

HOSPITALITY EDUCATION CURRICULUM EFFICACY: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

Education plays a pivotal role to shape the career of students with contemporary issues and challenges. Hospitality being a prominent service sector caters to the needs of diverse types of clientele, thus a constant revision and updating of the course syllabus or curriculum are necessary to maintain requirement from an administration perspective. In India, the "National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology" has several "National and State Institute of Hotel Management" which analyze and evaluate the need for syllabus revision or upgrading its contents. This research work is intended to examine and assess the course curriculum offered by the hotel management Institutes for preparing their students towards their career in the hospitality industry. The study will largely add to the existing body of hospitality literature in the areas syllabus review and development of curriculum. This study will assist in course directors and other administrators to identify any weaknesses, shortcomings or new changes required for their study course through student preparations for their syllabus.

Keywords: Hospitality, Curriculum, Administrators, Student

to train its students with contemporary industry issues and trends. Reigel (1995) considers the importance of hotel education as an interdisciplinary field of study, where various viewpoints from many areas, especially social science, influence core areas of practice and application in the tourism and hospitality sector. These inter-disciplinary skills inculcate needs for various new learning programs enabling students to be affluent and efficient in their fields. The core areas of training like Front Office, Housekeeping operations, Food and Beverage and Food Production are being provided by every hospitality institutions. However, other fields of studies like accounts, food science, nutrition, hotel engineering, etc. are often overlooked and their concentration also varies from one institution to another. It is, therefore, crucial to design and evaluate syllabus from very diverse fields which is evident in existing literary resources related to the hospitality syllabus. Meanwhile, hospitality being a dynamic industry requires the inclusion of new skills and training needs to be inducted in the curriculum concurrently academic research on industry and employers' perspective have been more discussed as compared to academic and student viewpoint. Henceforth, this study raises certain pertinent questions: What are the key skills that students of hospitality are better prepared in their curriculum and Which areas have a major concentration of prepared according to the current curriculum?

Introduction

Hospitality education has a very strong and direct association with the industry being a professional course

Objectives of the Study

- To examine student perception of preparedness of the hospitality curriculum.

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- To evaluate student preparedness concentration of subject as per the curriculum.
- To identify the generic skills and subjects contributing to preparedness to the hospitality industry.

Review of Literature

The increase in enrolment of hospitality students in recent years has been owed to the rapid advancement of dynamics in hospitality areas in the global scenario. This can be understood by the survey conducted by Rappole in the early 1970s stated that 27 Undergraduates, 7 postgraduate and 2 Doctoral programs in four-year courses of institutes in the USA which in 1992 increased to 142 Undergraduates, 26 Postgraduate and 12 Ph.D. programs from the study conducted by CHRIE (Council for Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education) in 1991.

In an Indian context, NCHMCT was established in 1982 as an autonomous body under the food corporation of India as a sub-unit of the Ministry of Agriculture as an institute to all affiliated Central Institute of Hotel Management, State Institute of Hotel Management, Food Craft Institutes in association with IGNOU, offers B.Sc. Three years program with Msc Two year program and Diplomas in central areas of hospitality. In recent years many hotel management and tourism courses are being provided by universities and institutes providing subjects on accounting, information systems, marketing, and human resources as well as the core subjects like front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and food productions to prepare students for the hospitality industry.

Curriculum Assessment – Theory and Practices

The curriculum theory is a part of an academic discipline deals with the entire learning procedure and shaping the students' ability towards career enhancement and continuous shaping their qualities. As a part of the study, it plays a significant role in the field of education. The following segments are an integral segment of the theory:-

- Curriculum Theory
- Curriculum Planning
- Development of Teaching Materials

- Analysis of Teaching Strategy
- Curriculum Evaluation
- Use of Educational Goals etc.

Various academicians (Johnson, 1967; Godland, 1969; Dewey, 1966; Pinar, 1975) have attempted to define the term “curriculum studies” and formulated definitions; however, no formal definition has been widely accepted so far. Various kinds of syllabus assessment have been commonly used with different programs.

Curriculum Planning

A number of factors play a significant role in curriculum planning. These may include –

- Market consolidation,
- Analysis of current curriculum models,
- Preparation of innovative course designs, on different curriculum, for general/specialized/service of global standards,
- Working on knowledge - dissemination methods,
- Bridging the perceived imbalance between academic and industry requirements.
- Real-time or Simulation experience,
- Considerate removal of institutional constraints and academic work.

A good and efficient curriculum serves the purpose of developing such academic full time or vocational courses, that provide exceptional hospitality skills and add value to the course and enhance employee efficiency.

“Increasingly the subject has been recognized as a ‘credible’ academic discipline has developed its own theoretical framework. This has given curriculum planners the confidence to develop new programs drawing on ideas, concepts, and methodologies beyond that of business management and the social sciences” Paul R. Fidgeon (2010).

Rothman (2007) suggested more emphasis on internships, orientations, training to enhance specific information and work by understanding stakeholders' perceptions, ideas, and experiences.

Hence, the educational institute needs to promote more practical exposure that focuses on the following:

- Achievement of greater professionalism.
- A better understanding of concepts.
- Understanding of what influences consumer decision.
- Exploring the components of service delivery.
- More-over, help hospitality professionals get a clearer idea about what kind of career they want in the hospitality industry.

A combination of various teaching methods and encouraging assessments related tasks for the development of management skills should be useful for college students. As job remains the highest priority for hospitality students the researchers also believe that all-round development of students can contribute to professional development in various sectors (Morrison & O'Mahony, 2003). Therefore, a well-planned and strategically designed curriculum that can help evaluate good practices and identify emerging trends in the hospitality services sector is needed.

Nurturing 'self- efficacy' has become a prominent method for evaluating academic programs. It is defined as a belief in the ability and wisdom to work effectively and efficiently in any kind of situation (Rishel & Majewski, 2009). A 'Need assessment' theory has been a widely acclaimed and academically accepted method of assessing programs in various academic institutions and learning centers. Many models have been proposed (Gilbert, 1978; Hannum & Hansen, 1989) in the assessment of the academic curriculum.

In order to updated techniques, colleges and universities are also designed their own way of curricular evaluation. 'Course Catalogues' are used to analyze the sequence pattern of contents arrangement generated by the means of networks, graph theory or analysis of the plan of events (Heise, 1989). Course contents, study plan, transcripts, student's IQ, teacher's qualification, course review case studies, text surveys can play an important role in the curricular assessment process. Although the grades of the course contents are widely used as an indicator of student's performance or curriculum revision but considered not so reliable (Singh, 2019). This is because of students must get appropriate and effective with streamlined feedback at the beginning of the academic year and, often to upgrade their learning and the kind of assessment that most likely improves teaching and learning is that supervised by teacher to answer the prescribed questions which they

then formulated in regard to difficulties in their own teaching (Angelo & Cross, 1993). Therefore, it should be clear that a form of assessment product is better than the course degrees for its evaluation and added with reference criteria (Cappell & Kamens, 2002) for a more effective, efficient and determined assessment.

Some remarkable contributions by the distinguished researchers to evaluate curriculum effectiveness include (Ramsden & Entwistle's, 1981) relationship between learning attitudes and perceived academic characteristics with their environment. Their work determined a correlation between learning outcomes and syllabus preparedness and established scale of learning outcomes through factor analysis (Entwistle et al., 1979) and the Course Perceptions Questionnaire (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). Following their work, the study was further processed by Meyer and Parsons (1989) in a large sample and different areas. In a subsequent study, Trigwell and Prosser (1991a and 1991b) in an attempt to compare various kinds of study outcomes originating from different courses analyzed the inter-relation of students understanding and study approaches (classroom training, practicals, cross-training) from the evaluation.

Although 'Need Assessment' is a widely accepted method for curricular evaluations, it also serves limitations. Many of the non-applicable subject contents were used as items in scales as well as a huge number of missing data for scales were not validated in the generalized context. Also, factors emerged were diverse and were incapable of calculating scores for analysis (Lee, Altschould & White, 2007).

Most of the works emphasized the lack of literature on student preparation and course syllabus, curriculum while studies related to an education environment or experience are being carried out by various academicians. Consequently, various effective tools and techniques are implemented for professionals expertise and specialization for making them not suitable for use in this study (Rahman, 2010).

The study emphasizes the student preparedness in their concentrated, specialized subject in terms of measuring efficiency for curriculum assigned by NCHMCT to the hospitality institutions. In this regard, it becomes imperative to strengthen hotel and hospitality literature relevant for further studies.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in hospitality institutions to analyze students' preparation for the curriculum efficacy. An online questionnaire was sent to the respondents through Google forms. The questionnaire adopted a 5 points Likert scale ranging from 1 as strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree to examine perceived level for preparedness related to core areas, functional skills, as well as the concentration of their skills and departments associated with the curriculum.

The response collected through respondents was done with non-probability convenience sampling of Undergraduate students to IHM Lucknow. This sample consists of First year, Second Year, and Third (final) Year students to gather information as they had better knowledge and experience from studying the curriculum which was under investigation. The final year students were given preference as they can better evaluate their preparation because of former training experience and are closer or recent graduates who live in more general and hospitality skills.

The data was gathered and analyzed in SPSS 23.0 version. All the variables were descriptively analyzed to obtain Means and Standard Deviations. Further,

Multiple Regression analysis was applied to evaluate which skill sets were significantly contributing to hospitality graduates preparedness of curriculum. The independent and dependent variables were curricular variables and student preparations respectively. To verify the measurement of consistencies reliability test was carried out within each skill set.

Data Analysis and Findings

The questionnaire was pilot-tested with 15 students and experts who were not part of the final survey. The period of filling questionnaire was September to December as it is a favorable time to collect responses from both batches of summer and winter internship students. A total of 123 responses received, and found fit for further analysis. 70 males and 53 females were surveyed, In year-wise criteria, 26 were first-year students, 37 and 60 were second and third-year students respectively. Most respondents belong to the age group (17-19) age, followed by 15 students in (19-22) age groups. When asked about their concentration area, the first-year students were more inclined to the food production department. However, Final year students were more choosing front office as their preferred area followed by food production, Food and Beverage, retail sector and housekeeping.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Responses Received

"Attributes	I st Year Students =26	II nd Year Students=37	III rd Year Students =60	Total Number of Respondents =123"
Gender				
Male	16	21	33	70
Female	10	16	27	53
Age				
17-19	24	30	51	105
19-22	2	6	7	15
Above 22	0	1	2	3
Concentration area				
Front Office	4	11	13	36
Food Production	15	10	11	28
Food & Beverage	3	9	14	26
Housekeeping	3	3	10	16
Retail Management	1	4	12	17

The interviewees were then asked to prefer the core areas in the present curriculum. 105 answers were adjudged to give their preference from the five departments by assigning grades from 1 to 5. Grade 1 corresponds to most preferred and prepared, while values close to 5 were least preferred and prepared.

Table 2: Ranking of Preparedness in Departments

Sr. No.	Departments	Grades*	Rank Assigned	Concentration Area of Respondents (%)
1.	Front office	2.47	1	34
2.	Housekeeping	2.49	2	30
3.	Food and Beverage	2.89	3	24
4.	Food Production	3.51	4	7
5.	Retails and others	3.65	5	5

It was observed that students were more preferring Front office and consider them more prepared for the industry as the curriculum content almost fulfills industry demands, with value 2.47, with housekeeping being second with 2.49. However, Food production and retail were the departments where it was found that the curriculum was old and needs further revision to meet industry demands with values of 3.51 and 3.65 respectively.

The next section had questions pertaining to the satisfaction from the current syllabus, content quality, preparedness from the curriculum and its relevance in curriculum and value for money. The results were described in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3: Students Overall Evaluation

Students' Overall Evaluations	Mean	Number of Responses
Preparedness from the curriculum (a)	2.82 (\pm .43)	96
Satisfaction from current syllabus (b)	2.79 (\pm .56)	98
Quality content (a)	2.69 (\pm .42)	95
Value for money (c)	2.70 (\pm .48)	102
Recommendation to others for joining this course (d)	2.89 (\pm .68)	98

Students overall evaluations from their academic curriculum upon the five parameters as presented in Table 3. The first parameter was preparedness from the curriculum with a mean score of 2.82 out of 96 responses. The score indicated the student was relatively less prepared. The mean value of satisfaction from the current syllabus was 2.79, which might be due to some outdated course content and the wide gap between academics and industry. When asked about the quality content of the academics, the student wished the course content to be more industry-specific, the mean score recorded was 2.69. Similarly, the mean score of value for money was 2.70 and 102 responses were collected, students were of the view that the courses were offered at an affordable price as compared to the facilities they received. The students had mixed views on recommending this course to others but wanted to update the syllabus as well as facilities in their institutions. The mean value of 2.89 suggested students was positively inclined towards recommending the course to others.

The respondents were instructed to assess their perceptions regarding their perceptions of preparedness and Quality attributes. 34 percent answered excellent, however above average and average was 40 and 22 percent respectively. Regarding the quality content of the syllabus 15 percent marked it excellent, whereas above average and average was rated by 42 and 33 percentage students stated in Table 4(a).

Student Perception Regarding Attributes

Students were strongly satisfied were 23 percent, Satisfied 46 percent, while 24 percent were neutral when related to asked about satisfaction from the current syllabus. However, they want the curriculum to be more industry-specific and training oriented. The results are displayed in Table 4(b).

Table 4(c) represents respondents' replies on value for money. 21 percent strongly agreed and 41 percent agreed with the value and affordability of the course. This was because of the easy availability of student loans and high placement records of institutes which motivates students to join this course.

Table 4(a): Preparedness and Quality Attributes

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Poor (%)</i>	<i>Below Average (%)</i>	<i>Average (%)</i>	<i>Above Average (%)</i>	<i>Excellent (%)</i>
Preparedness from curriculum	0	4	22	40	34
Quality content	1	9	33	42	15

Table 4(b): Satisfaction from Learning Attributes

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Strongly Dissatisfied (%)</i>	<i>Dissatisfied (%)</i>	<i>Neutral (%)</i>	<i>Satisfied (%)</i>	<i>Strongly Satisfied (%)</i>
Current syllabus satisfaction	2	5	24	46	23

Table 4(c): Value as an Attribute

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Disagree (%)</i>	<i>Neutral (%)</i>	<i>Agree (%)</i>	<i>Strongly Angry (%)</i>
Value for money	0	9	29	41	21

Table 4(d): Recommendations to Others Attribute

<i>Attributes</i>	<i>Very Unlikely (%)</i>	<i>Unlikely (%)</i>	<i>Indifferent (%)</i>	<i>Likely (%)</i>	<i>Very Likely (%)</i>
Recommendation to other for this course	1	8	19	40	32

Around 72 percent of the respondents likely believed to recommend this course to others (Table 4(d)) as they find course affordable and good career opportunities to work with global brands. From an overall perspective, the Institute of Hotel Management had a better infrastructure for practicals, training, and classroom teaching facilities, and prepared from a curriculum perspective. However, the students believed the curriculum to be revised and contemporary subjects and skills are to be included so as to prepare students for industry demands.

A total of six skills namely analytical, theoretical, communication, teamwork, interpersonal and management were identified from the relevant literature (Rahman, 2010) and their relation to preparing the student for the industry was tested through multiple regression analysis (Table 5). The reliability assigned from Cronbach's alpha values were ranged from 0.674 to 0.850 to test "generic skills" as an independent variable to the dependent variable as "preparedness".

Table 5: Generic Skills to Preparedness

<i>Generic Skills</i>	<i>(Preparedness)</i>				
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t-Ratio</i>	<i>α</i>
Constant	1.634	.376		3.82	
Analytical	.072	.042	.325	1.62	0.793
Theoretical	.284	.104	.119	1.98	0.710
Communication	-.007	.035	-0.27	.84*	0.720
Ability to work in Team	.0126	.138	.233	.52*	0.831
Interpersonal skills	.103	.126	.138	.72	0.822
Management skills	.025	0.35	.232	.94	0.859

$R^2 = .58$ $F = (p < .001)$, * $p < .05$

From the results analyzed, it was observed that the generic skills have a contribution of 58 percent in the preparedness of the students for the industry. At a significance level of 0.05, communication and Ability to work in a team significantly to a student's career.

The efficacy of course curriculum subjects to students preparedness was also evaluated using multiple regression analysis (Table 6). The Cronbach alpha score was ranged between 0.710 and 0.859. Eight subjects were used as a set of Independent Variables to the Dependent variable "preparedness". Four subjects were core departments

while the other four were "peripheral department". Table 6 presents that the total subjects have a 68% role in the preparedness of hospitality learners towards the industry. At 0.05 significance ($p < 0.05$), it was observed that front office and housekeeping were significantly related to education preparedness. The positive beta value of six subjects was reported suggesting student subjects have adequate content to prepare a student for his or her career. However, two subjects of food production and accountancy have negative values suggesting revisions and update in their contents to contribute to student preparedness in accordance with the industry.

Table 6: Subjects to Students Preparedness

Subjects	(Preparedness)				
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-Ratio	α
Constant	.980	.551		1.324	
Human Resource	.064	.063	.123	-1.011	.690
Sales and Marketing	0.211	0.068	0.439	3.104	.620
Accounting & Finance	-0.151	0.053	-0.364	-2.828	.638
Front office	0.035	0.067	0.068*	0.529	.672
Housekeeping	0.205	0.064	0.415*	3.205	.751
Food and Beverage	0.039	0.045	0.131	0.885	.733
Information Technology	0.153	0.104	0.163	1.469	.710
Food Production	-0.237	0.119	-0.232	1.989	.692

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$, $R^2 = 0.68$, $F = (p < 0.000)$

Limitations

The study was conducted in one institute to obtain student perception in preparedness from the curriculum and ascertaining skills which in the curriculum are significant in preparedness to industry. Since the paper is exploratory in nature, the small sample size is acceptable. However, the results cannot be generalized. This work can be replicated in other education centers to collect with a large sample size for generalization of data. Further testing and validation of data may lead to skill sets that can be obtained from the syllabus. Consequently, the study may consult the opinion of educators, students, and industry for better results to the evaluation of curriculum to generate more factors that might be added on to generic skills and subjects improving R^2 values and evaluate curriculum efficacy towards student preparedness.

Suggestions

'Hospitality and Tourism Industry' is one of the fastest-growing service sectors in India has created the rapid demand for hospitality education and its proper training to prepare the skilled manpower to fill the supply and demand gap. With the advent of hotel management education, the requirement of having a proper course curriculum and employability skills with competent institutions have increased than ever. Through the curriculum assessment and its proper implementation and evaluation, a satisfactory result has achieved. Although the objectives of the study are successfully achieved and analyzed all aspects. Considering it's all limitations, the model can be developed further and improved in a new dimension. The students believed the curriculum to be revised and contemporary subjects and skills are to be

included so as to prepare students for industry demands. It was also observed in Table 6 as the negative beta values of Accountancy and food production. The study can be further followed to the larger sample size and more institutes to further generalize and validate the data. There is a possibility to pilot implementation of this 'Curriculum Assessment Model' in an improved and updated version to rank an institute is an avenue to look for the future.

Conclusion

On the basis of this research work, it can be concluded that 'course curriculum' plays a vital role in every type of hospitality education like 'Restaurant management', 'Food & Beverage Management' 'Catering Management'. An 'efficient course curriculum management program' contributes to enhancing the employability skills as well as student's preparedness about any kind of difficulties. On the other side, courses in accounting and food production were not so effectively contributing to the student's preparedness. The students' preparations for these subjects may not be similar to their actual demands from the industry since they are not always counted qualitatively. Students should be able to implement skills that they learned from their curriculum in the industry and bridge the gap between academia and industry and bridge the gap between academia and industry by gaining experience which can boost their professional career. The importance of industrial training, a part-time job, and mentorship get established to analyze the true experience of the service industry with essence and aesthetics.

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