

*A Systematic Literature Review on Issues of Hospitality, Tourism and Catering  
Curriculum Development in Ghana Institutions*

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The European Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This study systematically reviewed the literature related to hospitality, tourism, and catering (HTC) institutions' curricula in Ghana to identify quality issues, the research approach that has been least adopted, and the contribution of improvement of the curricula. The study utilized the PRISMA guideline to conduct a systematic literature review. The findings are that HTC policies and developments were the issues that had received little attention from researchers. Also, the mixed-method approach appeared to be the least preferred research approach adopted for HTC studies. As noted in the findings, the HTC curricula in tertiary institutions in Ghana have received little attention towards their development. The insights gained from this analysis could be helpful to both academia and professionals in the HTC industry, especially in Ghana, as the study identifies critical areas for consideration in HTC curriculum development. Among other suggestions, this study recommends that more research be carried out to identify factors that can contribute to improving the quality and usefulness of HTC curricula in Ghana.

Keywords: Hospitality, Curriculum, Systematic Literature Review (SLR)

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## **Introduction**

The economic and societal relevance of the hospitality, tourism, and catering (HTC) sectors has led to a recent surge in interest in these sectors. As a result, a large number of pertinent articles and data about the HTC sector have been published and are frequently kept in libraries and internet databases. The volume and complexity of this data, however, makes it difficult for academics and industry experts in HTC to use it methodically to enhance performance. To meet customer expectations and stay competitive in a market that is always changing, hotel and tourism management need to use this information. A systematic literature review (SLR) process, which entails finding, analyzing, and synthesizing scientifically established literature, can be used by stakeholders to get better results. This technique aids in assessing, condensing, and communicating the findings and implications of large and complex data sets, making it an effective tool for improving the HTC sector. This paper aims to explore the research questions related to HTC issues, research methodologies used by HTC researchers, and contributions made by researchers to enhance the HTC curriculum in Ghana over the past five years.

## **Methods and Results**

Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) is a collection of standards for evidence-based systematic reviews and meta-analyses. It aids writers in choosing what to cover and creating comprehensive literature techniques (Mulrow,1994). Relating to the key words 123 papers were identified relating to the key words and the study searched for 60 publications pertaining to graduate performance, skills acquisition in tourism, and curriculum development for hospitality and catering using Google Scholar, EBSCO, and Elsevier. Sixty papers related to HTC were selected. Thirty-three out of the sixty papers were filtered out for not meeting the inclusion criteria which was based on the year of publication and the journal being Scopus. The exclusion criterion which includes duplications of papers and connection between the purpose of the research and the database used led to the removal of the other three papers leading to 24 papers. The study examined 24 articles on HTC that were published in 14 publications between 2017 and 2021, considering the most recent research in the HTC sector. The study classified 24 papers into four main foci: enhancing HTC-related policies, influencing the HTC sector, employment in the HTC industry, and HTC-related curricula. The classifications were based on research questions, methodology, and contribution to the HTC curricula.

**Table 1: Systematic Literature Table**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Information</b>
Keywords: Hospitality and catering curriculum, attributes, skills acquisition, and graduate performance. Scopus-indexed papers – 123	
60 papers reviewed between 2017 – 2022	
The 2017 Year Papers from 60 papers	10 Papers
The 2018 Year Papers from 60 papers	9 Papers
The 2019 Year Papers from 60 papers	9 Papers
The 2020 Year Papers from 60 papers	14 Papers
The 2021 Year Papers from 60 papers	17 Papers
The 2022 Year Papers from 60 papers	1 Paper
Research Gap (24papers)	3 Papers (2017) 3 Papers (2018) 4 Papers (2019) 6 Papers (2020) 8 Papers (2021)

### ***Classification of Papers***

These papers were divided into three categories based on the research questions: (1) the research focus; (2) the research methodology (for example, qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods); and (3) the contribution to the HTC curricula in Ghana. This study classified 24 papers into four main foci: enhancing HTC-related policies, industry influences on the HTC sector, employment in the HTC industry, and HTC-related curricula. Table 2 and 3 below shows the results of the classifications.

**Table 2: Hospitality, Tourism, and Catering Issues - published in 14 leading journals in the Scopus database**

<b>Focus of paper</b>	<b>Number of papers</b>	<b>% Count</b>
Policies	2	8.3
Industry Influences	2	8.3
Employment	7	29.2
Curriculum ( <i>those related to Ghana</i> )	2	8.3
Curriculum ( <i>those related to other countries</i> )	11	45.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3: Research approaches adopted for Hospitality, Tourism, and Catering studies published in 14 leading journals in the Scopus database**

Research approach	Type	Number of papers	% Count
<b>Qualitative</b>	Interviews	8	33.3
	Content Analysis	4	16.7
	Focus group	1	4.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54.2</b>
<b>Quantitative</b>	Survey	5	20.8
	Content Analysis	5	20.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>41.6</b>
<b>Mixed-methods</b>	Interviews/survey	1	4.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4.2</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>

## Discussion

### *Immerging Issues in the Hospitality, Tourism, and Catering Industry*

Researchers in the hospitality, tourism, and catering industry have studied various issues, including government policies, industry influences, employment, and curriculum as highlighted by Buthelezi, Ali, Murphy, Nadkarni, and Anselmi. Scholars such as Buthelezi (2018) and Preko (2020) have examined how governments have regulated the hotel and tourism (HTC) industry. However, Buthelezi (2018) discovered that modifications to South African educational policies created difficulties for both educators and learners, which might have affected their dedication and training standards. According to Preko's (2020) assessment, the government of Ghana is strongly committed to reforming tourism to reach international standards, which will facilitate the expansion of the HTC industry in Ghana. From the viewpoint of graduate employers, Ali, Murphy, and Nadkarni (2018) investigated the contribution of information technology and sustainable development on the employability of individuals in the HTC sector.

According to the study, the notion of sustainability is poorly represented in the course descriptions and program profiles of sustainable tourism that are provided by colleges across the globe. A stronger awareness of sustainability should be imparted to students through the hospitality and tourism curriculum. Although the US hospitality management curriculum places a strong emphasis on specialized knowledge across a range of hospitality sectors, its usefulness is limited by its inability to evaluate individual courses. The curricula include support programs, which serve as a standard for further study, Szende, Catalfamo & Upneja (2019).

Sanga (2019) study revealed that Tanzanian educational institutions and the tourism industry work together to offer an effective tourism curriculum, however the industry lacks good leadership, customer service, marketing, sales, and communication skills. Griffin (2020) discovered that the coursework ought to cover just six of the thirty-three distinct hospitality-related curriculum areas. Iran's technical vocational colleges and universities raise the standard of education by designing their courses to meet the demands of the professional and

labor markets Mohammed, Neyestani, Jafari & Taghvaei (2021). The impact of employability and digital literacy skills in a burgeoning digital economy, as well as the potential disruptions to the hospitality and tourism industries, are examined by Adeyinka-Ojo, Lee, Abdullah, and Teo (2020). Through content analysis the study revealed that digital transportation, meal sharing, and trip planning are the skills that lead to substantial changes in the operational and strategic management of the hospitality and tourism firms.

In their evaluation of Latin American hospitality and tourism programs, Gonzale & Villegas (2021) discover that a bachelor's degree can be obtained in four to five years in five different nations, with 21% of programs having national ministry of education accreditation and 11% having international accreditation. A study on sustainability sub-education programs among the top 50 international programs in tourism and hospitality management was carried out by Zizka (2021). The results demonstrated that well-known and bigger universities have an edge when it comes to educating students about sustainability. However, comparing hospitality and leisure management programs across several institutions has an impact on the findings' dependability.

Given Ghana's problems with environmental deterioration, more research is advised before integrating sustainability into the hospitality and tourism curricula. According to Karali, Das, and Roy (2021), more research is required to elucidate the influence and policy challenges. Karali et al. (2021) conducted a review of 404 publications published between 1980 and 2019 to ascertain the direction of rural tourism research. They discovered that important topics including resource control, stakeholder power struggles, and community politics have been disregarded.

## **Research Approaches in the Hospitality, Tourism, and Catering (HTC) Industry**

### ***Studies That Adopted Qualitative Research Approaches***

Qualitative research approaches have been used by HTC researchers to investigate the challenges faced by educators in modern hotel management education. However, some studies have limitations, such as small sample sizes and purposive sampling techniques. For example, Lugosi and Jameson (2017) found that the sample size was too small to produce representative views due to the variability among educators in modern hotel management institutions.

Ali, Murphy, and Nadkarni (2018) investigated the role of sustainable development and information technology on employability in the hospitality industry from the perspective of graduate employers. However, the study's generalizability was limited due to the use of only graduate employees as participants. Cotterell, Hales, Arcodia, and Ferreira (2019) also analyzed diverse ideas students and lecturers have about sustainability in course outlines and profiles of sustainable tourism programs offered at universities around the world.

Mohammad et. al. (2021) sought to develop indicators to improve education standards provided by technical and vocational colleges and universities using unstructured interviews. One limitation identified was that the study was conducted only in Iran with 18 participants, hence affecting generalization. Castiglioni, Lozza, Anselmi, & Rossi (2020) found that local people in Mozambique face employment challenges in the tourism industry. Ochieng and Ngware (2021) conducted a study to answer the research questions about TVET students' definition of "soft skills" and their impact on their employment prospects using structured

interview. Perceptions of thirty -four locals collected and analyzed give a limitation to the study.

Szende, Catalfamo, and Upneja (2019) used content analysis to determine the quality of key components of the HTC Curriculum in tertiary institutions in the United States by analyzing 15 management programs. Content analysis is more appropriate than interviews as deeper thoughts are given by participants. Adeyinka-Ojo, Lee, Abdullah, and Teo (2020) investigated the role of skills related to employability in the HTC industries. Sanga (2019) used focus group discussions among 356 professionals to investigate how the tourism sector and educational institutions in Tanzania work together to provide effective education.

### ***Studies That Adopted Quantitative Research Approaches***

Quantitative research approaches have gained attention among hospitality training (HTC) researchers, like qualitative methods. Studies have shown disparities between curriculum content and practitioners' expectations. For example, Cathy, Honggen, and Nan (2018) evaluated Ghana's hospitality training programs, while Alexakis & Jiang (2019) evaluated the US hospitality management curriculum. However, the study's small sample size and inability to evaluate individual courses limited its applicability. Griffin (2020) investigated if hospitality industry professionals' perceptions of courses were comparable to those of teachers, but the lack of balance between professionals and teachers may affect the findings. The use of a single methodology also limited the depth of the study. Further empirical studies are needed to understand the level of industry and academic collaboration in Ghana. Boo and Kim (2020) found a positive correlation between HTC professional certification and academic performance, which could be useful for improving the HTC curriculum in Ghana. Gonzalez & Villegas (2021) evaluated hospitality and tourist programs in Latin America but found the evaluation insufficient. Zizka (2021) analyzed sustainability education programs among the top 50 international tourism, leisure, and hospitality management programs, recommending further research on incorporating sustainability into curricula. These findings highlight the need for further research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the value of hospitality and tourism curricula in Ghana. Karali, Das, and Roy (2021) conducted a quantitative review of 404 articles from 1980 to 2019, focusing on tourism-biased journals. Adu-Ampong and Mensah (2021) evaluated the research output and trends in Ghana's hospitality and tourism (HTC) industry but found that the data excludes local and regional publications not indexed in Scopus. Frye, Kang, Huh, and Lee (2020) examined the relationship between marketing strategies and employee retention, suggesting future studies should consider issues beyond pay and benefits. Hyasat (2022) examined the approval of Jordanian tourism and hospitality colleges' diploma programs, finding low levels of approval. Dlamini, Migiro, and Tefera (2020) examined the balanced scorecard as a development and performance measuring instrument for small and medium-sized hotels in Eswatini, finding it to be primarily focused on non-financial performance criteria.

### ***Studies That Adopted Mixed-Methods Research Approaches***

Fraser (2020) utilized a mixed methods approach to study strategies for incorporating operational managerial competencies into the hospitality management curriculum. The study involved 96 human resource managers from various hotels in Australia, analyzing 48 competencies from 43 job postings. The methodology may have bias due to the participants being hotel managers. Future studies should include clients and other industry workers. The mixed-method approach was the least preferred research approach for hospitality

management (HTM) studies, accounting for only 4.2% of the total. The study highlights the need for a mixed methods approach in most HTC studies to study complex industry issues.

### ***Research Contribution Towards the Improvement of HTC Curricula in Ghana***

The tourism industry in Ghana experienced a 3.5% growth in 2019, surpassing the global economy's 2.5% rate. To achieve this, there is a need to develop skills for current and future professions in the hospitality and tourism (HTC) industry through an official curriculum in tertiary institutions. However, studies on the HTC curriculum in Ghana are limited, with less than 10% of reviewed papers focusing on the curriculum. A study by Commey, Koko & Hattingh (2020) found that employers expect graduates to possess applied and business-like competencies. A study by Yirbekyaa, Kuuder, and Mohammed (2021) at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), the University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR), and the University of Development Studies (UDS) found that 45% of respondents did not intend to work in the industry after graduation. The study recommends a mixed-methods study to examine the alignment between the intended and enacted hospitality and catering curricula in tertiary institutions in Ghana.

### **Conclusions**

The study analyzed 24 HTC-related papers published in 14 journals from 2017 to 2021. It found that influences and policy issues have received the least attention among researchers in the past five years. The mixed-methods approach was also the least preferred research approach. Researchers have contributed little to improving the HTC curriculum in Ghana. The study recommends replicating these studies in Ghana to fill 22 setting-related gaps in the literature. Additionally, three research questions were identified: research issues, approaches, and relevance to HTC curricula in Ghana. The study reveals that HTC-related issues, influences, and policy issues have received less attention from researchers in the past five years. Future research should investigate the influence of educational and economic policies in Ghana on the HTC industry. Community politics, stakeholder power struggles, and resource control issues should also be addressed. The mixed-methods approach is the least preferred research approach for HTC studies. Future studies should adopt a systematic review of literature and interviews with key stakeholders. The relevance of research to HTC curricula in Ghana is also highlighted, with limited attention to tertiary institutions. Further systematic reviews should be conducted on the HTC curriculum in Ghana, extracting papers from other databases. The study has one limitation, as the papers used were articles published in only the Scopus database. Future research should include HTC-related articles in other databases like Taylor and Francis.

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