cultures) doctoral school of Toulouse University-Jean Jaurès.

Mobility Programs

Developing staff and student mobility is one of the challenges faced by international partnerships. Student mobility programs cover three different types of opportunities: internships, study courses and study tours. Students from both partner countries are encouraged by TTUC to do their studies either at ISTHIA or at TCHT. The partnership grants French students scholarships to help them partly or fully afford tuition fees. International scholarships have enabled Malaysian students to come and study in France for a Bachelor's or a Master's degree and French students to study in Asia. Professional employability in the hotel industry through means of internships are also encouraged by agreements signed between TCHT, ISTHIA and economic stakeholders of the hospitality, tourism and catering sectors. The Bachelor's degree syllabus provides for third-year students to spend some time at ISTHIA to get to know French culture and share their Malaysian culture.

Staff mobility programs are meant to strengthen the relationships between the teaching teams from both partner establishments. In 2012, three ISTHIA lecturers benefited from the first long-term mobility program (2 years) from France to Malaysia with a view to maintaining the incumbent activities and boosting research. Vice-versa, there have been 15-day to 1-month stays of Malaysian guest lecturers in France, although with a lesser scope.

Recognition of Prior Learning and Experience: First Session in 2013

Access to a professional diploma through validation of learning from acquired skills and experience (VAE) has been made possible since 2002 in France. It enables professionals to apply for the validation of their work experience and thus obtain a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree by following a procedure governed by the Higher Education and Research Board. Since Malaysia does not have a similar system for these levels of qualification, the partnership paved the way for this in the course of the 2012-2013 academic year. It enabled five applicants, among whom two professionals and three TCHT teachers, to validate a vocational degree in hospitality and catering. TTUC thus opened up new avenues for cooperation in continuing education. The local model is still being developed but the experience of ISTHIA is a tremendous boost for TCHT with regard to this new project.

Reflecting on the Paradigms in Light of the TTUC Experience

The success (so far) of the experience can be seen from the institutional actors as well as the project coordinators who have been capable of evolving the partnership modalities in line with the ever changing internal and external contexts experienced by both institutions. The cooperation modalities have actually changed several times over the past 26 years and various paradigms (franchising, transfer of know-how,

co-development) have been successively and simultaneously used. Looking back on the partnership, it can be said that it has, more or less implicitly, managed the co-evolution of two interacting academic systems. Co-evolution used here is in the context given by geneticists to describe the parallel evolution of two interdependent species (Valen, 1973).

We shall first outline the current paradigms used to design international cooperation schemes. Then, focus on the models of academic cooperation according to the different contexts in which they were implemented.

The sociology of international relations (Marcel, 1974) and political science (Colard, 1993) commonly distinguish three main approaches in looking at cooperations from a macrosociological point of view: realistic, liberal and marxist. The first one takes into account existing situations, stakeholders and their strategies with no intention of changing them in order to build up partnerships and alliances. The second one, in line with the liberal economic trend of thought, sees cooperation as ruled by competitive relations regulated by international law, more or less relying on the defence of individual rights. Partnerships are seen as tools to move stakeholders and institutions towards greater social, economic and political freedom. Last of all, the marxist approach sees internationalization as the arena of confrontation between social classes in which partnerships are meant to serve people's emancipation. Some researchers, like Louis Martres, promote a syncretic theory of international relations, which moves away from both liberal and marxist philosophical and ideological dimensions (Martres, 2003).

With regard to academic partnerships, it is necessary to first assess the extent to which the Third World Approach influences the issue.

Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Third World Approach

In the Third World Approach, international partnerships between western and so-called developing countries aim to narrow the gap between these countries (Nahavandi, 2003). It also forms a part of the post-colonial context. The implications of the Third world expression as suggested by Alfred Sauvy (1952) outline the necessary solidarity to be developed between Northern and Southern countries and assert the former's responsibility towards the latter. This responsibility is rooted in the colonial history and in the idea that part of the development of western countries has been achieved through the exploitation of the countries they colonized. Hence, aid is seen as making up for the historical wrongs of the North with both sides bearing a sense of guilt. Academic cooperation becomes one of the main levers to catch up by developing local human potential, which raises a number of difficulties. First, it should be noted that Sauvy distanced himself from the notion in the 1980s as being too general and masking a number of very different situations. Then, when compensation is used as the main approach, it encouraged a "let's get our funding" attitude among both

academic parties, with neither considering the lasting sustainability of the project nor the necessary joint contribution from the recipients. Many projects which were supported by the French Embassy, the French Institute, the AUF (University Agency for French-speaking communities) via French public funding started many joint ventures but were later unable to create the right conditions to be financially independent as the only way to maintain long-lasting actions. The most detrimental consequence is the resentment shown towards funding organizations when they end their commitment.

Even though the TCHT-ISTHIA partnership started in a post-colonial context, at times not devoid of complexities that had to be cleared up, the absence of colonial history between France and Malaysia has probably made things easier. As the partnership was developed in a world shaped by the Anglo-Saxon model with high tuition fees and system of scholarships, the implementation of a self-financed model was made possible. Thus, the project developed without any financial support for the first four years ; only once fully implemented, did it get some support from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the Midi-Pyrénées region and from the Toulouse town council. Lastly, the extremely fast economic development of Malaysia and the emergence of a middle class also completely changed the context.

Before looking at paradigms that can be mobilized to develop cooperation, we shall focus on two different situations: on the one hand, unbalanced legitimacies when one of the partners enjoys greater academic legitimacy and on the other, more or less equivalent legitimacies. The latter may display either a situation of homogenous equivalence with universities enjoying similar levels of legitimacy in the fields of teaching programs, research and non-academic partnerships (industrial, political, governmental and non-governmental linkages) or a situation of heterogenous equivalence with different levels tending to balance out, which in the end, produce a rather close overall level of legitimacy.

The Major Paradigms

Commercial Franchising

Similar to franchise companies, the franchising model first buys up the right to commercialize degrees and their accompanying services in return for direct or indirect financial compensation. Franchisors enable franchisees to award degrees and assist them throughout the agreement period. In the field of higher education (Deardorff, de Wit & Heyl, 2012), the franchising university develops detailed contents which the associate professors from the franchised university follow closely, including pre-defined teaching programs and assessment modalities. In return, the franchised university pays franchising fees and is expected to comply with the strict specifications both in teaching and communication. This prevailing pattern in the Anglo-Saxon world is clearly business.

The philosophy of the French public higher education is not really adapted to that model. Beyond the business aspect, the very conception of teaching is different. The French approach relies on teaching contents defined in terms of objectives and assessment modalities. Teaching programs are largely the professor's responsibility. In this context, the key points are teachers' training and the development of internal competences.

Nevertheless, several private French hospitality and catering school networks organised along the model of business schools have gone international in the same way. They are similar to TU's Malaysian context: Le Cordon bleu with Sunway University and the Paul Bocuse Institute with HELP University.

Transfer of Methodology and Know-how

This method, closer to the French teaching philosophy, relies on teachers' training. As mentioned in the previous case studied, when the degrees from the emitting university are awarded, the recipients enjoy support geared towards the development of teaching teams. We used that method in the first years of our collaboration. CETIA, which had accumulated significant experience in implementing higher education programs in tourism, hospitality and catering in France, was in a position to assist the academization of the cooperation. The definition of degree programs, management of professional and institutional relations, organization of course examinations are all part of the range of activities that can be transferred.

Joint Development

This model raises the issue of the partners' rationale of action which define the cooperation, rather than the question of balance. It develops within a logic of reciprocal exchanges, fuelled by the determination to build together and embodied into concerted initiatives. Stakeholders initiate common actions relying on resources that can be mobilized respectively. However, partnerships are also mainly levers for the development of each respective entity. The institutions may well have different goals and different agendas, since the cooperation mainly serves the rationale of action.

The TCHT and ISTHIA partnership has therefore gone through several paradigms: transfer of methodology and know-how, then joint development.

Understanding the Rationale for Collective Action

From a theoretical perspective, two models of collective action have been used mainly. An approach based on the theory of stakeholders and systems (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977) places a significant emphasis on individual stakeholder's interests within the rationale of action implemented. This explains, among other things, why teachers' training sessions were conducted to help TCHT teams gain higher academic status.

However, the theoretical framework which proved to be the most useful was developed by Jean Pierre Oliver de Sardan in *Anthropologie du développement* (1995). It describes cooperation as an exchange between two systems of action which officially interact to contribute to the development of one of the partners with lesser legitimacy or to that of two partners enjoying a balanced situation. The very process of development, in whatever context, reallocates resources and changes the symbolical status of stakeholders and of the two institutions in their respective social and political arena. When contemplating a cooperation, three levels ought to be considered: the levels of joint action, systems of action and ecosystems in which the two partners live. The mere fact of being involved in a cooperation changes each partner's actual and symbolical resources in their local political, institutional and professional environment.

In our case, the first level is cooperation and its modalities : number of students and graduates, type of degrees, number of teaching and expertise days, research programs and publications. Each partner has used the cooperation within a local strategic rationale. Through the cooperation, the Malaysian partner has benefited from new resources to act in its own competitive environment, confronting other institutions and negotiating with authorities to move its status upward. The same applies to the French partner with its supervisory authorities. After Taylor's became *University College*, they had to issue their own degrees and transform the partnership communication. On the other hand, CETIA had to explain and validate a cooperation model viewed as a business model to authorities often biased by their Third World perspective.

However, the educational philosophy focusing on the development of human resources has suffered some weaknesses. In the context of a strong development of hospitality and tourism programs, many teachers, after completing training, were recruited by competitors, whether in Malaysia or in Singapore. Provisions were then implemented to enforce on-site employment so as to guarantee some stability among teaching teams.

During the academization stage of the training programs and the status change of Taylor's into a full-fledged university, the difference between the Anglo-Saxon model which starts university training at the Bac level and recognizes tourism as an academic discipline and the French model with the weight of incumbent disciplines raised a number of difficulties. To upgrade their team's academic level, TCHT recruited PhD graduates trained in Australia or New-Zealand along the Anglo-Saxon model. The university status opened up opportunities in terms of degree or thesis supervision the year following thesis completion, which is not likely to happen in other recognized academic contexts. Hence, the French partner was viewed, at least in this field, as extremely traditional, and was blamed for slowing down the progress and personal opportunities of some of the stakeholders. On the French

end, it distanced itself from the particular organization of doctoral training while understanding the significant role it played in the Malaysian agenda until adequate partnership conditions are met. The Malaysian partners proposed setting up an economy/sociology-backed doctoral program, a first for TCHT teachers holding a Master's degree but its implementation proved difficult. A few dissertations were started but language problems and discipline requirements soon emerged and consequently, only a limited number of teachers registered for a PhD. However, the arrival of PhD graduates, some of them quickly becoming Associate Professor, enhanced the level the TCHT Master's courses and enabled the partners to move to joint degree programs. There is now a risk of drifting away from the hospitality culture that initially made TCHT so successful to that of academic tourism which is the current prevailing trend. It will take another few years to solve this particular dilemma.

Recent developments in the French-Malaysian cooperation highlight research as one of the levers for development. However, this development is confronted with the problem raised by the different status granted to tourism in the doctoral trainings offered. In the French academic culture, PhD research is mostly disciplinary while, in the Anglo-Saxon model, tourism is actually a discipline as such. A mere click on the Internet (hotcoursesabroad.com) displays over 139 doctoral courses in only 6 countries throughout the world: the United States, Great Britain, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore and Malaysia (Laporte & Poulain, 2013). Lastly, the emphasis laid on research shifts the focus of TTUC's rationale of action. Reputation which, originated from the hospitality culture and techniques is gradually moving towards the world of research. The status of *Doctor*, *Associate Professor* or *Professor* open up new avenues for other areas of legitimacy. The current teams are somewhat unsettled by these new career opportunities and there are potential strategic losses for those who will not be able to catch up with the new university status. Naturally, strategies stemming from different biographies, different stages in lives and different statuses in the organization are triggering conflicts in the rationale of action. An organization is nothing but a world of conflicts and its operation, the outcome of multiple and diverging rationales of rather autonomous stakeholders using the available sources of power (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977). Hence, the main issue here is to identify the connections to articulate multiple individual and institutional rationales.

Conclusion

The success of an academic and scientific cooperation lies in the capacity of partner institutions and players to overcome their differences. If the launching of a partnership does not present any major difficulties, success in the long term is only possible by the progressive increase of activities and ownership of the partners in various respective issues (financial, stakeholders' career, etc). The example of this cooperation between

France and Malaysia shows the potential of this field. Beyond the initial training, continuing education, researcher and student mobility, we perceive that research can play a central role between the partners and serve as a lever for development for both partner countries. The story of this partnership illustrates the long process of academic and scientific cooperation where mutual understanding of the rationality of the players is one of the central keys to success.

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