Blended Learning in Hospitality Education and Training: Review and Discussion

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to examine current hotel training approaches and programs and to explore the potential impact of blended learning on hotel training, and discuss some possibilities. The paper is divided into three parts, introduction, literature review, and discussion. The analysis of the literature shows that it is feasible to use blended learning methods in hotels. This is followed by a discussion section in which a simple idea and design for a feasible, conceptual hotel training are presented, incorporating online courses and offline training. The paper concludes by presenting the importance and limitations of this paper and ultimately provides some direction for future research.

Keywords: Vocational Training, Hospitality Training, Hybrid Learning, online courses

1. INTRODUCTION

During Covid-19, the tourism industries have faced severe situations since about 96% of destinations in the world implemented travel restrictions, and people are restricted by travel bans [1]. Accordingly, the hospitality industry faces a much lower accommodation rate while operating with a higher price of maintenance. Gursoy and Chi's review (2020) showed that Covid-19 also affects the cleaning standard in hotel industries. Tourists and customers want to raise the standard of hygiene due to safety concerns and further precautions [2]. According to Jiang and Wen's research, the consumers' demand for cleanliness is growing, and the cleanliness will be attracted to consumers and encourage them to consume [3]. As the expense of maintaining the daily routine of a hotel is increasing, the need for adjustment to better survive this economic shock is significantly urgent and essential.

To reduce the pressure on financial expenditures, hospitality education and training could be decreased as the costs are very high, from $350-$4000 per person [4]. The training expenses occupied a large part of the total cost in the hospitality industry, and the feasible way to reduce cost is to cut down the training expenses in hotels. So, revaluation is immediately needed in the hospitality industry. With apparent flexibility, hybrid learning comes into light and makes the training more adjustable in terms of time, place, cost, and pace [5]. Therefore, this article aims to investigate the adoption of

the in-hotel training section. This article will be based on a literature review to fully assess this idea. This article will briefly review 1) Hospitality education and training, 2）Hybrid learning, 3) the Match between hospitality training and hybrid learning, 4) Discussion. Furthermore, this article will discuss the need for Blended/Hybrid learning and Distant learning in the hospitality industry, compare these two types of learning, and design a feasible Hybrid/Hybrid learning model or Distant learning model through the assessment of the review of the literature.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Hospitality Education and Training

Hospitality education and training are two notions that are opposed. Hospitality education is specifically given for tourism or hospitality-related students to develop high-level hospitality professionals with attributes such as global vision and leadership [6], public social awareness, innovation, and entrepreneurship. And it assists them in becoming familiar with theoretical information and international operating standards connected to hotel management. These connected courses will allow students to study a variety of topics, mostly management and tourism; however, some institutions also offer courses in finance to help students improve their professional abilities and better survive in the business [7]. On the other hand,

many schools choose to use experimental learning approaches [6]. For example, they encourage their students to take part in an internship program, which will substantially assist them in applying what they've learned in class to real-life situations [8].

To discuss hospitality training programs designed specifically for new workers to help them adjust to their new surroundings while learning the organization's values and customs. Apart from this, according to Ye (2003), hospitality training programs are always geared toward developing trainees' strategic thinking, multi-dimensional technical abilities, and interpersonal skills. The purpose of hotel training, according to his analysis and conclusion, should be to systematically educate and train employees in a planned, organized, systematic, and targeted manner, to develop their current knowledge and abilities while encouraging them to work continuously and effectively in the future through teamwork [9].

Indeed, hospitality training is of great importance because it can help improve employees' knowledge, abilities, and personal qualities and apply training content at work to increase employee productivity and ultimately improve organizational efficiency and competitiveness. And hospitality training aims to help staff build their competitiveness and achieve their value through staff's career development and enhance their working skills and working discipline through hospitality training programs. However, such goals seem difficult to achieve in China, as the issues on hospitality training are enormous. Accordingly, from Wang's research, the problems can be divided into two main categories, lack of strict training system and plan, inadequate training effect evaluation training content blindly copied from other hotels [10]. Due to these problems, despite the hotel industry's desire to make hotel training effective, the results have been unsatisfactory.

2.2. Hybrid Learning

Hybrid learning, or Blended learning, is a teaching method that combines face-to-face teaching and online learning [11]. It is a student-oriented teaching method to help students better adapt to what they are interested to learn. "This type of teaching method greatly improved learning effectiveness and efficiency, which have the potential to develop the flexibility of the class and maintain face-to-face classes effective communication in the traditional class" [11]. In this type of teaching method, students will be taught in the physical classroom and the online one. Web-based instruction, which is called e-lecture, and which will make students learning process flexible and convenient.

Besides, hybrid learning is greatly used on many occasions and in different primary schools and senior high schools, and even colleges. In the flipped classes,

knowledge transmission is done after class using information technology in the flipped classroom (IT). Knowledge is internalized in the classroom with the support of the instructor and peers. All components of the classroom learning process are reversed when the teaching process is reversed. The classroom learning process, as well as many components of the learning process, are inverted. The emergence of the flipped classroom has led to several changes, the first of which is a shift in the role of the teacher, who has changed from being the knowledge transferor in the traditional classroom to being the facilitator and guide of learning. This means that teachers are no longer at the centre of knowledge interaction and application, but they are still the primary facilitators of learning for students [12]. In addition to this, the flipped classroom model makes interactivity in the classroom much more effective. Based on the teacher's assessment feedback, students will have a more objective understanding of their learning and better control their learning, making it much more effective.

Hybrid learning helps achieve education equity. For example, according to Andujar and Nadif's research, in EFL, they try to help students with disabilities in language learning in a flipped class format. They use online instructional videos that are often accompanied by captions and sign language, which can effectively help students with physical challenges better understand the language they are learning. In addition, by using e-learning videos, teachers can have more time to focus on students who need attention, such as students with autism [13]. Many students with disabilities think this teaching method is great, and they maintain a positive attitude toward this teaching method.

However, there are still drawbacks to hybrid learning. First, the technical problems found in the Hybrid learning programs and applications that make people do not have access to online platforms are caused by technology-related problems [14]. Another problem is the limitation of hybrid learning. Firstly, the web video function only provides basic instruction and does not help the teacher communicate with the students during the rest of the lesson. This greatly reduces the quality of learning. According to Demetriadis and Pombortsis, e-lecture should "(a) foster instructional cohesiveness by integrating the various learners' options as interconnected nodes of a productive learning network, and (b) efficiently match the attributes of the used media to the socio-cognitive conditions favourable to any specific learning activity." [5]

2.3. Match between Hybrid Learning and Hospitality Training

Before comparing Hybrid Learning and Hospitality Training, the training is not vocational education in hospitality industries. From OECD, vocational

education aims to provide students with skills and competencies unique to a group of vocations or crafts and the capacity to work with and serve international clients [15]. Training, on the other hand, is a set of activities organized in an appropriate environment as a complementary part of vocational education that aims to provide quality professional adequacy to the trainee by transforming theoretical knowledge into practical and professional skills that are required for specific types of jobs [16]. So, to briefly discuss the training status in hospitality industries. The first part discusses the current state of Hospitality Training, its focus, and which parts still require development. The hospitality industry shares many characteristics with other types of service companies, but it also has distinct characteristics that necessitate technical-vocational skills [17]. Besides, in a similar vein, there appears to be a mismatch between educational programs' knowledge and abilities and the needs of the tourist sector, chef abilities, kitchen control, general cleaning, reservations procedures, sales. Marketing skills are among the skills shortages [18] in the tourism and hospitality sector. And according to Tracy and his team's research (2014), the duration of various contents in the hospitality sector varies; for example, it will take 3.0 days for hotel management staff to engage in strategic content, 5.2 days for technical content, and 2.0 days for interpersonal staff to develop. Line employees require 2.4 days to complete strategic material, 9.4 days to complete tactical content, and 1.4 days to develop technical and interpersonal abilities. Despite the amount of time spent on this training program, there are still some flaws. For example, the hospitality training content lacks practice and time, the content is not organically mixed with the hotel's development strategy and staff's personal development, some line staff only focus on practical skills, and there is a lack of strategy and culture content and management staffs lose control [4].

So, it is reasonable that some hotel executives are not pleased with the training outcomes. Some of those cannot evaluate the return on investment (ROI) in the hospitality training process (Kline and Harris, 2008). And this can be more harmful in this time of Covid-19. As it is mentioned earlier, the cleaning cost and standards have raised in the hospitality industry. For hygiene and cleaning practice, it will take more time for hospitality training. But for many hotels, it could be hard to raise the standard of training. The training revolution needs to be started immediately.

As far as today's hotel training is concerned, some big brand hotels have introduced online courses in their training programs, focusing on their brand culture, etiquette, and other basic hotel skills. And through the online platform and technology advancement, the hotel can make the training program efficient and flexible [4]. Then the role of online learning and Hybrid learning in hotel training will continue to grow as hotels continue to

focus on the need for interactive web-based skills and the overall quality of their employees in the future.

The first point to mention about Hybrid learning and vocational training is that it may provide learners with a new learning platform, pique their attention, and substantially increase the efficiency and quality of learning. Second, by promoting online learning and offline practice to make learners more familiar with the Internet and information technology, hybrid learning may link learners with contemporary technology more organic, allowing them to better sustain their careers and stay up with the times. Finally, hybrid learning may better assist employees in upgrading themselves online by providing a choice of courses to fit their individual self-improvement needs, allowing them to better accomplish their tasks and prolong their careers. According to Youde's research (2017), the module structure in a hybrid learning environment helps students build problem-solving abilities and work autonomously in their work [19]. In this situation, Hybrid learning enables students to address difficulties, which will tremendously assist them in their professional development.

3. DISCUSSION

From the perspective of today's hotel training mechanism, including online courses in their on-the-job training to help trainees learn more in a short period and at a lower cost. In mid-range hotels and fast-food hotels, staff training is mostly in the form of apprenticeship training. In this form of training, new hotel staff will be in the hotel under the guidance of the old staff to learn. This method allows hotel staff to get thorough training. Still, most of the time and cost will be wasted in some simple and detailed work for the current stage of the work of the staff has a great help. But for the future development of the hotel staff's long-term effect is minimal, so the introduction of new learning and training mechanisms in the existing hotel training is extremely important.

To design a conceptual Hybrid learning structure, first is to identify the training objectives. According to Baum and Devin's research in 2005(2005), the hotel focuses on the flexibility and labor transfer of certain employees, which means the hotels are looking for great communication skills and familiar with ICT technologies [20]. Besides, Teamwork, inspiration-motivation, creativity, mentoring, staying current, proactiveness, active listening, staying healthy, training measurement, consistency, and love and passion for the profession are all training competencies that the current study identified as essential for the effectiveness of training and development [21]. Learners who can execute a wide range of tasks, requiring them to be very flexible from one position to the next, will also focus on future hotel training.

The online courses and practical training are created after the training objectives have been defined. According to this article, the online training for recruits is expected to focus on various areas of orientation, business culture, and established processes for hotel operations. In the online platforms, the online courses will mainly be video-based and e-lectures, the standardized operation of the details of the explanation. So, learners will have a basic impression of the details of these operations, and then in their shifts with their masters to operate their masters to explain the details of their operation more targeted. Through online self-study and targeted offline training, students will be more efficient and flexible in their learning. They will have more time to use the online platform to study courses of interest in other departments to make their skills more comprehensive and have more time for themselves. At the end of the training, the relevant departments will evaluate the students' learning, starting with the learners' attendance in the online courses. The second is based on the learners' performance, measured by the number of complaints and compliments received from visitors. The outcomes of their training will eventually impact their performance revenue, boosting their willingness to study. By structuring Hybrid learning in this way, the hotel may save money on training while also making the entire process more contemporary and relevant to society's future requirements.

There will also be self-improvement courses in the online course, such as leadership development and management skills, that are meant to satisfy learners' career planning goals and widen their career paths by boosting their general self-esteem. For this type of online program, the leadership development program publishes periodic leadership development programs, usually lasting 15-20 weeks and 3-4 sessions per week. Learners can select the program that best suits their needs and are divided into small groups to practice group work. Learners will be given an in-class project, a discussion board, or a written assignment to share their views and opinions about what they have learned in each course. Department directors will assess this "homework". In addition, each group will have its group discussion at specified times throughout the week, with a director from a different department each week to give their viewpoint and expertise to assist those learners in developing their career pathways. At the end of the course, each team will be asked to give a final presentation, and the results will become an important reference document for learners on their way to promotion.

After learners have completed the full cycle of the Hybrid learning class, we send them a survey two weeks after the end of the course to determine what went wrong and what went well in the course and make recommendations for future course improvement and retention. And we will continue to track the professional development of those who have taken the course to determine whether the course is useful enough, and if so, how to make it better, and if not, how to increase the ROI of the course.

4. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION

The tendency is to employ new education and training techniques in hotel training since the combination of training and current technology is highly significant and in line with future talent demands. This article explores the possibility of hybrid learning in hospitality training and suggests a hybrid learning method for hospitality training. However, due to financial constraints and other factors, this article could only create a conceptual design. It was unable to assess the participants' happiness with the course or other parts of it. In the future, researchers can utilize this article as a model for course design, training trials, data analysis, and detailed assessment in a future study to see if Hybrid learning is effective in hotel training.

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