

Students' Perceptions of the Bachelor of Technology (BTech) Program in Hospitality Education: A Study of Kumasi Technical University, Ghana

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Abstract

Over time, the long-standing challenge of closing the gap between academics and industry has considerably impacted both parties involved. Some Technical Universities began offering Bachelor of Technology (BTech) programs in Hospitality Education to address this issue. This study sought to evaluate students' awareness of the BTech program, its benefits, and the difficulties of enrolment. A quantitative study utilizing an online survey was conducted with 300 hospitality students in Diploma and Higher National Diploma (HND) classes in the Hotel Catering and Institutional Management department at Kumasi Technical University (KsTU), Ghana. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and Eviews software. To achieve the research objectives, cross-tabulations, Granger causality tests, and multiple linear regression. The study's findings revealed that the majority (97%) of the students were aware of the BTech degree in Hospitality Education. Students acknowledged the program's practical approach, viewing it as a good avenue to gaining significant competency and increasing their competitiveness in the labour market. However, many students suffered a huge financial burden because of the program, making enrolment difficult. Considering these findings, the study recommends that hospitality educators and industry partners work together to incorporate a comprehensive practical component into the program while addressing cost restrictions. This strategy attempts to enhance the overall effectiveness of the BTech programs and allow greater participation by students.

Keywords: Hospitality Education, BTech, Students, Enrolment, Career Aspirations, Challenges

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Introduction

Tertiary education has been a cornerstone in the education of people in various fields. However, the trajectory of education continues after school, when students seek to be employed to utilize the knowledge acquired in their respective fields (Le et al., 2018). Thus, the selection of programmes at tertiary education schools is mainly based on prospective career opportunities after completion (Gokuladas, 2010; Ineson & Kempa, 1996; Wabwoba & Mwakondo, 2011). The rates of unemployment in Ghana have led to the careful selection and appropriation of prospective employment before the selection of tertiary education programmes. Mostly when students enrol in the Diploma and HND hospitality programs they are excited and hopeful about the industry. However, upon getting to their final year, they often have divided thoughts about hospitality education and career prospects as to further their education in the hospitality field or not (Chavan, 2019). This study seeks to assess the perception of Diploma and Higher National Diploma (HND) Students Enrolment in BTech Hospitality Programs after Completion.

The main objective is to assess the perception of Diploma and Higher National Diploma (HND) Students Enrolment into BTech Hospitality Programs after Completion. A study of Kumasi Technical University, (KsTU) Ghana. Specific objectives: (1) To evaluate students' awareness of Hospitality Management and Catering Technology as a BTech programme in KsTU. (2) To examine the benefits in enrolling into the programme. (3) To examine the challenges in enrolling into the programme. (4) To explore the career aspirations of these students.

Literature Review

The self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977), career self-efficacy theory (Hackett & Betz, 1981), and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) are the three main theoretical frameworks upon which the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett's (1994) foundations. Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory explains how an individual believe/confidence in capabilities affect result expectations. Hackett and Betz (1981) developed career self-efficacy theory to study the impact of self-efficacy on the career advancement of women in scientific and engineering degrees. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory investigated the ongoing connection between personal variables, contextual influences, and behaviour. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by (Ajzen's (1991) was also reviewed. Applying these models to the study setting, students' perceptions of hospitality education are influenced by intentions, which are defined by their attitude, subjective norm, and behavioural control. In terms of attitudes, it considers the student's belief and interest in pursuing hospitality education. The outcome of his or her aim will be reviewed, and it could be positive or negative. Subjective norms consider external pressures that influence students' intentions to pursue hospitality education. These external influences could include pressure from family, peers, alumnus, teachers, industry practitioners, and anyone who believe they have influence over his or her decision to pursue hospitality education. Perceived behavioural control explains students' freedom to pursue hospitality education. Students' ambition to study and work in hospitality is influenced by variables such as self-efficacy as well as external factors such as the learning environment and working conditions (Zahari, 2004).

Methodology

This study was a multilevel study that involved the creation of surveys to collect data on interest, classroom performance, and teacher quality. In the study, 300 students were sampled, and self-administered questionnaires were distributed on their WhatsApp platform for them to answer. The random sampling technique ensures representation of educational attainment and data is collected electronically to ensure anonymity. Data analysis includes various techniques such as statistical analysis. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and Eviews software. Cross-tabulations, frequencies, analysis, Granger causality tests, and multiple linear regression were used to achieve the research objectives. Ethical considerations, including informed consent and confidentiality, were strictly adhered to. Limitations such as sample bias and resource limitations are acknowledged. Finally, this study is intended to provide valuable information to inform the evaluation and development process of BTech in Hospitality and Catering Management at Kumasi Technical University.

Findings

The collected data were imported into SPSS for quantitative analysis and subsequent analysis to achieve the research objectives. This involves cleaning up elements, coding variables appropriately, and running various tests and models to find important patterns and relationships. The information obtained from this analysis is important for solving research questions and drawing conclusions. The resulting details are as follows:

		Age:				Total
		18-25	26-35	26-35	35+ years	
Demographic Information	Female	253	24	2	4	283
	Male	14	3	0	0	17
Total		267	27	2	4	300

Table 1: Demographic Information

The results in Table 1 show that this study mainly included young women, especially women aged 18-25. The very small number of participants in the older age group and males indicates that the findings may better represent the views of younger women. This means that the majority of students taking hospitality management course are female, indicating the possibility of gender bias in this study.

		Are you aware of the availability of BTech programs?		
		No	Yes	Total
If yes, how did you become aware of BTech programs?	Friends or family	0	33	33
	Internet research	2	50	52
	School	4	158	162
	School; Internet research; Friends or family	0	53	53
	Total	6(2.7%)	292(97.3%)	300

Table 2: Students' Awareness of Hospitality Education as a BTech Program in KsTU

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents (292 out of 300) were aware of the BTech programme. The students' main source of information was their school (158). Respondents had access to information on the programme from different sources (school, online research and friends or family), which shows its effectiveness in many aspects. Additionally, 52 participants received information from online research about the role of online resources, while 33 participants obtained information from friends or family, noting the impact of personal collaboration. These findings show that schools are crucial in creating awareness about BTech courses based on online resources and personal networks. To raise awareness, emphasis needs to be placed on promoting media in schools, developing online information, and using personal connections through deals and word-of-mouth recommendations.

To Examine the Benefits of Enrolling in Hospitality Education Programme

Item	Mean	SD
To work in the hospitality industry	2.83	.454
To secure a good job in the future	2.82	.492
To become a self-employed graduate	2.79	.495
To earn a higher salary	2.79	.485
To become a hospitality Tutor	2.57	.688
To be able to run and manage my family business	2.50	.711
To secure a government job	2.49	.662

Scale of interpretation: 1.0-1.49- Disagree 1.50-2.49 neutral 2.5-3.0 agree.

Table 3: Perceived Benefits

The results in Table 3 show that most respondents agree on the benefits from enrolling in the hospitality industry, finding a good job in the future, becoming self-employed, or earning a high salary again. However, respondents remained neutral (2.49) on the benefit securing a government job), indicating that participants have different views on this job. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents have positive views on the benefits of pursuing a degree in hospitality.

To Examine the Challenges in Enrolling in Hospitality Education Programme

Item	Mean	SD
High Tuition fees	2.53	.744
High practical fees	2.52	.752
The unwillingness of industry operators to accept students for internship	2.12	.821
Irregular work schedules	2.08	.812
Lower salaries in the industry	2.06	.786
Negative perception about working in the industry	2.04	.839
Inadequate modern equipment for training	2.02	.865
Negative attitude of Tutors towards students	1.86	.867
Course not relevant for this modern generation	1.83	.887

Scale of interpretation: 1.0-1.49- Disagree 1.50-2.49 neutral, 2.5-3.0 agree

Table 4: Challenges/Barriers in Enrolment

The results in Table 4 show some of the challenges and problems perceived by participants in pursuing their studies. The most frequently cited problems include high education and

training fees, irregular working hours, low wages in the sector, negative perceptions of employment in the region, operators' reluctance to accept workers and the lack of modern training equipment. Similar findings were found by Peshave et al. 2016 and Wang & Huang, 2014 all identified lower salaries, high busy schedules, and family issues as challenge facing hospitality education enrolment. However, opinions differ regarding teachers' poor attitude towards students and the impact of the classroom on today's generation. These findings highlight many of the issues faced by individuals working in the hospitality industry and highlight areas for improvement in education and the industry.

To Explore the Causal Relationship Between Career Aspirations and Student Enrolment Into the BTech Program

Null Hypothesis:	Obs	F-Statistic	Prob.
Career Intention Does Not Granger Cause Enrolment	292	2.01973	0.0346
Enrolment Does Not Granger Cause Career Intention		0.03728	0.9634
Learning Environment Does Not Granger Cause Enrolment	297	2.83297	0.0605
Enrolment Does Not Granger Cause Learning Environment		13.8039	0.0000
Social pressure factors Does Not Granger Cause Enrolment	298	1.19207	0.3051
Enrolment Does Not Granger Cause Social factors		5.90413	0.0031
Industry experience Does Not Granger Cause Career Intention	292	1.81767	0.1643
Career Intention Does Not Granger Cause Industry experience		4.07130	0.0180
Learning Environment Does Not Granger Cause Career Intention	291	0.65433	0.5206
Career Intention Does Not Granger Cause Learning Environment		7.49952	0.0007
Personal factors Does Not Granger Cause Career Intention	292	1.71806	0.1813
Career Intention Does Not Granger Cause Personal factors		4.32851	0.0141
Learning Environment Does Not Granger Cause Industry experience	297	0.84593	0.4302
Industry experience Does Not Granger Cause Learning Environment		22.6104	0.0000
Personal factors Does Not Granger Cause Industry experience	298	1.00898	0.3659
Industry experience Does Not Granger Cause Personal factors		3.26878	0.0394
Personal factors Does Not Granger Cause Learning Environment	297	145.078	0.0000
Learning Environment Does Not Granger Cause Personal factors		1.17280	0.3110
Social pressure factors Does Not Granger Cause Learning Environment	297	9.83785	0.0000
Learning Environment Does Not Granger Cause Social factors		1.87550	0.1551
Social pressure factors Does Not Granger Cause Personal factors	298	2.77541	0.0640
Personal factors Does Not Granger Cause Social pressure factors		2.93485	0.0547

Table 5: Pairwise Granger Causality Tests

Table 5 shows the Granger causality test results showing the relationship between different topics. Career motivation had a significant impact on enrolment, indicating that one's career motivation influences the decision to enrol in a program. Enrolment, in turn, highlights differences between these relationships, influencing changes in the educational and social environment. This confirms studies supported by Amissah et al., 2019, who found out that students pursuing hospitality programs intend to choose a career in the hospitality industry. In

addition, work motivation reveals its role in the creation of personal work in the business by leading to changes in experiences in the business. However, there is no significant relationship between job knowledge and job intention. In addition, although the individual is related to the learning environment, there is no significant Granger causality between the relationship and the learning environment. These findings provide insight into the interplay between factors influencing education and career decisions in the hospitality industry.

Further Analysis

In addition to the pre-test, additional analyzes were conducted to understand the impact of the identified factors on student admission to the BTech Hospitality program. This detailed study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the enrolment decision-making process. Table 6 below shows a detailed summary of this analysis showing the relationship between the identified factors and the sample enrolled in the program.

Model	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
Career_Intention	0.047852	0.014932	3.204640	0.0015
Industryexperience	0.015719	0.006095	2.578794	0.0104
Personalfactors	0.007659	0.005125	1.494486	0.1361
Socialpressure factors	-0.005478	0.003464	-1.581353	0.1149
Learning_Environment	0.012873	0.002231	5.770919	0.0000

Table 6: Effect of Independent Variables on Student Enrolment to BTech Program

Table 6 shows the effects of various independent variables on student enrolment in BTech programme. The coefficient of 0.047852 indicates that an increase in career intention is associated with an increase in student enrolment of approximately 0.048 units. This relationship is significant at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.0015$), indicating that strong career goals have a positive impact on enrolment. Industry experience has a positive impact on student enrolment with a coefficient of 0.015719. Each unit increase in the industry increases schooling by approximately 0.016 units. This relationship is significant at the 0.05 level ($p = 0.0104$), indicating that students with more industry experience are more likely to enrol in BTech programme. The coefficient of 0.007659 indicates that there is a relationship between personal factors and student enrolment, but it is not significant ($p = 0.1361$). This shows that personal factors may have a slight impact on school enrolment, but it did not reach significance in this sample. The coefficient of -0.005478 indicates a positive, although not significant, relationship between the relationship and student enrolment ($p = 0.1149$). This suggests that social pressure factors may have a moderating effect on enrolment, but further research is needed. The coefficient of the Learning Environment variable is 0.012873 and has a positive effect on student enrolment ($p < 0.0001$). Learning Environment for each additional credit hour, enrolment in the program increases by 0.013 credit hours, highlighting the importance of the learning environment in attracting students to BTech programs assistantship program. The results showed that career goals, job knowledge, and learning environment influence students enrolled in BTech courses, while personal and social pressure factors influence show weakness or ineffectiveness. These findings provide valuable information for program managers and policymakers to improve enrolment strategies and increase program attractiveness.

Discussion

Reliability analysis verifies the consistency and reliability of the research instrument and ensures the validity and stability of the results obtained. This demonstrates the reliability of the findings and gives confidence in making inferences about students' perceptions of the BTech program in hospitality education. Demographic analysis revealed the possibility of gender bias in study participants; The majority of participants were young women. Understanding the vulnerability of this population is important to correctly interpret the results of the study and address potential weaknesses in assessment and evaluation development. As shown in Table 3, respondents' good knowledge of BTech programs cited the usefulness of various sources such as school and online research. Using these channels for advertising and promotion can increase visibility and attract potential students. Analytical results confirm the adequacy of the sample size and the robustness of the research methodology in capturing dimensions that influence students' enrolment decisions. This provides a solid foundation for understanding the complex issues that lead students to select and receive targeted interventions. The analysis highlighted three factors that influence enrolment decisions: personal factors, learning environment, and business dynamics. Knowing the relationship between these factors is important for developing a holistic strategy to make programs attractive and retain students. The benefits and challenges perceived by the participants gave a good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the BTech program. Addressing issues such as high tuition costs and related economic issues is critical to increasing access and ensuring student success. The Granger Causality Test reveals the interactions that influence students' choices by showing the relationship between employment, enrolment decisions, and the environment. Understanding these relationships can inform intervention plans to support students' career development and academic success. Further analysis highlighted the significant impact of career goals, job knowledge, and learning environment on student enrolments. This highlights the importance of addressing these factors in recruitment and retention strategies to attract and retain high-quality students.

Implications

Understanding student attitudes, knowledge levels, and decisions can guide leaders in adjusting recruitment and retention strategies, curriculum design, and instructional efforts to meet students' needs and expectations. Recognizing the possibility of gender bias in participants highlights the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion in projects. Efforts should be made to ensure that all students, regardless of gender or origin, receive fair treatment and support. Knowledge of useful information can guide advertising campaigns to raise awareness of BTech programs. Using competitions such as schools, online resources, and personal collaborations can increase the visibility of your project and attract potential students. Teachers can adapt instruction to meet students' interests and expectations, address real-world opportunities, develop appropriate skills, and support learning. Lawmakers can use research studies to advocate for policy changes to address issues such as higher education rates, economic barriers, and gender inequality. Collaboration between organizations, business stakeholders, and policymakers can help close these gaps and create positive outcomes. Prospective students can make more informed decisions about joining BTech programs based on the perceived benefits, challenges and career opportunities of study. Those in the hospitality industry can work with schools to ensure graduates are well-prepared for employment. Aligning the curriculum with industry needs, providing internship opportunities, and supporting partnerships can improve graduates' employability and work readiness. To address the issue of gender bias, hospitality educators in KsTU can award

scholarship to males in vocational education. This will encourage their enrolment into hospitality education.

Conclusion

One of the main sources of labour for hospitality companies is higher education. The aim of hospitality education is to provide students with practical knowledge and abilities, and this has led to its increasing popularity. The public awareness of higher education programs in hospitality has expanded among educators in the field. The reduced tuition and practical fees of the hospitality education program is likely to increase students enrol. The learning environment, career aspiration, and industry experience all influence their enrolment.

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