

ENHANCING HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT STUDENT SKILLS THROUGH HANDS-ON LEARNING: INTEGRATING PRACTICE-BASED APPROACHES

ABSTRACT

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This study highlights the significance of hands-on learning in equipping Hospitality Management students with the skills needed for industry readiness. Practical experiences support the development of both technical and soft skills, improving students' employability. Active and experiential learning enables students to gain competencies that go beyond theoretical knowledge, establishing the importance of practice-based approaches in preparing graduates for real-world hospitality work environments. This study employed a quantitative research design to assess the effectiveness of hands-on learning strategies in hospitality education. Data were collected through surveys and informal interviews with 50 alumni from the 2022 batch, selected through purposive sampling. A structured and validated questionnaire was used to gather information on demographics, skill development, and workplace challenges. Responses were collected through Messenger and Google Forms and analyzed using frequency distribution, weighted mean, and ranking methods. The analysis aimed to provide data-driven insights on how practice-based approaches contribute to skill enhancement and industry preparedness among hospitality graduates. The results indicated that hands-on learning was highly rated by the respondents, particularly in areas such as industry insights and career preparation. While problem-solving and adaptability were reported as strong skills gained through practical experience, lower scores were observed in areas like customer complaint resolution and self-reflection. Common challenges cited include workplace complexity, guest expectations, feedback management, technical skill acquisition, and cultural differences. Job shortages were identified as the least pressing concern. Based on these findings, recommendations include the implementation of simulated environments, mentorship programs, exposure to industry-relevant technology, and cross-training opportunities to improve teamwork, problem-solving, and overall flexibility. The findings of the study emphasize the effectiveness of hands-on learning in shaping skilled and industry-ready hospitality professionals. Respondents, composed mostly of young alumni, reported substantial improvement in practical competencies, particularly in adaptability and problem-solving. However, challenges such as managing workplace dynamics, acquiring technical skills, and adjusting to guest expectations remain areas for development. The study recommends enhanced practice-based interventions such as real-world simulations, guided mentorship, and multi-role training to further support student readiness and professional growth within the hospitality sector.

RECOMMENDED CITATION

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