CHALLENGES FACED BY HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT EDUCATION DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a systematic literature review on the challenges present in the hospitality management education and the impacts and effects of the COVID-19 to the students who are greatly affected by the present situation, the instructors/teachers who were forced to shift from their traditional teaching to online teaching, and the administrators who enabled teaching and learning amidst the pandemic. It also discussed the coping strategies they have undertaken to overcome the challenges caused by COVID-19 in the educational system. To accomplish this literature review, a thorough reading was done on different related pieces of literature to present a clearer view and understanding on the challenges presented in the hospitality management education during this time of the pandemic. Results show that COVID-19 caused several challenges to the hospitality management education, particularly to the students who shifted from learning face-to-face to virtual. In addition, teachers were forced to become technologically literate to cater to the needs of their students. The administrators experienced numerous challenges, such as dealing with teachers who lack technological skills, scarcity of funds, curriculum adjustment, and the blurred difference between work and home. Moreover, the impact of the pandemic includes lockdown of schools, shift on teaching and learning modality, remote internships, and illness and death. Some coping strategies being undertaken were shifting from the traditional teaching to a blended teaching modality, development of online curriculum, upskilling and re-skilling of teachers particularly in their ICT skills and redesigning the hospitality management education. Drawing on the findings, a need for a review and adjustment of the hospitality and management education curriculum adapting to the present situation is recommended. In addition, continuous upskilling and re-skilling of teachers especially in the use of ICT is highly recommended. A review and revision of pre-internship policies, workshops, or internship guidelines/manuals to suit virtual internships is also suggested. Lastly, a dialogue between and among the different industry partners and Higher Education Institutions may be conducted to establish agreements regarding the virtual internship of students during this pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

Today, hospitality management education is faced with various challenges brought by COVID-19, particularly in the different modalities used for the delivery of learning and in the skills development of students enrolled in the course.

This study provides a systematic literature review on the current challenges in hospitality management education and the impacts and effects of COVID-19 on the students, the instructors, and the administrators, coupled with their coping mechanisms on these challenges during the pandemic.

According to UNESCO (2020), COVID-19 has severe negative impacts on the alternative levels of education from kindergarten to college. Considering the ultimate purpose of hospitality and tourism higher education is to provide professionally trained talents, the design of its curriculum and its teaching paradigm is different from traditional courses. Emphasized by several academics, the focus of hospitality and tourism education should not only be on the theoretical curricula but also on the practical training of the students at local and global levels. Such diversified learning scenarios have resulted in greater crises in hospitality and tourism education than in traditional higher education courses during the pandemic. Given that hospitality and tourism education need close communication among educators, industry practitioners, and students, a high risk of infection may be transmitted among the group when traveling between schools and industrial places.

Hospitality and tourism educators are continuously adjusting their response actions to the pandemic situation and exerting their best to maintain the operation of the education system, as it shifted from traditional/offline to online educational delivery during this period challenged both students and educators. Most teaching classes, seminars, and workshops are conducted online to reduce unnecessary face-to-face meetings. This is where the implementation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) plays an important role. It ensures consistent quality of lectures and helps reduce human resources

and costs. Online educational delivery provides advantages for lecturers and learners (Airey et al., 2021).

Likewise, government policies and implementation to control the spread of virus made several changes in the education system. Not only were the theory and practical studies of the hospitality management were affected but also the overall growth of the students. The curriculum of hotel management is much more practical and industry oriented. Hence, the practical work, one of the most important parts of this field that increases the skills and knowledge of the students, was seriously affected (Rakesh Dani et al., 2020).

However, issues in online educational delivery should be considered and addressed in the future. Since ICTs in hospitality and tourism education are integrated, some barriers impede the implementation progress such as institutional (e.g., funding), personal (e.g., users' attitudes), and technological (e.g., accessibility) barriers. Students with low self-control and self-motivation may easily fail in time management and participation in online activities (Airey et al., 2021). Thus, hospitality and tourism educators should consider adjusting traditional teaching methods to ensure consistent quality of online courses with offline courses.

Joshi and Gupta (2021) discovered in their study that there is a perceived gap between academia and industry that needs to be bridged. They stated that the pandemic is seriously affecting education with challenges ranging from technological issues, disparities, and reduce enrolments to students' behavioral issues. The most impacted area is the practical training component in operational areas, especially in food production and services. It is now clear that educationneeds a shift in focus from traditional, operational aspects of hospitality and tourism to technological awareness, knowledge, and soft skills development.

Since the graduates are still expected to be adaptive, proficient with technology, and equipped with the right skills in hospitality management amidst this pandemic, this study was undertaken. More specifically, this study sought to answer the following:

1. What are the challenges faced by:
   1.1. students;
   1.2. teachers/instructors; and
   1.3. administrators?
2. What are the effects/impacts of these challenges to Hospitality Management Education?
3. How does Hospitality Management Education cope with these challenges?

Hospitality Management Education

Hospitality management education is comprised of curriculum content and delivery methods for training and educating hospitality managers. Considering the size and scope of the hospitality industry, the number of staff and students involved, studies on efficient, effective, and innovative ways of developing hospitality competence are considered indispensable (EHL Insights, 2020).

Moreover, it is a branch of the overall tourism and hospitality industry dedicated to providing the industry with well educated, adequately trained, and committed workforce (Atef, 2018). It is also a program designed for students who wish to obtain career opportunities in the hotel and restaurant service industry.

COVID-19 Outbreak

Year 2020 started with a very unsettling and unfortunate occurrence of a new disease following the over 30 novel infections that the world has experienced in the past 30 years (Nkengasong, 2020 as stated in Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021). This time, the nomenclature given to the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak was the novel coronavirus. Later termed COVID-19, the disease represented typical pneumonia that started in China and later spread across the world. Countries like the USA, Brazil, India, Italy, Spain, France, SouthKorea, Iran, and many more have been experiencing the unexpected spread of the disease and death for several months.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 entirely disrupted people's daily life, including the education system (UNESCO, 2020), affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries across continents. Universities in the world also closed their campuses to avoid the spread of the virus and provided continued education through online platforms instead (UN, 2020).

Challenges Met by Hospitality Management Students

Students are perhaps the Business Schools' (BS) most affected stakeholder throughout the pandemic and were at the forefront of BS's minds when designing and implementing responses. Students in the later stages of their courses are concerned to understand the impacts of COVID-19 on their progression and graduation. New students are concerned about the impacts on their experience. Students and their family members have contracted COVID, causing considerable anxiety within student communities. BSs tend to be highly externally engaged, institutions encountered significant challenges with providing internships, international study tours, and exchanges, as well as other co-curricular elements of university life. Considerations regarding whether and how to repatriate students overseas at the time the crisis arose were especially challenging (Brammer & Clark, 2020).

Similarly, COVID-19 has brought significant changes to all aspects of life and society. The higher education system in tourism, events, and hospitality must adapt to changes brought by the current pandemic and move away from traditional classroom settings to online classrooms. This change impacts many aspects of the student learning environment, particularly the courses that contain field experiences such as student internship programs (Park & Jones, 2021).

Besides, the delivery of work-based learning including apprenticeship has faced serious disruption from the lockdown imposed on enterprises. Based on results derived from the Global Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on the training of apprentices and interns in enterprises, over three-fourths of the respondents representing enterprises reported either a partial or total closure of their premises. While these many countries

enter an economic slowdown, it also resulted in the suspension of practical training activities in the form of apprenticeships and work-based learning (ILO, 2020). Moreover, COVID-19 has impacted not only a significant decrease in student internships available but also the format of internships (Park & Jones, 2021).

Student internship programs bridge educational institutions with the industry to build a cooperative relationship and enhance the institutions' commitment and contribution to the community (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2021 as stated in Park and Jones, 2021). It has become a challenge because in remote or virtual internships, students would not be able to have the same type of engagement with their site supervisor or coworkers, and they would not be put into a position where they need to experience what it is like to present themselves professionally and interact in an office setting for seven to eight hours a day. In addition, it is undeniable that virtual internships are harder for interns to gain on-the-job training by shadowing supervisors or other staff members in an office space (Park & Jones, 2021).

Consequently, heavy dependence on digital technology also poses some challenges for virtual internships, such as lack of personal touch/personal bond, Zoom fatigue (too many online meetings), prolonged screen time, numerous e-mails, and delay in feedback (Park & Jones, 2021). Hospitality Management Education has a similar experience on training the students during this pandemic. Shifting from face-to-face to blended learning brought a great concern on the skills development of these students since they are not allowed to go out and undergo actual training to prepare them for the actual work after graduation. Hence, according to Lei and So (2021) students may find theory classes less relevant as they expect to learn practical skills.

In the same way, Lugosi and Jameson (2017) identified significant challenges faced by the contemporary hospitality management education. These include engaging contemporary students, particularly through new technologies; the growing presence of international students; institutional constraints, resource pressures, and distinctiveness of hospitality management education; ongoing tensions

between hospitality's intellectual development and its practice focus; and new course.

Moreover, compared with their teachers, students seem to be less prepared to adapt to the new environment and challenges brought about by the pandemic (Lei & So, 2021). They further asserted that in comparison with teachers, students are less familiar with using technologies for business purposes. Although the younger generations are digital natives (Prensky, 2001, as stated in Lei & So, 2021), this result implies that online learning technologies can be quite different from the technologies that young teenagers use in their daily life such as social media and mobile applications. Furthermore, students experienced mental stress derived from excessive online classes (Lei & So, 2021 as cited in Soobin & Hyun, 2021).

Challenges to Instructors

A study on hospitality education administrators conducted by Mejia and Phelan (2014) revealed that instructors who primarily teach through the face-to-face method are not comfortable delivering online courses. The main reason was that these instructors are concerned that they cannot achieve the required interactions when they deliver customer service-related courses online. The core value of the hospitality industry, which is service orientation, is diluted when face-to-face interaction is not available. Similarly, Lei and So (2021) stated that practical subjects that require hands-on demonstration and exercises online can be difficult. Faculty also struggled to teach via online platforms and experienced the extra burden because of the new mode of class delivery (Lei and So, 2021 as cited in Soobin & Hyun, 2021).

Administrative Challenges in Hospitality Management

Leaders in hospitality management education face diverse challenges in today's competitive and changing environment. One of the keys to success is the understanding of the administrative challenges that will define the necessary skills for effective leadership. Kalargyrou (2011) discovered in his study key challenges which include dealing with faculty,

budgetary and fiscal challenges, administrative management curriculum and program development, increasing the diversity of faculty and students, and technological challenges. His study also notes the relationship between leadership skills and challenges, and the dynamics between the two concepts, while suggesting the importance for hospitality institutions to invest more fully informally in training their academic leaders.

In addition, he learned in his study that leaders in hospitality management education face diverse challenges in today's competitive and changing environment. Evolving demands from superiors, financial challenges, and faculty and students increasing demands, create a turbulent environment where administrators must thrive. Hence, one of the keys to being an effective leader is the application of the necessary leadership skills.

In like manner, Brammer and Clark (2020) cited that staff, both academic and professional, have been significantly affected by COVID-19. The pandemic has necessitated the largest and quickest transformation of pedagogies and assessment practice ever seen in contemporary universities. It required support for colleagues, including the development of formal training on software and communities of practice through which good practices were shared.

They also said that as academic leaders, they have been made acutely aware of the heterogeneous experience and challenges faced by staff through the crisis. Juggling widespread homeworking, alongside homeschooling, navigating other caring and household responsibilities has blurred boundaries between work and home and have led to longer working hours and greater stress.

Impact of COVID-19 on Education

COVID-19 is having profound impacts on tertiary education globally. Border closures, cuts to aviation capacity, mandatory quarantine on entering a country, restrictions on mass gatherings, and social distancing all pose challenges to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) (Brammer &

Clark, 2020). Yassin et al. (2021) also ascertained in their study that the outbreak of COVID-19 made students unable to focus on their study, feel anxious about studying, have less confidence in their learning, and commit more mistakes than normal days. Meanwhile, Joshi and Gupta (2021) concluded that the gap between academia and industry needs to be bridged. They further stated that the pandemic is seriously affecting education with challenges ranging from technological issues, disparities, and reduced enrolment to students' behavioral issues. The most impacted was the practical training component in operational areas and especially in food production and services.

Impact of COVID-19 on Hospitality Management Education

COVID-19 has brought significant changes to man's life and to the society. The higher education system in tourism, events, and hospitality must adapt to changes caused by the current pandemic and move away from traditional classroom settings to online classrooms. This change impacts many aspects of the student learning environment, particularly the courses that contain field experiences such as student internship programs (Park & Jones 2021).

It has been affirmed by Tiwari et al. (2020) when they said that the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism industry is likely to have an indirect impact on tourism education. The unstable scenario of the industry concerning unemployment and financial losses would dissuade students to enroll in tourism and cognate courses in the coming years. This problem has caused substantial pressure for placements amongst institutions providing tourism-related courses.

Similarly, UNESCO (2020) announced that the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 entirely disrupted people's daily life, including the education system, influencing 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents; universities in the world closedtheir campuses to avoid the spread of the virus and offered online or hybrid classes through online platforms and students experienced mental stress derived from excessive online classes; facultyalso struggled to teach via online platforms and

experienced burden because of the new mode of class delivery (Lei & So, 2021).

UNESCO, therefore, recommends distance learning programs and open educational applications during a school closure caused by COVID-19 so that schools and teachers can use these programs to teach their pupils and bound the interruption of education. Therefore, many institutions go for online classes (Shehzadi et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, the impact of the current Corona Virus outbreak to date has long surpassed those that were observed during the SARS epidemic in 2002-2003. Corona Virus cases stand at over 10 million worldwide and the reported deaths due to the infection have crossed 500,000 (Worldometers). The enormity of this outbreak can be imagined from the fact that even the leader and prominent people could not escape the infection. For instance, the virus-infected British Prime Minister Borris Johnson, they had earlier warned citizens of the United Kingdom to prepare for the potential loss of lives in the country (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021).

The pandemic has also taken a serious toll on the education sector across the globe. COVID-19 has affected 90% of the student population globally, with more than 1.5 billion students from over 190 countries who are out of the schools (UNESCO). In fact, the impact of COVID-19 on internship was severe. According to the Glassdoor research (Stansell, 2020), half of all internships (52%) in the US were canceled in the spring when the coronavirus spread. While all industries showed declines in internship opening in the spring, the travel and tourism sectors had dropped to 92% since March 2020 (Stansell, 2020). Many companies also canceled their internships due to budget constraints or the inability to move to an online format. Meanwhile, others pivoted to virtual or remote internships as a replacement.

Because of COVID-19 which impacted the United States in March 2020, student internship programs are facing unprecedented challenges. As mentioned earlier, COVID-19 has impacted not only a significant decrease in student internships available but also the format of

internships. Virtual internships are fieldwork experiences from a remote location, typically working from home and not physically working on site. Until the COVID-19 pandemic forced universities to change the way they manage experiential learning courses, virtual or remote internships have not been allowed to students because they were not perceived to assure a high-quality internship experience (Park & Jones, 2021). Many classes, career activities that students considered important, and other academic activities such as advising and site tours were either temporarily halted or converted to online and mixed modes (Dopson et al., 2021).

Distance learning and the use of digital technologies are hardly new practices in hospitality and tourism education (Goh & King, 2020), and some research found that students were satisfied overall with such learning modes (Patiar et al., 2017). However, the current pandemic might exert tremendous stress on many students and leave them for choices in selecting their preferred learning and communication modes. It is uncertain under such circumstances whether students can adapt to new ways of learning and interacting with their academic community (Zhong et al., 2021).

Coping Strategies During COVID-19

The situation remains critical in higher education as well, but colleges are stepping up to the challenge of meeting the needs of students through online classes. It is worthwhile to mention that sectorial education such as tourism and hospitality that increasingly depend on practical sessions are likely to be affected significantly (Law, 2005 as stated by Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021).

Joshi and Gupta (2021) concluded in their study that education needs a shift in focus from the most traditional, operational aspects of hospitality and tourism to technological awareness, knowledge, and soft skills development. They also identified a way for better two-way communication and information exchange between industry and academia. This strategy is important given that the industry expects graduates to be adaptive, compassionate, able to multi-task, familiar with principles of crisis management, and proficient with technology.

In contrast, Nair and George (2016) viewed that most hospitality programs have been designed to have face-to-face interaction with instructors and require interaction with peers as key components in the learning. It would be a mistake to take the curriculum and create it wholly online. Therefore, they suggested that instructors must be selective in the materials that are presented online. Perhaps only parts of the curriculum, case studies, and required readings can be loaded for easy access and some classes can have a variation of classroom interaction. As a result, students will be encouraged to use various resources to obtain materials online. Meanwhile, the challenge is to convince the instructors to engage with the cohort in their playing field.

Studies conducted by Busby and Huang (2012), Mejia and Philan (2014), and Song (2010) claim that personal communications by industry professionals' conflict with the perception towards online learning. They agreed that there is a call for a blended approach as not all hospitality-related programs can be delivered entirely online. Moreover, hospitality administrators need to ensure that their faculties are competent enough to pursue online teaching using an up-to-date tool available to them.

Despite its negative impacts on Hospitality and Tourism (H & T) Education, the COVID-19 pandemic situation has helped uncover opportunities for alternative teaching and learning methods. Instructors have sought numerous active learning strategies to enhance student engagement and satisfaction in virtual internships; and students have adopted the new mode of learning including Zoom classes, online discussion, and virtual group projects (Park & Jones, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021).

Consequently, the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna – Isabela Campus started to maximize the use of both asynchronous and synchronous modes of delivery using Google Meet with a skills laboratory practice unit that includes significant virtual teaching hours to assist students in linking hospitality theories with practice. It is conducted by instructors in the laboratory, and it is used in each specific subject for the students to see. Additionally, there are scheduled virtual time-sensitive projects with the close online supervision of an experienced instructor.

The students can also gain knowledge of the basics in hospitality and enhance their skills while their teachers ensure that they adhere to policies and guidelines set by CHED, LGU, and IATF to safeguard the safety and well-being of learners, teachers, and stakeholders (UPHSL-I College of International Hospitality Management LCP, 2021). Likewise, Park and Jones (2021) emphasized that sufficient training, support, and technology tools with good quality should be provided to students to ensure a smooth online learning experience.

Online courses should be re-designed and operated in ways that are different from the traditional "content-delivery" style so that students can perceive the value of learning online (Park & Jones, 2021). For example, to provide a more personalized, mastery-based instruction and integrated learning experience and meet the specific needs of each student, Faculty-recorded learning resources are included in lectures and modules in the Learning Management System, particularly the Moodle platform powered by frontlearners as well as web-based e-learning tools being incorporated in the delivery of instruction to prepare the students for the actual laboratory work with the use of video clips and other application as well as other interactive simulations (UPHSL- I College of International Hospitality Management LCP, 2021). Likewise, teachers teaching practical subjects could use video clip presentations and actual video-demonstration sent to the class group chat for the students to have a basis and idea on how practical performance is to be done (Linao National High School, Tuguegarao TVL LCP, 2021).

Appropriate technology, positive perception of learning online, and teachers' performance are the most important factors that affect students' effectiveness of online learning. Thus, policymakers must ensure these are all in place to warrant the effectiveness of online learning. In addition to sufficient training and support, technology tools of good quality should be provided to students to ensure a smooth online learning experience (Lei & So, 2021).

Moreover, to measure and attain academic success especially in the Hospitality Management program as a non-board program, The University of Perpetual Help System Laguna – Isabela campus have tried

to incorporate the conduct of different formative, summative, and performance-based assessments to determine student progress on their attaining of learning outcomes and employing of TESDA. They also aligned modules and conducted enhancement programs to prepare students for National Competency Assessments in the activities and approaches (UPHSL-I College of International Hospitality Management LCP, 2021).

Similarly, partnership with stakeholders like TESDA Accredited Training Center through Joint Delivery Voucher Program for TVL learners to enhance their skills in their field of specialization was introduced as one of the appropriate resolutions for students with no exposure and actual training with a work-related environment to enhance competencies and be familiarized with the actual operation (Linao National High School, Tuguegarao TVL LCP, 2021).

According to Park and Jones (2021), the need for university internship coordinators to review and revise pre-internship policies, workshop, or internship guidelines/manuals to suit virtual internships, help student interns set proper expectations, better prepare students for virtual internships, and develop best practices to ensure a high level of student satisfaction and skill development for their future careers aligned with the same outcomes of traditional on-site internships. Hence, institution management should ensure that teachers also receive sufficient training andsupports to deliver high-quality online classes (Lei & So, 2021).

Likewise, institution management and teachers need to be aware of students' difficulties when changing to a different learning environment. Teachers should communicate with students more frequently to collect student comments and evaluate the effectiveness of different teaching styles (Lei & So, 2021). For example, the instructors of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna – Isabela campus regularly conduct class catch-ups/check-ins with students at least once a week including a weekly wrap up and extend proper moral assistance to students who are struggling academically (UPHSL - I College of International Hospitality Management LCP, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature studies which have been reviewed by the researchers, it is concluded that COVID-19 brought challenges to the students, particularly in the shift on learning from face-to-face to blended which hinders the development of their practical skills. In addition, teachers were forced to become technologically literate to cater to the needs of their students which they found difficult.

Moreover, the administration was bombarded with numerous challenges, ranging from dealing with teachers' lack of technological skills, scarcity of funds, curriculum adjustment, and the blurred difference between work and home.

There are also several impacts caused by the pandemic which include the lockdown of schools, shifting of learning modality, internships finished remotely, and other severe impacts like illness and death.

Finally, coping strategies such as shifting from traditional teaching to blended, development of an online curriculum, upskilling and re-skilling of teachers especially in the technology aspect, and redesigning the hospitality management curriculum were undertaken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the foregoing conclusion, the following recommendations are presented:

1. Higher Education institutions offering courses on hospitality management may consider reviewing the Hospitality Management curriculum to ensure its relevance and responsiveness to the needs of the industry.
2. Higher education institutions may consider including in its faculty development the continuous upskilling and re-skilling of teachers, especially in the use of ICT in instruction.

3. Higher education institutions may consider reviewing and revising pre-internship policies, workshops, or internship guidelines/manuals to suit virtual internships.
4. Higher education institutions may conduct a dialogue between and among the different industry partners and HEIs may be conducted to establish agreement regarding the virtual internship of students during this pandemic.
5. Higher education institutions may consider sustaining their best practices to ensure a high level of student satisfaction and skill development.
6. Future researchers may consider the results of this research to conduct more investigations to explore and improve the area of hospitality management.

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