Original Article

"Bridging the Skill Gaps": Analyzing the Mismatch between Hospitality Education and Industry Needs in Uganda

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ABSTRACT

This is a persistent problem of skill mismatch between graduates and employers' needs in the Ugandan hospitality industry, resulting in skill deficits that hamper employability and industry advancement. Identifying the causes of these skill gaps is the aim of this study, together with establishing recommendations to narrow the gap existing between hospitality education and the industry. The study adopted the qualitative case study research design and sampled 26 respondents from recent hospitality graduates and employers, educators or trainers, and policymakers in Kabale District, Uganda. The findings were encoded through thematic analysis. Theoretical orientation is scant with practical and interpersonal skills. Some employers also reported a concern that more attention should be paid to enhancing the practical readiness of graduates at workplaces and that there should be an increased dialog between educational institutions and employers in the hospitality sector. According to the results of the study, there is a need for a closer connection between curricula and industry demands, interconnecting the abilities needed for practical work and soft skills. Recommendations include increasing communication between teachers and supervisors from industry, enhancing internship programs, and including practical aspects. It is recommended that such collaborations be promoted through policy and funding to guarantee the appropriate match of education to the labor market requirements. These steps are relevant for reducing the existing skill gap and making graduates fit for employment opportunities in the industry.

INTRODUCTION

In the hospitality sector and in graduates' employment, the issue of the mismatch between educational results and market requirements is a continuing problem in the academic environment (Okolie et al., 2020). A skill gap, therefore, refers to the difference between the skills required by employers upon graduation and those that education programs provide (Bhatnagar, 2021). To fill this gap, perhaps one of the best strategies to undertake is to bring onboard educational institutions, employers, policymakers, and researchers. Because customers constantly change their needs and expectations, technological innovation at the infant stage in the hospitality industry requires everyone to update their skills (Altinay & Arici, 2022); hence, there must be a way of closing this skills gap to ensure a sustainable competitive advantage.

Another possible area of research for closing the gap is the formation and development of cooperation and partnerships between hospitality education institutions and the industry. Collaboration fosters a guarantee that curricula present the demands needed in practice—equipping graduates competent to function in their positions (Commey, 2021). Another study by Lashley & Halverson, (2021) revealed that collaboration contributes toward the development of a knowledge-based economy through matching the academic knowledge presented in universities to the practical expertise needed in various industries. However, the deficit has, over the years, been attempted to be closed through curriculum development, and graduates still struggle to fit the job markets in many ways due to a lack of matching skills.

The greatest challenge is the gap between the theoretical approach to the problem and real-life practice (Resch & Schrittesser, 2023). When it comes to theoretical research, there are always lots of sophisticated models and frameworks designed within the walls of academia, yet these theories rarely address the field's practical concerns. Therefore, employers are more inclined toward commercial research firms that offer simple, strategic, and pragmatic approaches that can be easily implemented (Rao et al., 2023). This disconnection goes a long way in hindering relevant graduates from obtaining jobs in related industries and also denies the sector the opportunity to foster innovation. This gap must be filled, therefore, by the construction of a common ground between both sides that will allow graduates to join the workforce possessing skills that are current and pertinent to the needs of the industry.

This means that all employers and educators must cooperate to develop and use practices that correspond effectively to the needs of the hospitality industry. This refers to advocating for continuing education and work-related learning, which includes internships, apprenticeships, and vocational training in any mode of delivery in education (Carty, 2021). Last but not least, policymakers and researchers should shape the environment for monitoring industry trends, encourage partnerships between academia and industry, and fix the skills gap. Through the integration of such initiatives, the gap between hospitality education and the market can be closed to produce qualified workforces for the current hospitality sector.

Research Questions that guided the Study

- What are the major mismatches in the Ugandan hospitality industry regarding hospitality education and employers' expectations?

- What needs to be done to increase the quality of hospitality education for graduates in Uganda with a view to prepare graduates to meet appropriate employers' demands?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies show that this sector is extremely short of the skills required for employment openings, as presented by employers in the Ugandan hospitality industry (Tukamushaba & Xiao, 2012). Geary, (2024) research shows that a number of global curricula provide more importance to the accumulation of theories than experience. This is quite annoying to employers because fresh graduates lack field experience, which is highly important in the service industry (Anthony et al., 2021). This imbalance has called for learning institutions to update their courses to meet market demand. In addition, Commey, (2021) added that the hospitality industry is growing and adapting at a very fast pace and therefore calls for regular revision of curriculum proposals to meet the current market demands and innovation. In this regard, many institutions fail to meet the mark, resulting in graduating individuals who may be knowledgeable about practices that were relevant in the past regarding current practices. This gap influences not only the employment rates of graduates but also the quality of offered services within the hospitality industry as employers search for workers that fit their expectations.

Second, soft skills are easily valued in the hospitality sector with the growth of focus in the hospitality field. Pranić et al., (2021) found that a lack of communication, a lack of ability to work in a team, and a lack of understanding of good customer relations are some of the grievances often raised by employers. Lack of soft skills consistently gets in the way of graduates' opportunities to engage clients and colleagues, and as a result, the gap between education and industry widens. Filling these gaps is necessary to increase the relevance and utility of hospitality education in Uganda. Ugandan hospitality graduates struggle with many challenges in translating their academic education into real-life environments. First, inadequate simulations of practice in educational programs make people feel inadequate upon gaining employment. The idea that has been common with most graduates is that although they understand hospitality theory, they lack practical experience to handle the actual situations in the hospitality industry.

Similarly, Vo et al., (2022) noted that internship placements made available to students are usually exciting errands that do not help students grow in their careers. This leads to the abstraction and depreciation of these experiences and is therefore not very effective. Students continue to complain about their internships, saying that they cannot acquire relevant skills and get a clue about how the hospitality industry works. Therefore, this might result in a cycle of inadequate training for newcomers who are not even equipped with adequate experience.

The working conditions in the hospitality industry require a significantly increased working rate and significant pressure, which makes it even harder for graduates. Ngoepe, (2021), it can be seen that most graduates continue to fail to meet the requirements of their various tasks, especially during emergencies where agility and decisiveness are of utmost importance. This can be compounded by inadequate critical soft skills such as communication and problem-solving skills. Altogether, these facets pose great difficulties for graduates in their endeavor to transfer learned theories into practice.

To improve graduate employment and ensure a match between education and professional expectations in hospitality, the following strategies can be proposed. One critical approach is the urge to practice by incorporating training opportunities into the curriculum (Williamson et al., 2021). Through practical exposure, academic institutions can provide students with perspectives on real-life practices in the hospitality industry so that they can apply their learned knowledge. College and university collaborations with hospitality companies should also be encouraged. Exemplary engagements may foster proper internship placements and guide curriculum development pertinent to existing demands (Manke et al., 2023). In this way, institutions will be in a position to play a middleman role between employers and graduates by involving employers in curriculum development. These partnerships

can also generate networking opportunities for students, which improve their chances of employment.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

This study employed a qualitative research strategy to identify the existing gap between hospitality education and industry demand in Uganda concerning the means by which such a gap can be closed. A qualitative approach is appropriate for this research because it allows the researcher to collect data on stakeholders' impressions of the degree of fitness of education and employment (Creswell, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The approach involved collecting diverse qualitative data from various players in the hospitality sector, such as graduates themselves, educators, employers, and policymakers.

A case study design was chosen because of the nature of the study. A case study serves best for establishing research on contemporary phenomena, especially if a considerable overlap between the phenomenon of interest and the context where it evolves (Yin, 2018). This design allows the researcher to explore the experiences of multiple actors within a specified context to facilitate policy and educational changes.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected by administering semi-structured interviews among representatives of key stakeholders in the hospitality industry in Kabale District, Western Uganda. A total of nine graduates, nine lecturers from three institutions, three heads of institutions, two government officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, and three employers were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews offered a high degree of control in that the participants were free to express knowledge and perspectives regarding skill acquisition and training, educational-industrial partnership, and the limitations that graduates encounter when implementing their faculty knowledge in various organizations (Shi, 2022).

Sampling

The purposive sampling method was used to identify participants who were involved with the hospitality education system or in the recruitment and training of hospitality graduates. This technique has the advantage of restricting those who are conversant with the content of the study, thereby increasing the density of the information gathered. Graduates were sampled from the 2018-2023 graduating cohorts to understand the current challenges affecting the employability of graduates.

Table 1: Population and Sample Size

Category	Population	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
Graduates	Hospitality graduates (2018-2023)	9	Purposive Sampling
Employers	Managers and HR professionals	3	Purposive Sampling
Lecturers	Faculty from 3 institutions	9 (3 from each)	Purposive Sampling
Ministry Officials	Officials from relevant ministries	2	Purposive Sampling
Heads of Institutions	Heads from 3 hospitality institutions	3	Purposive Sampling
Total		**26**	

Source: Primary Data, 2024

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The collected data were analyzed under a thematic analysis to extract themes related to skills deficits and the use of education systems. The form of analysis used in this study is thematic analysis, which is fluid in nature and enables the researcher to conduct a comprehensive consideration of the interview data, highlight patterns, and sort data into relevant themes, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). In this way, the most important

topics were identified, including the collaboration of industrial and academic sectors, the importance of developing practical training activities, and the involvement of policymakers in addressing existing gaps as revealed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: The major gaps in hospitality training programs as reflected by employers' expectations in the Uganda hospitality industry.

	Gap	Percentage (%)
1	Misaligned Curriculum with Industry Needs	35
2	Lack of Practical Skills Training	30
3	Insufficient focus on soft skills	20
4	Limited Industry Exposure during the Study Period	10
5	Insufficient Engagement with Employers	5
	Total	**100**

Source: Author compilation, (2024)

A significant proportion of respondents (35%) complained of misalignment between the curriculum and current practices. One graduate said, "*We studied things like theories that are never realistic in actual hotel setting*" (Graduate 2, interviewee, 2024). There is an important need to locate the curriculum so that it becomes more dynamic and relevant. Another expressed, "*When I was through with my program, I realized I was not ready for the job. The courses didn't offer what I wanted*" (Graduate 3, interviewee 3, 2024). This is in accordance with Baum, (2019), who acknowledged that hospitality programs have always been and are still behind in terms of industry advancements, hence creating a big skills gap.

Participants 30% pointed out that practical skills training was severely lacking in most programs. When one participant was asked about his experiences, he said, "*Most of our training was theoretical. I thought it sounded good on paper when I began my job, but I had no idea how to deal with actual life scenarios. A graduate further commented, "It is good to have theoretical knowledge but should have practical experiences in areas we are practicing.*" (Graduate 1, interviewee 1, 2024). Collet et al., (2015) align with this view, arguing that practical skills are important for forming competencies sought by employers because there is a clear separation between training and practice.

The lack of emphasis on soft attributes (20%) of graduates was discussed, and the respondents noted that there was inadequate emphasis on soft skills. In their opinion, some skills were dealt with that were lacking in the course of their graduation; for instance, a graduate stated that they had never learned how to communicate or even solve some disputes common in hospitality. One of them said, "*It's not just about the sales; it's about how you treat those they are buying the product from, and we were not trained well enough on this.*" White, (2020) strongly agrees with this concern, arguing that soft skills are currently highlighted by employers in the hospitality industry and that the lack of such skills in education makes graduates struggle to find their footing at work.

Again, a lack of exposure to the industry during studies emerged as an important issue, contributing 10%. One submitter commented, "There was limited exposure to businessmen and women." This is why internships should be made compulsory for most, if not all, students. One of the participants elaborated, "One might not understand the environment they are getting into without having prior field experience once they get a job." This is in close relation to a statement made by Jackson & Bridgstock, (2021), who noted that interacting with the industry offers students more exposure and makes them employable. Lack of interactions with employers, respondents further claimed, that current interactions between employers and educational institutions were limited (5%). Another alumnus said, "It needs more partnership between schools and hotels, where students should be trained in the things that are really required in the industry."

Another participant said, "Employer feedback can go a long way in making positive changes to what is taught in the curriculum." This lack of partnership is well captured by Fraser, (2020), who pointed out the need to involve stakeholders in curriculum preparation and design for the production of positive outcomes that reflect industrial requirements.

The need to improve hospitality education to increase graduate employment.

Graduate employability needs to be worked upon both in terms of classroom content and outside skill development. One of these initiatives is the inclusion of intern practices into the education system. The incorporation of experiential learning/activities such as simulation and real-life projects, as identified by Yan & Cheung, (2012), also helps to close this gap. This not only prepares students in terms of knowledge and skills but also adds the confidence needed to join the workforce. Stakeholders should consider more of such learning through exposure so that once students complete their studies, they can be ready to fit in the market.

One of the other significant approaches is to enhance the collaborations between academic organizations and other players in the market. With proper cooperation with local hotels, restaurants, and other tour operators, institutions can offer internship opportunities that offer real, vocational value. According to Huang & Baker, (2021), tasks performed during internships should develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities rather than enabling students to act as clerks. These partnerships can also result in changes to the curricula based on employer feedback on the competencies that are required most in the industry upon graduation. Another important field in which further reinforcement is needed is soft skills training.

Graduates fail to communicate, work in groups, or address clients requiring hospitality.

According to Pai & Mayya, (2022) there is a need to integrate soft-skill training into university education to equip learners with appropriate social behaviors and relationships. Interaction or group activities such as workshop learning, role-playing, and peer assessment help improve these skills. Introduction of interpersonal aspects is an important factor for the learning process to be fostered at the institutional level, as this approach will help students become more equipped for the challenges of the hospitality industry.

Finally, learning and teaching problem-solving and decision-making skills should also be included. Hotel personnel work in a competitive environment where operations occur in a fast-paced environment and are more often under pressure, thus obliging them to act quickly. Hariandja, (2011) expresses that educational programs should incorporate case approaches and centroid example exercises to allow students to apply strategies in controlled scenarios. In this regard, any attempt to incorporate critical thinking and adaptability within the curriculum empowers graduates to compete seamlessly within the industry by matching their skills with expected standards.

Enhancing Graduate employability.

This theme generated two primary codes: Academic institutional arrangements and staying updated. Analyzing the circumstances of preparing students for employment, academic institutional arrangements determine how educational organizations manage their structures and processes. Staying updated pays attention to the timely nature of education services and materials, as well as new teaching techniques relevant to a properly defined market segment. As seen in Figure 1 below;

Figure 1: Enhancing Graduate Employability Measures
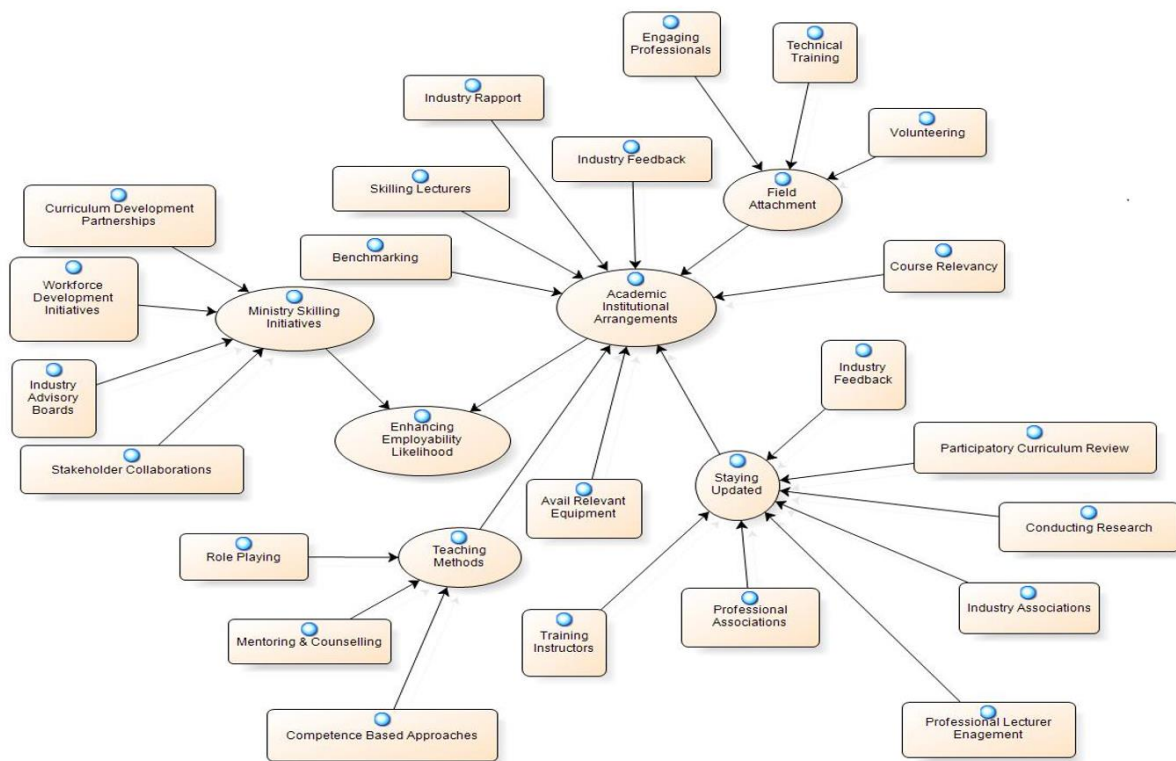
Source: Author, (2024)

The interviews identified several strategies to address the lack of correspondence between hospitality education and employers' demands in Uganda. In the context of Ministry Skilling Initiatives, it emerged that the main issue was curriculum mapping for skills requirements from the various industries. Curriculum development partnerships, workforce development initiatives, and industry advisory boards were highlighted as essential for guaranteeing that graduates from the launched programs are skilled in relevant fields. This was captured by one graduate who speaking on this noted that: "This would compel the government to fund more programs that engage local industry players in determination of what is taught." The following finding accords with the call by Tribe & Airey, (2007), who recommended improving the hospitality and tourism curriculum that involves input from the professions to support preparedness for fulfilling employment roles.

Another important theme was the involvement of academic institutional arrangements in producing graduates suitable for the workforce. There are 3 areas institutions must address: field attachments must be improved; industry feedback should be solicited; and course relevance must be increased to meet the needs of graduates as they perform in their workplaces. An employer said, "Universities are old school; they need to be affiliated with today's job market." This is in concordance with Vingerling, (2020), who noted that hospitality education requires an insane adaptation to the dynamic nature of the industry. Provision was also made by recruiting skilled lecturers and providing technical training to minimize gaps that might exist in the syllabus and enable instructors to share with learners the latest information they may possess.

The demand for improved employability opportunities of graduates through teaching methods and competency-based approaches was

mentioned most often. Students claimed that the knowledge they received was full of theory and lacking practical application. Another graduate said, "If I had come here and done my three-month internship, I knew more than when I came here for four years to read." This supports Baum's (2006) view that experiential learning and competence-based education are important for developing students' ability to compete in complex hospitality environments. Mentoring and role-playing in academic settings can duplicate the real-life situations and decision-making, thereby initiating the gap between academic knowledge and real life.

As previously stated, there was a call for escalating graduates' employability likelihood using teaching methods and competency-based approaches. Some graduates stated that their education focused on theory and not practice. An ex-graduate said, "*I got more knowledge during my three-month internship than I ever got in four years of learning.*" This is in concord with the view advanced by Baum (2006), who advocated for competency-based education and experiential learning as appropriate approaches to student education to fit the dynamic hospitality environment. Among the effectiveness of teaching strategies used in academic settings is the fact that mentoring and role-playing recreate reality where performance is tested in an academic context, thus providing an application of what has been taught.

Lastly, the recommended strategy for maintaining relevance of hospitality education was touched on: staying updated with industry trends through professional associations, industry associations, and research. Another lecturer said, "We have to be more involved with organizations and be updated on what is happening in the field so that what we are producing will be relevant to what practitioners want." This can be further evidenced with the help of Kusumawardhana, (2019), who pointed out that only constant research and participation in professional associations can help to deliver industry-centered curricula. Those that involved employers and educators in participatory

curriculum reviews, which focused on course assessments as necessary to transition the educational sector to the employment sector.

In conclusion, the interviews show that there is a need for the government, academic institutions, and industry to work together to develop embedded systems. To increase the employment rate, respondents were of the view that a curriculum should be best fitted to what is required in the market, students should be given practical experience in one form or another and courses contents should be updated as frequently as market requirements. These strategies not only meet the current needs that exist between education and employment but also prepare graduates to do well in the Ugandan hospitality industry.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Regarding the research findings, this study established that there is still a discrepancy between hospitality education and employers in Uganda, largely because hospitality education is still delivered in a highly theoretical manner (SCM) than in practice where the Ugandan hospitality industry is practiced. This supports a finding made by Baum (2006), who asserted that hospitality graduates, especially those from universities, lack the experience to compete in environments where operations are fast and demanding. Several participants noted that although they acquired a large amount of content knowledge while attending university, they were not provided with a practical skills practicum. Another graduate said, "We were given too much of knowledge in theories, but I did not feel prepared to practice what has been learned in the real working world." Therefore, this is a clear indication of a call to change the curriculum to ensure the inclusion of more skill-related training and case studies, simulations, and internships.

Moreover, a previously mentioned problem of soft skills remained persistent, with more employers reporting on the poor communication and interpersonal skills of fresh graduates. This confirms White's, (2020) statement that soft skills are important in the hospitality business because

employees have direct contact with customers and fellow employees. Some of the employees were quoted to have said that communication and the ability to work in teams, which are key to the workplace and characterize an employer's environment, were the issues that their graduates had the most. The fact that no stress is laid down in learning these skills in any academic curriculum presents a challenge to hospitality institutions in incorporating these human relations skills into their training curricula as they are vital in practicing hospitality.

The other areas of focus during the discussions were internship experiences. Many graduates complained that internships were unmeaningful because they included simple tasks with limited intent on valuable work. This was the testimony of one of the graduates, who said the following when asked how she was treated during her internship: "During my internship, I was mostly needed to do things such as cleaning or making errands." "I did not participate in the decision." This supports Zopiatis & Theocharous, (2018), who observed that poorly structured internships may create a gap between what students learn in the classroom and what practice expects from them.

Internship structural arrangements that offer graduates strict responsibilities, including decision-making, are essential to fill the gap in experiential learning that graduates leave school with.
In this respect, there was dire institutional and governmental support to demonstrate how academic institutions and the industry can complement each other. The employers made some criticisms, among which they included the following: the curriculum offered does not depict the actual hospitality sector. From one employer: "The syllabi offered in universities are irrelevant." They should reach out to the industries more often to obtain material for their curriculum." This concurs with Tribe & Airey, (2007), who opined that educational institutions should foster better relationships with industry players to enable them to provide education that meets practical market demands. Further, it was observed that government workforce development programs, and industry advisory boards were perceived as solutions to the perceived chasm.

In conclusion, the results of this study reveal that there is a dire need to fill the existing gaps between hospitality education and market requirements. Possible areas for further development include improving the practical utility of education, paying more attention to the development of interpersonal skills, and increasing cooperation among schools, government, and business entities. These steps will assist in enhancing graduates' preparedness for rewarding careers in the hospitality industry in Uganda.

Consequently, the implications of the study indicate a significant divergence between the hospitality education currently offered and the one demanded in the hospitality industry practice. They also voiced that their educational programs were too academic, and many of them did not equip learners for the complexities of the profession. Concerning Baum, (2019), who established that teaching approaches in hospitality management courses are not aligned with tendencies in the hospitality industry, this position also appeared to be coherent in the present context. As a result, graduates leave with low self-esteem and wonder about the ability of their institutions to equip them with relevant skills, tools, and knowledge necessary in the job market. The first inconvenience mentioned here is the lack of adequate skills training for hospitality program students. Similarly, most graduates stated that the education they received was not as practical as needed to support the welfare of general skills. As Baum advances (Ndiuini & Baum, 2021), the concept of experiential learning must be used because this difference is essential for theory and practice. These are due to the absence of adequate internship programs and practical covers in most courses, where graduates carry rich theoretical knowledge to seats, leading to high unemployment and job satisfaction.

There is also a lack of focus on important soft courses, especially within the hospitality industry, due to the limited weight allocated to their development. When it came to soft skills such as interpersonal interaction, conflict management, and customer relations, graduates felt they lacked adequate preparation for these areas despite being critical in a service-based career. In support of this feeling, Succi & Canovi, (2020) added that soft skills can be critical when making distinctions in the face of competition. Lack of effort to incorporate soft skills into talent development courses also leads to violations in performance and service quality degradations in the hospitality industry.

Finally, a lack of interaction between learning institutions and employers was also established as a hindrance to graduates. Some expressed the desire for more functional avenues of communication that would enable students to provide information about curriculum applicability and employers' expectations. In their discussion, Kruger, (2003) noted the potential for more relevant curricular content as well as relevant knowledge and skill sets sought and needed by employers, highlighting the need for close, near, or real collaboration between teachers/trainers and practitioners. By enhancing these partnerships, the needs of the workforce regarding the social return on investment will be met while increasing the employability of hospitality graduates in Uganda for the benefit of students.

CONCLUSION

This paper explored the tendency of the synchronous supply of human resources in hospitality education given the demands for human resources in the hospitality industry in Uganda and the available training gaps impeding employed graduates. The research findings show that as much as schools attempt to impart relevant knowledge, the existing theory training gap is quite extensive compared to the skills expected by employers. Graduates emerge with inadequate practical experience, interpersonal skills, and the precise technical proficiency required by employers; subsequently, there is a high employment or underemployment rate among hospitality graduates. This mismatch has consequences for graduates' employment prospects and the dearth and productivity of Uganda's hospitality business sector.

However, the study also reveals that there is a need for more commitment from academia and industry to act cooperatively toward skill deficiencies. At present, there is minimal engagement between stakeholders from the education sector and professionals from industries in the development of learning curricula and training courses. These disconnects make employers feel distant from academics, and graduates barely equip themselves to meet the challenges that arise in the industry. To promote the continued evolution of the types of education under consideration, it is recommended the formation of cooperation between universities, organisations from the sphere of the hospitality industry, and the government.

Lastly, the inadequacy of the skills required can be managed to promote a competent workforce for developing the Ugandan hospitality industry. It is clear that the hospitality sector in Uganda needs some improvement; hence, the integration of industry needs into educational needs as well as the improvement in the amount of practical training for students are needed. In their absence, Bukamal &Mirza, (2017) notes that higher learning institutions and the labor market remain misaligned and vulnerable to the impact of graduates and employers.

Recommendations

As a result, there is hope that strategic partnerships between hospitality institutions of education and the hospitality industry in Uganda can help close the gaps in skills existent between what is offered in hospitality education and what graduates in the Ugandan hospitality industry expect. This should be an established habit since there is always a need for updates from the academic field and industry. It remains the responsibility of those providing education/training to solicit employer input in

determining the design content of courses as well as internships and practical training programs to help ensure that graduates entering the workplace already have theoretical knowledge as well as practical experience. Successful partnerships can also be achieved through joint projects, peer attachments, or internships where students can work with industry practitioners.

A further suggestion is for learning institutions to promote human skills that include communication, problem-solving, and teamwork in addition to skills. These skills are missing from the typical programs being offered today but are much sought-after in the job market. To enhance the quantity and quality of practice-based curricula, practice-oriented training, realistic exercises, and authenticated work-incorporated-place learning programs ensure students acquire real practice experience. This would better prepare graduates for the necessary practical needs of the hospitality industry when it comes to employment.

Finally, policymakers should ensure and foster such multi-partnered strategies through policy frameworks that harmonise educational intents with the hospitality business sector. This could involve certain rewards for firms that provide internships, mentorship, or apprenticeship programs and scholarships for universities that redesign their programs in interaction with the existing market. Such an initiative establishes a suitable foundation to conduct sector-based evaluations of changing skill demands and to note education responsiveness in sectors. By doing so, such schemes help policymakers play a critical role in closing the skills demand and supply gap to enable the hospitality industry in Uganda to stay relevant.

Conflict of Interest

The researchers affirm that there was no conflict of interest in the study.

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