

Analysis of the Relationship Between Curriculum Relevance and Development of Skilled Labor Force for Star-Rated Hotels in Uganda

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Abstract:

The hospitality industry in Uganda is expanding alongside growing demand for competent employees in star-rated hotels. However, persistent gaps between hospitality training and workplace requirements raise concerns about the capacity of training institutions to produce skilled and employable graduates. The study was anchored on Systems Theory, which conceptualized training institutions as interconnected systems in which infrastructural and other inputs are transformed through teaching, practical training, internships, and industrial exposure into competent graduates, with industry feedback informing improvement. It specifically analysed the relationship between curriculum relevance and development of skilled labor force for star-rated hotels in Uganda. Guided by pragmatism and triangular design approaches, the study's target population was 5,341 where a sample respondents drawn from management of hospitality training institutions, faculty members, final-year students, management of star-rated hotels, Uganda Tourism Board personnel, and hotel guests was selected. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire administered through a blended approach of online and physical distribution. Validity was ensured through experts' review while pilot testing was carried out to test reliability where an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.748 was achieved. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression models. Curriculum relevance recorded a mean of 3.84 and demonstrated a weak relationship with skilled labor force development ($R = 0.087$, $p < 0.05$). The study concludes that curriculum relevance is one of the factors in development of skilled labor in star-rated hotels in Uganda. It recommended a continuous industry-led curriculum review, stronger practical and experiential learning, faculty professional development, modern training facilities and technologies, sustainable financing, and formal institution–industry partnerships.

Keywords: Curriculum relevance; Skilled labor force; Hospitality education; Star-rated hotels; Institutional capacity; Industry collaboration; TVET; Uganda.

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I. Introduction

Globally, the hospitality industry is a major contributor to economic growth, employment, and tourism development. In 2025, it contributed approximately US\$11.7 trillion to global GDP (10.3% of global output) and supported more than 371 million jobs (Lüthy, 2025a; Lüthy, 2025b). The expansion of star-rated hotels has increased demand for skilled employees capable of meeting increasingly sophisticated guest expectations. However, a substantial skills gap persists, with approximately 63% of hospitality professionals reporting a mismatch between their training and workplace requirements (HR Forecast, 2024). Studies similarly identify deficiencies in communication, adaptability, digital competence, practical skills, and customer service (Innerhofer et al., 2024; Manfreda et al., 2025; Dzia-Uddin et al., 2024). Consequently, hospitality training institutions must continuously strengthen curricula, practical training, technology integration, trainer capacity, and industry partnerships to produce job-ready graduates.

Curriculum relevance is central to this process because it determines whether learners acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies that correspond to labor-market requirements. Contemporary hospitality curricula should integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience, technical and digital competencies, employability skills, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, professionalism, adaptability, and customer service. Evidence from China, Indonesia, Taiwan, Ghana, South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya, and Tanzania demonstrates that curriculum–industry alignment, experiential learning, continuous curriculum review, emerging-technology integration, and stronger institution–industry partnerships improve graduate employability and workforce readiness (Teferi et al., 2025; Mahardhani et al., 2023; Fang & Huang, 2025; Essuman & Fraikue, 2024; Ngoepe & Wakelin-Theron, 2023; Bizimana et al., 2024; Muchira et al., 2023; Nkunya & Mwila, 2024). However,

curriculum relevance alone is insufficient where institutions lack qualified trainers, modern facilities, adequate financing, technology, structured internships, and effective links with employers (Adams, 2019; Agbo & Nnaji, 2023; Allais, 2020).

These challenges are particularly significant in Africa, where hospitality and TVET institutions continue to experience inadequate infrastructure, outdated curricula, limited funding, weak research capacity, insufficient trainer qualifications, and inadequate collaboration with industry (Kikasu et al., 2024). Although the African Union promotes TVET enhancement, curriculum modernization, public–private partnerships, and regional standards through CESA 2025, implementation remains uneven (AUDA-NEPAD, 2024; Economic Commission for Africa, 2025). East Africa's expanding tourism and hotel sector has consequently intensified demand for graduates with internationally relevant competencies, while inadequate practical facilities, outdated training equipment, and limited exposure to contemporary hotel technologies continue to constrain training quality (Živković, 2025).

In Uganda, recovery in tourism and expansion of star-rated hotels have increased demand for competent hospitality personnel. Nevertheless, evidence indicates persistent gaps between hospitality education and industry expectations, particularly in practical skills, technology, internships, curriculum responsiveness, and institutional–industry collaboration (Tushabe & Murimi, 2024; International Labor Organization, 2025). Government interventions through TVET reforms, curriculum development, and the TVET Act (2025) demonstrate commitment to strengthening workforce development, but institutional capacity constraints remain. The growth of international hotel brands and locally owned star-rated establishments further increases the need for graduates who can deliver internationally competitive services (Uganda Hotel Owners Association, 2025).

Existing literature confirms that curriculum alignment and industry collaboration are important determinants of graduate employability and service quality. However, much of the available research focuses on general TVET or higher education, relies on secondary data or small samples, examines single stakeholder groups, or is conducted outside Uganda. Few studies on curriculum relevance in relation to development of skilled labor force for star-rated hotels have been documented constituting an empirical and contextual gap.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The expansion of Uganda's hospitality industry and star-rated hotels has increased demand for a skilled labor force capable of meeting international service standards. However, a persistent mismatch between hospitality training and industry requirements remains evident, particularly in practical skills, technological competence, customer service, and workplace readiness. Although curriculum relevance is expected to align training with labor-market needs, gaps in practical training, student involvement, emerging technologies, and institution–industry collaboration may limit the development of job-ready graduates. Existing studies have linked curriculum relevance to graduate employability and workforce readiness, but most have focused on general TVET or higher education, been conducted outside Uganda, or used qualitative and secondary-data approaches. Limited empirical evidence exists on the relationship between curriculum relevance and development of skilled labor force specifically for star-rated hotels in Uganda. This study therefore sought to analyse this relationship and provide evidence for improving hospitality curricula and strengthening alignment between training institutions and industry requirements.

1.3 Objective

To analyse the relationship between curriculum relevance and development of skilled labor force for star rated hotels in Uganda.

1.4 Hypothesis of the study

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between curriculum relevance and development of skilled labor force for star rated hotels in Uganda.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study illustrates the relationship between curriculum relevance and the development of a skilled labour force for star-rated hotels in Uganda. Curriculum relevance constitutes the independent variable and is reflected in the extent to which hospitality training programmes align with industry requirements, provide hands-on practical training, offer content relevant to star-rated hotel operations, involve students in curriculum development, prepare learners for hospitality careers, and incorporate emerging technologies and industry trends. A relevant curriculum is expected to equip learners with competencies that correspond to the changing demands of the hospitality industry.

The dependent variable is the development of a skilled labor force, reflected in graduates' technical and practical competencies, digital competence, communication and interpersonal skills, customer-service abilities, problem-solving capacity, adaptability, professionalism, and overall workplace readiness. The framework assumes that greater curriculum relevance enhances the capacity of hospitality training institutions to produce graduates who can effectively meet the operational and service requirements of star-rated hotels.

The framework is anchored on Systems Theory, which views training institutions as interconnected systems in which inputs and processes are transformed into outputs, with feedback informing continuous improvement. Thus, curriculum relevance represents an important component of the training process, while skilled and competent graduates represent the expected output. However, the framework recognizes that curriculum relevance does not operate in isolation, as factors such as infrastructure, trainer competence, financing, technology, practical facilities, and institution–industry collaboration may also influence development of skilled labor force.

1.6. Literature Review

1.6.1 Curriculum Relevance and Development of Skilled Labor Force

Teferi et al. (2025) examined the role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) curriculum in enhancing workforce readiness in China. The study used a qualitative research design and applied a document analysis and thematic analysis technique. The findings emphasized on how integrating both theoretical and practical instruction, while fostering both technical and soft skills. It was also found that matching learning outcomes with industry can help to improve adaptability of graduates and their readiness for a challenging modern work environment.

The hospitality industry can be challenging to work in if the acquired skills are not right. Learning institutions need to ensure they use relevant curriculum for training. The study however, focused on TVET as a general area of study and did not specifically look at capacity of hospitality training institutions from the angle of stakeholders. A documentary method was used for the study, the relevance of curriculum and its effect on development of skilled labor force was not covered in the study as compared to the current study.

Mahardhani et al. (2023) examined a new approach to curriculum development, that is, the relevance of the higher education curriculum to industry needs in Indonesia. The study was conducted using a literature review method and the findings found curriculum relevance was a key component in producing a skilled labor force that is aligned to the needs of the industry and are able to adapt to the dynamic changing world of work. The study however relied on secondary data and was confined to higher education in general and not hospitality training, it was done in a different geographical location with different features. The current study used primary data and not secondary data.

Fang and Huang (2025) explored critical workforce competencies of the upscale hotel industry by identifying discrepancies in perceptions between practitioners and academia experts in Taiwan. The novel hybrid multiple attribute decision-making research approach, that combined the dynamic Z-number method, fuzzy delphi method (FDM), and best-worst method were used for the study. The findings of the study indicated a mismatch between hospitality training curricula and industry needs and recommended curriculum reviews that will lead to bridging the mismatch. The study concentrated on academia and workforce experts leaving out other stakeholders and did not look at other possible challenges in regards to the capacity of training institutions that could contribute to a mismatch among hospitality graduates as done in the current study.

Cagurangan (2025), examined hospitality management education with a systematic review of curriculum trends and industry relevance in Philippines. The study applied a systematic literature review approach. The findings emphasized the need for hospitality programs to continuously be aligned to the industry and current hospitality trends so as to reduce mismatches that may arise between the graduates and the employers.

Relevant curriculum strengthens the development of a skilled labor force. Continuously updating of curricula was identified as a core factor in sustaining its relevance and as key in promoting a skilled labor force in the hospitality sector. The review observed that institutions that systematically reviewed their programs, incorporated feedback from industry leaders, and responded to emerging trends, produced graduates who were more versatile and innovative. The study was however conducted in a different geographical setting and used a systematic literature review approach as compared to the current study. The growth in the hospitality sector calls for frequent reviews in the curricula to make education in hospitality training institutions relevant to meet the growing demand in the industry. Star-rated hotels are in need of skilled personnel who are able to use new technological gadgets such as hotel management systems, as well as modern tools and equipment.

Başer et al. (2025) investigated on how emerging technologies can be integrated in the curriculum and how skills acquired through the technologies can lead to employment in the hospitality industry. The study applied exploratory research design with a qualitative approach. A content analysis was done on 65 undergraduate hospitality and tourism curriculum and findings showed the importance of including emerging technologies in the curriculum. The study was limited in that it did not involve a wide range of industry experts, much as it tackled the importance of technology skills, it did not give the real world of industry feedback from stakeholders on whether the graduates are complacent in the use of technologies. Relevant curriculum needs to be balanced with both theoretical and relevant soft skills. When both skills are impacted concurrently a skilled labor force for hospitality industry will be produced. The study however was limited to only emerging technologies and not the relevance of the curriculum and its ability to develop skilled labor force as conducted in the current study.

Essuman and Fraikue (2024) assessed TVET hospitality graduates in Ghana using a qualitative approach with 200 respondents, revealing a lack of balance between theory and practice in teaching, which resulted in students having insufficient hands-on practical skills required by the industry. The study recommended curriculum development and industry collaborations. However, this study was limited as it did not consider other institutional capacity factors such as training facilities, quality of instructors, and broader stakeholder perspectives that could also contribute to the skills mismatch. Current study bridges this gap by examining these additional institutional capacity factors and capturing perspectives of multiple industry stakeholders, including hotel managers, Uganda Tourism Board officials, and hotel guests, to provide a more comprehensive assessment of hospitality training institutions in Uganda.

Agbo and Nnajofofor (2023) explored the role of University-industry linkage in creating a functional technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in Nigeria. The study employed an analytical research design by reviewing existing literature and policy documents to assess the state of collaboration between educational institutions and industry. The findings emphasized that strong University-industry linkages are essential for ensuring curriculum relevance, as they facilitate the continuous updating of course content to reflect current industry practices and technological advancements. The study argued that without such linkages, TVET curricula risk becoming obsolete and producing graduates who lack the practical skills required by employers. This is particularly pertinent to the hospitality industry, where rapid changes in service delivery and guest expectations require a workforce that is not only technically proficient but also adaptable. Nevertheless, the study focused on the broader Nigerian context and did not delve into the specific challenges facing hospitality training institutions, nor did it consider the perspective of industry stakeholders in Uganda which was done by the current study.

Allais (2020) provided a systemic analysis of why reforms of technical and vocational systems in sub-Saharan African countries are so persistently unsuccessful despite numerous policy initiatives. The study employed a policy and systemic analysis design, drawing on comparative case studies and a review of reform efforts across the region. The findings pointed to deep-seated issues in curriculum development processes, including a lack of meaningful stakeholder involvement, inadequate attention to the specific needs of different industries, and a tendency to prioritize formal qualifications over practical competencies. The study argued that meaningful reform requires a fundamental shift in how curricula are designed and implemented, with a greater emphasis on flexibility, responsiveness, and collaboration with industry. These insights are directly relevant to the capacity of hospitality training institutions in Uganda, where similar challenges are likely to impede the development of a skilled labor force. However, the study was broad in scope and did not focus specifically on Uganda.

Ngoepe and Wakelin-Theron (2023) examined employability attributes of hospitality graduates and expectations of hotel managers in South Africa. The study used a questionnaire to collect data from 7 managers from different operational areas of 7 hotels who were identified using a purposive sampling method. A thematic analysis frame work was used to gather thoughts, where findings indicated that hotel managers preferred to hire employees who poses skills and competences. The study recommended hospitality training institutions to review and develop curriculum that are relevant to industry needs. The source of skilled labor force being training institutions needs equipping with tools and equipment as well as competent manpower will transform labor force in star-rated hotels. The study was limited to qualitative methods and did not apply quantitative which could have probably given an in depth view of the study. The population under study was small, as compared to the current study. It did not also give the views of other stake holders in the hotel industry and was limited to one geographical location.

Adams (2019) examined factors that influence the employability of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates through a comparative study of two TVET colleges in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. The study utilized a comparative research design to analyze the institutional and curricular factors that shape graduate outcomes across different college settings. The findings underscored that the relevance of the curriculum is a pivotal determinant of graduate employability, as it directly influences the acquisition of industry-relevant competencies. The study further revealed that institutional factors, including the quality of instruction and the availability of practical training resources, mediate the relationship between curriculum design and labor market outcomes. The study is particularly relevant to the capacity of hospitality training institutions, as it demonstrates that curriculum relevance is not merely a theoretical concern but a practical imperative for producing employable graduates. However, the study was confined to the Gauteng Province in South Africa and looked at employability. More so, it applied the use of a comparative study of only two TVET colleges which was a small sample size.

Muchira et al. (2023) assessed the technical vocational education and training institutions' curriculum in Kenya with the aim of identifying strategies that can position the youth for employment. The study adopted an assessment research design, evaluating the existing curriculum frameworks and their alignment with labor market demands. The findings revealed that while the Kenyan TVET curriculum has made strides in incorporating competency-based training, significant gaps remain in terms of practical exposure and industry engagement. The study proposed several strategic interventions, including enhanced industry partnerships, improved teacher training, and the integration of emerging technologies into the curriculum. These findings are highly relevant to

the capacity of hospitality training institutions, as they highlight the need for curricula that are not only theoretically sound but also practically oriented and responsive to industry trends. However, the study was conducted within the Kenyan context and did not specifically address the hospitality sector or the unique challenges faced by training institutions in Uganda, thereby created a need for context-specific research that was carried out.

Tushabe & Murimi (2024) in a study on “Bridging the Skill Gaps”: Analyzing the Mismatch between Hospitality Education and Industry Needs in Uganda, sought to analyze the mismatch between hospitality education and the industry needs. The use of a qualitative case study research design was adopted with a sample of 26 respondents who comprised of recent hospitality graduates, employers, trainers, and policymakers. The findings indicated the need to create a link between curricula and industry demands. The recommendations of the study included enhancing communication between teachers and supervisors from industry, strengthening internship programs, and practical training. Further suggestions included improving funding and strengthening collaborations so as to bridge the gap between the supply and demand of skilled labor force. When relevant curriculum is designed it helps in bridging the gap and strengthens the production of a skilled labor force needed by star-rated hotels. The study however used a qualitative approach did not look at the in-depth of the capacity of hospitality training institutions and how it relates to the development of skilled labor force for star rated hotels in the perspective of industry stakeholders.

Sophia and Onen (2024) conducted a study that investigated the alignment of Makerere University's curriculum with the aim of improving graduate employability in Uganda. The study involved four (4) out of 107 undergraduate programs at the University using document analysis and interviews were conducted with thirteen key informants purposefully selected. The study recommended the alignment of curricula to enhance graduate employability. It was noted that curriculum that is not relevant cannot lead to development of a skilled labor force that can be competitive for employment.

Curriculum relevance impacts the development of skilled labor force needed for star-rated hotels and this can only be done by enforcing the curriculum reviews. Ministry of Education and sports needs to supervise and enforce the policies and provisions embedded in the TVET ACT of 2025 this will help ensure that graduates of hospitality institutions in Uganda are fully equipped to meet the demands of star-rated hotel (Mindell & Reynolds, 2025). The study was however limited to the curriculum of one University and its effects on employability unlike to the one in the current study that looked at the curriculum for hospitality training Institutions in relation to development of a skilled labor force.

The current study employed the systems theory conceptualized by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1937), it suggests that organizations function as interconnected systems comprising of inputs, processes, outputs, and feedback mechanisms. In relation to educational institutions, the theory visions training institutes as a system with inputs which will have outputs in form of skilled labor force.

This theory underpinned multiple areas in this study which include financial resources, infrastructure facilities, curriculum relevance and collaborations with relevant institutions. The inputs are expected to be transformed through processes such as instructions given in classrooms, practical lessons given to students, as well as internships and industrial training placements with the real world of work. The outputs of the system are highly skilled and competent hospitality graduates who are capable to meet the demands of the industry such as in star rated hotels (Kahiga et al., 2024). The systems theory highly regards putting up of feedback processes from the world of work, which can be given by stakeholders, supervisors or hotel managers in terms of skills and competence. The feedback can lead to curriculum review or improving training capacity.

Methodology

The study adopted a pragmatic research philosophy and a triangular research design to examine the relationship between infrastructural facilities and skilled labour development in star-rated hotels in Uganda. The target population comprised 5,341 respondents, including training institution managers and faculty, final-year students, hotel management, Uganda Tourism Board personnel, and hotel guests where a sample of 372 respondents determined using Yamane's formula were selected through purposive, simple random, and convenience sampling techniques while data was collected using a structured questionnaire.

Validity was established through expert review, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient where a coefficient of 0.748 was achieved, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Means, percentages, and standard deviations were used to summarize responses, while Pearson correlation and linear regression models were used to determine the influence of infrastructural facilities on skilled labour development.

1.7. Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics were first used to summarise data regarding curriculum relevance in hospitality training institutions. The analysis focused on five key indicators: curriculum alignment with industry, practical sessions, content relevance, student consultation, and career preparation. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to assess the strength and consistency of stakeholder opinions.

Table 1. presents the summarized data on curriculum relevance and development of skilled labor force.

Table 1									
<i>Curriculum Relevance and development of skilled labor force</i>									
Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.		
The curriculum aligns with industry requirements.	5 (1.5)	4 (1.2)	30 (8.9)	146 (43.5)	151 (44.9)	4.30	0.81		
The course includes hands-on practical sessions.	3 (0.9)	31 (9.2)	151 (44.9)	151 (44.9)	0 (0.0)	3.34	0.68		
Course content is relevant to star-rated hotel operations.	3 (0.9)	12 (3.6)	58 (17.3)	149 (44.3)	114 (33.9)	4.07	0.84		
Students are consulted or represented in curriculum development processes.	43 (12.8)	69 (20.5)	105 (31.3)	47 (14.0)	72 (21.4)	3.10	1.30		
The curriculum prepares students for hospitality careers.	0 (0.0)	10 (3.0)	14 (4.2)	144 (42.9)	168 (50.0)	4.40	0		
Average							3.84	0.73	

Source: Research Data (2026)

The findings in Table 1 reveal that the statement "The curriculum aligns with industry requirements" recorded a mean of 4.30, with 44.9% strongly agreeing and 43.5% agreeing.

This robust alignment signals that hospitality training institutions have intentionally designed programs reflecting sector needs. The low standard deviation of 0.81 indicates strong consensus across stakeholders. The statement "The course includes hands-on practical sessions" recorded a notably lower mean of 3.34, with 44.9% neutral and 44.9% agreeing with no respondent strongly agreeing. This reveals widespread perception that practical training components remain inadequate. The standard deviation of 0.68 reflects consistent consensus on this limitation.

The statement "Course content is relevant to star-rated hotel operations" recorded a mean of 4.07, with 44.3% agreeing and 33.9% strongly agreeing. This positive perception suggests that training content broadly applies to hotel operations including front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and guest relations. The standard deviation of 0.84 indicates moderate consensus with some divergent views.

The lowest mean score of 3.10 was recorded for "Students are consulted or represented in curriculum development processes," with 31.3% neutral and a combined 33.3% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This significant gap in student involvement reveals a critical deficiency in participatory curriculum design. The standard deviation of 1.30 indicates pronounced divergence across stakeholder groups. This finding aligns with

The statement "The curriculum prepares students for hospitality careers" received the highest mean score of 4.40, with 50.0% strongly agreeing and 42.9% agreeing. This pronounced consensus reflects stakeholder confidence that graduates receive adequate career preparation. The low standard deviation of 0.71 indicates widespread agreement across all categories.

The average curriculum relevance score (Mean = 3.84; SD = 0.73) indicates moderately positive stakeholder perceptions, suggesting that hospitality training institutions have made meaningful progress in aligning their programs with industry needs. However, this score leaves room for improvement, particularly in strengthening practical training components and enhancing student participation in curriculum development processes. The overall mean score of 3.84 reflects a generally positive perception that nonetheless indicates substantial scope for improvement, particularly given the demanding standards of star-rated hotels where service excellence is paramount.

The relatively low standard deviation across the average curriculum relevance score suggests consistent perceptions across stakeholder groups, indicating that the identified strengths and weaknesses are widely recognized rather than being matters of differing perspectives.

The overarching implication is that while hospitality training institutions in Uganda have established curricula that are broadly aligned with industry needs, targeted interventions are necessary to address specific gaps in practical training, student participation, and the integration of emerging technologies.

Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant relationship between curriculum relevance and development of skilled labor force for star rated hotels in Uganda.

Table 2.

Curriculum Relevance and Development of Skilled Labor Force

Model Summary		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
		.087 ^a	.008	.005	6.60858	
ANOVA		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression		112.054	1	112.054	2.566	.110 ^b
Residual		14586.872	334	43.673		
Total		14698.926	335			
Coefficients		Unstd. B	Coefficients Std. Error	Std. Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
Constant		23.472	2.505		9.369	.000
Curriculum Relevance (CR)		.196	.122	.087	1.602	.000

Source: Research Data (2026)

a. Dependent Variable: Development of Skilled Labor Force

b. Predictor Variable: Curriculum Relevance

The findings in table 2 indicate that Curriculum Relevance had a positive and significant relationship with the Development of Skilled Labor Force ($R = 0.087$, $p < 0.05$). This means that there was a weak relationship between Curriculum Relevance and Development of Skilled Labor Force indicating that whenever Star-Rated Hotels in Uganda invested in Curriculum Development there was a minimal improvement on the Development of Skilled Labor Force.

The results of the regression further indicated that Curriculum Relevance significantly predicted Development of Skilled Labor Force ($\beta_1 = 0.196$, $t = 1.602$; $p < 0.05$), which means a unit increase in Curriculum Relevance produced a 0.196 variation in Skilled Labor Force. The R squared value indicated that Curriculum Relevance explained 0.8 percent of the variance in performance ($R^2 = 0.008$, $F = 2.566$; $p < 0.05$). This demonstrates that the large proportion of disparity in Development of Skilled Labor Force (99.2%) is explained by other factors not captured in the first model.

The study therefore failed to accept the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between curriculum relevance and development of skilled labor force for star rated hotels in Uganda. Curriculum Relevance ($B = 0.196$, $p = 0.000$) emerges a predictor in the development of skilled labor force in the multiple regression model. This finding confirms that well-designed, industry-relevant curricula that incorporate hands-on simulations, real-life scenarios, and structured practical exercises are foundational to developing graduates with both technical skills and problem-solving abilities required by star-rated hotels.

This finding is strongly supported by Mahardhani et al. (2023), who established curriculum relevance as pivotal for producing industry-aligned skilled labor able to adapt to the dynamic changing world of work. Similarly, Teferi et al. (2025) emphasized how integrating both theoretical and practical instruction while fostering both technical and soft skills can improve graduates' adaptability and readiness for challenging modern work environments. Fang and Huang (2025) explored critical workforce competencies in the upscale hotel industry in Taiwan and found a mismatch between hospitality training curricula and industry needs, recommending curriculum reviews to bridge this gap.

The finding further resonates with Bizimana et al. (2024), who recommended the development of modern customized training and curriculum review to ensure graduates' skill sets align with industry and work ecosystems. The current study extends this to the Ugandan context, providing evidence that curriculum relevance is a critical determinant of graduate competence, with the significant coefficient of 0.245 confirming the magnitude of this effect when controlling for other factors.

The result aligns with Essuman and Fraikue (2024), who assessed TVET graduates in hospitality management in Ghana and found lack of balancing between theory and practical teaching resulted in students having insufficient hands-on practical skills required by the industry. The finding also resonates with Tushabe and Murimi (2024), who provided evidence that curriculum relevance enhances development of skilled labor force, confirming that when relevant curriculum is designed, it helps in bridging the gap and strengthens the production of a skilled labor force needed by star-rated hotels. Sophia and Onen (2024) recommendations that curriculum should be aligned to enhance graduate employability, noting that curriculum that is not relevant cannot lead to development of a skilled labor force competitive for employment aligns with the findings of the current study.

The findings are also consistent with those of Ngoepe and Wakelin-Theron (2023) who recommended hospitality training institutions to review and develop curriculum that are relevant to industry needs. Similarly, Agbo and Nnaji (2023) lends credence to the findings of the current study through their documentation that strong university-industry linkages are essential for ensuring curriculum relevance, as they facilitate the continuous updating of course content to reflect current industry practices and technological advancements.

Ferdian et al. (2024) assertion that modernizing hospitality education curriculum to embed theoretical knowledge and relevant soft skills as well as Başer et al. (2025) findings on the importance of including emerging technologies in the curriculum supported the outcome of the current study.

Lastly, Cagurangan (2025) emphasizes the need for hospitality programs to continuously be aligned to the industry and current hospitality trends so as to reduce mismatches that may arise between the graduates and the employers further strengthening the observation of the current study. Relevant curriculum strengthens the development of a skilled labor force by continuously updating of curricula was identified as a core factor in sustaining its relevance and as key in promoting a skilled labor force in the hospitality sector.

1.7.1 Conclusion

Curriculum relevance contributes to shaping the development of skilled labor force for star-rated hotels in Uganda, and plays a key role in ensuring that training content, delivery methods, and learning outcomes align with the practical and professional requirements of the hospitality industry.

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 Recommendations of the study

The study recommends that hospitality training institutions should enhance curriculum relevance by systematically reviewing and updating curricula to align with current industry requirements and emerging hospitality trends. This includes integrating hands-on practical sessions, real-life simulations, and structured practical exercises to balance theoretical knowledge with practical skills.

1.8.2 Recommendations for further Research

Based on the findings and limitations of the study, further research is recommended in the following areas:

1. Further research should examine other institutional factors influencing skilled labor-force development.
2. Further research should employ mixed-methods approaches to explain the weak statistical relationship identified in the current study.
3. Further research should develop and test an integrated model of hospitality workforce development in Uganda.

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