Exploring Pedagogies Available for Skill Acquisition in Hospitality and Student's Preference

Harrietta Akrofi-Ansah, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana
Evelyn Catherine Impraim, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana
Vida Commey, Kumasi Technical University, Ghana
Lois Vigil Commey, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana

Abstract

Skill acquisition is very important aspect of hospitality/tourism teaching delivery. An in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted involving two hundred (200) hospitality/tourism lecturers, students and practitioners in the industry to examine various pedagogies that are available, effective and preferred by students of hospitality education. The study showed that demonstrations and practical activities are dominantly used by technical universities than traditional universities. This is because, the courses and modules (catering, food and beverage production, food technology, event organizations, etc.) within the tourism and hospitality education at technical universities are practically intensive. These pedagogies are also effective since they drive hands-on and visual engagement of students in the teaching and learning process. Interactive discussions and theoretical reflective/experiential learning are more dominant in traditional universities that offer leadership, entrepreneurship and managerial skills to both undergraduate and postgraduates. Reflective learning is highly preferred by postgraduate students who desire to become frontrunners, policy framers, managers and leaders at the industry level. Considering the limitations of practical pedagogy, it becomes imperative that, government provide some financial support to students who enroll in skill-based tourism and hospitality education. Provision of financial resources to students will fully accelerate inclusive participation which will further enhance the effectiveness of practical pedagogy in skill-based hospitality education at technical universities. Moreover, traditional universities must embrace demonstrations as part of pedagogy for leadership and managerial skills acquisition for undergraduate tourism and hospitality students. These can be achieved through integrated field visits by partnership with firms within the industry.

Keywords: Hospitality/Tourism Education, Skills Acquisition, Pedagogies

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Introduction

Interest in tourism and hospitality education in Ghana has increased over the last decades. Indeed, several higher learning academic institutions such as universities, colleges and vocational training institutes have widened their scopes and intake of students in tourism and hospitality educations (Commey et al., 2019). Public universities such as University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Ghana, Kumasi Technical University, Accra Technical University, etc. are currently running various master programs. The overarching aim of tourism and hospitality education in Ghana is to create synergy between academia and the industry through labour supply, development policies and research (Amisah et al. 2020). Hence, the ability of tourism and hospitality students to translate theory into practice in real world situations have gained significant attention over the decade. This brings into light the effectiveness, relevance and efficiency of teaching and learning methods within tourism and hospitality education. Much research attention has been given to learning styles and methods across the globe. In fact, learning style as grounded in literature has been construed as a confusing strand on interrelation models, concepts and constructs. Researchers have become overly concerned with the physiological dimensions of the brain function in the teaching and learning process. Thus, authors such as Ndou et al. (2019); Hsu (2018) and Della et al. (2021) give relevance and lays more emphasis on how the human brain is able to capture, process and appreciate concepts that are taught in the classroom. Essentially, the brain function perspective of the argument focuses on the cognitive abilities of students to appropriate and articulates concepts, models and constructs which are taught as part of academic disciplines. Other authors such as Amangeldi et al. (2023) and Civak (2021) have also explored the relevance of the learning environment that suits students. Thus, in as much as the brain is the storage environment of students, the environments within which teaching is delivered must also reflect the cognitive capacities of students. Olenych et al. (2021) lays much emphasis on combination of manipulatives, graphical illustrations with theoretical delivery of teaching as essential to enhancing learning outcomes. Indeed, the preference of students regarding teaching and learning differ based on contexts. Several forms of learning styles have been proposed and used across the globe over the century. These include: instructional learning, information processing method, social interaction, cognitive personality method, etc. Instructional preference reflects the learning choice of students where teaching is delivered in an environment that integrates sound, lighting, design, graphics and visuals, etc. (Farsari, 2022). Social interaction also connotes the learning choice of students where teaching is delivered in a discussion and interactive manner. Information processing highlights students learning choice where they are allowed to process teaching information and resources on their own with little interference from instructors (Farsari, 2022). Teaching and learning preference for skills acquisition within tourism and hospitality education has also received some level of research attention. Nonetheless, there are still some confusions on the choice and preference of students regarding the different strands of pedagogies in the context of effectiveness, relevance and efficiency (Carvahlho et al., 2021). Students are often in dilemma regarding the kind of teaching methodology that blends their cognitive abilities in appreciating lessons taught in the lecture hall. While skill acquisition toward a growing and vibrant tourism and hospitality industry is paramount in Ghana, it becomes very eminent to explore the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of pedagogies that fit the preference of students. Students are expected to translate their skills and competences at the industry level. However, Asirifi et al., (2013) found some high degree of competency gap and mismatch between students' skills and industry expectations. According to Asirifi et al. (2013) majority of tourism and hospitality students are not able to translate theoretical assumptions, concepts,

models and constructs they have been taught in school into practice at the industry level. According to Desere and Hattingh (2019) and Commey (2021) more than 60% of tourism and hospitality students have competence gaps which limit their abilities to making meaningfully impacts at the industry level through policies, best practices, research, management and leadership. While these competency gaps undermine the contribution of tourism and hospitality education to industry, little has been done on the contributions of pedagogies to the narratives discussed above. Remedying the narrative therefore calls for urgent research into best pedagogies that fulfil the underlying objectives of skills acquisition within tourism and hospitality education. Justifiably, the findings of this research provide insights to lecturers on best pedagogies that deliver superior teaching outcomes to students.

Literature Review

Some studies have been done on the preference and effectives of pedagogies for skill acquisition in tourism and hospitality education across the globe. For instance, Kusumawardhana (2019) found that majority of tourism and hospitality students in United Kingdom preferred practical activities and demonstration than theoretical exposition to concepts and models. Kusumawardhana (2019) carried out his study among 493 food and beverage students across five public universities where 67% of the students enjoyed practical teachings and demonstrations that theoretical discussions. Practical activities and demonstration are most effective for practical based modules such as catering, food and beverage, and tour operations. This observation is consistent to what was observed by Hsu (2018). According to Hsu (2018) skill-based tourism and hospitality education such as food and beverage, food processing and development, tour operations etc. are practical hence students prefer demonstrations and practical activities than theoretical reflections. Interestingly, the aforementioned studies were carried out among college and undergraduate students who were enrolled in practical based skills acquisition programs. It was therefore not surprising that these students had similar findings that reflect higher preference for demonstrations and practical activities in teaching and learning. From a different perspective, Boluk et al. (2021) observed that, students who were enrolled in hotel and accommodation management preferred discussion and social interactions than demonstration and practical activities. Thus, 69.3% out of 783 students who participated in the study of Boluk *et al*. (2021) ranked their preference for discussions and social interactions as very high compared to demonstrations which was ranked as low. According to Boluk *et al*. (2021), hotel management require strong leadership and managerial acumen. Hence, hotel management students mostly want to interact with their colleagues and industry practitioners by leveraging on their experiences. This observation is confirmed by Steriopoulos *et al*. (2022) where 79.4% out of 925 hotel management students preferred interactions with industry practitioners than theoretical reflections. Steriopoulos *et al*. (2022) explained that, interactions with industry practitioners help students to develop relevant knowledge of industry trends, innovations and best practices which enable them to match their skills once employed in the labour market. Steriopoulos *et al*. (2022) observed that, 59% were willingly to do vacation internship with hotels and other accommodation service operators due to their desires to learn on the job through constructive and effective interactions with players in the industry. Similarly, Wong et al. (2022) observed that, undergraduate hotel management students in Singapore and Taiwan preferred reflective learning than practical and demonstrations. Wong et al. (2021) noticed that majority (72.9%) of the students were willing to undertake at least four internships as part of their learning process for proper reflection on industry trends. According to Wong et al. (2021) and Chen *et al*. (2022), reflective learning is preferred by students who always want learn from field observations that offer them the

opportunity to experience real world situations. Ngwenya *et al.* (2022) and Fullagar and Wilson (2019) also observed a different narrative where post-graduate tourism and hospitality students preferred theoretical reflections than demonstrations and social discussions. According to Joppe and Elliot (2015), postgraduate tourism and hospitality education is aimed at equipping students with skills and abilities to research and translate research findings into actionable policies. Postgraduate tourism and hospitality education such as Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD.) are aimed at training students to become frontrunners of the industry in areas of researcher, leadership, management and policy frameworks. Hence theoretical reflections become the most effective pedagogy for such students. It is not surprising when 61.8% out of 281 MPhil and PhD students ranked theoretical reflections as their most preferred pedagogy in UK (Joppe & Elliot, 2015). Theoretical reflective learning pedagogy equip students with extant knowledge how to apply models, concepts and theories of tourism and hospitality development into real world situations.

Theoretical Review

Pedagogical theories lay emphasis on how aspects of teaching are brought together, how teaching is delivered and how students understand and appreciate teaching outcomes. Teaching is expected to sharpen and broaden the knowledge of students on issues, concepts, models and constructs within an academic discipline. Various pedagogical theories have been proposed over the years and each of them derive inspiration from three major perspectives which include: herbatianism, the new London group and learning theories. Essentially, each of these three perspectives reflects five teaching methodology which include: preparation, presentation, association, generalization and application (Uysal & Kilic, 2022). Thus, instructors are required to go through each of these stages in order to deliver superior teaching outcomes. Since, this study is overly focused on students, it becomes imperative to situate the learning theory perspective to provide enough theoretical explanations to the preference and effective of various pedagogies in skills acquisition within tourism and hospitality education. Two learning theories including behaviorism and constructive learning theories are applied in this study. Earlier theorist such as Skinner (1953) propounded behaviorism as a theoretical underpinning of students' articulation of concepts, models and constructs. Skinner focused on observable behaviors and explained that, effective learning outcomes is achieved when students are supported in the teaching process through drills, practical demonstration and reinforcement. According to Fullagar and Wilson (2019), incorporation of practice into lectures enable students to exercise behavioral control over concepts. Thus, student develop much interest in lectures when practical activities are integrated into the learning procedure. For skill-based academic programs such as food and beverage, food technology, food development, etc. student require more practical activities to enhance their appreciation of what they are taught in class (Amangeldi et al., 2023). Although this theory is widely used in teaching method studies and development, nonetheless, it has some limitations. According to Ngwenya et al. (2022), demonstrations and practical based teaching methods are only effective in skill-based academic programs. Hence applying this theory to explain the effectiveness of pedagogy for postgraduate tourism and hospitality students may be flawed. This explains why reflective learning theory is used as an augmenting theory for the study. Reflective learning theory assumes that, students develop better critical thinking and problem-solving skill when they are allowed to analyse concepts, models and experiences for future improvement. Postgraduate tourism and hospitality students become better critical thinkers and industry policy framers and problem solvers when they are able to reflect and apply tourism and hospitality development theories into real

world situation. In effect, MPhil and PhD tourism and hospitality education that are research-based required reflective teaching and learning in order to produce superior teaching and learning outcomes. Students who prefer theoretical reflective learning are able to create abstract concepts, models and constructs and also apply them for effective problem solving.

Materials and Methods

The study adopted cross-sectional research design and qualitative approach. Cross-sectional research design was appropriate for the study because, it allowed the study to develop wider findings across different fragments of the tourism and hospitality sector across broader geographical scope. Thus, cross-sectional research design enabled the study to sample respondents from food and beverage sector, food development sector, tour operations, hotel and accommodation management, art and culture etc. Moreover, adoption of cross-sectional research design enabled the study to sample respondents from different locations including: Kumasi, Accra, Cape Coast, Sunyani, Tamale and Takoradi. Qualitative research approach enabled the study to develop expansive knowledge on the research issues. For instance, qualitative approach allowed the to probe further the reasons why respondents preferred some available pedagogies over others. Moreover, the probing method employed in the interviews enabled the study to developed deeper insight into the effectiveness of each pedagogy based on availability and students' preference. The study population included tourism and hospitality students from five public universities as well as those practicing in the industry. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted among two hundred respondents to gather data on the research issues. The data were analysis through Castleberry and Nolen's (2018) thematic analysis.

Results and Discussions

This section of the paper presents the results and discussions of findings. The results and discussions centers on availability and effectiveness of identified pedagogies in skills acquisition in tourism and hospitality education such as; demonstration, practical activities, interactive discussions, theoretical reflections (experiential learning) and instructional learning.

Availability and Effectiveness of Demonstrations

Demonstration is one of the widely used pedagogies in skill-based education across the globe. Availability of demonstration in this study was peculiar to technical universities (Kumasi and Accra Technical Universities. Thus, usage of demonstration as a pedagogy was pronounced in these to higher learning institutions than Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast. Essentially, tourism and hospitality education in both technical universities where demonstration is used are skilled and practical based. Thus, courses such as food technology, food development, catering, food and beverage service are the main focus of hospitality education in technical universities. This explains why demonstration is significantly used in those universities. For instance, one of the lecturers who was interviewed at KTU stressed that:

> *"The kind of hospitality education offered at KTU is hands-on skill-based. Courses such as food and beverage, food processing and development, catering, food and beverage service are highly integrated into the program. This explains why we place much emphasis on demonstration as one of the teaching and learning pedagogies."*

Another lecturer at ATU also indicated that:

> "The program is 70% skill-based. Thus, course such as food service, food processing and development, food technology, catering etc. are the main focus of hospitality education at ATU. Essentially, demonstration is one of the widely used pedagogies in skill-based academic programs."

Further probing showed that, demonstration has become one of the most effective teaching and learning styles at technical universities that offer skill-based tourism and hospitality educations. According to lecturers/instructors and students who were sampled from KTU and ATU, demonstration enables students to develop better visual appreciation concepts and models that are taught as part of the skill acquisition process of hospitality education. For instance, one of the students at ATU indicated that:

> "Demonstration helps me to develop visual connection and appreciation of concepts, constructs and models that are taught in class. The demonstration procedure in itself in visually appealing hence it engages my interest throughout the process. Several intriguing demonstrations are used in food preparation, food processing and technology, catering services and event organizing, etc. Demonstration experiences help me to understand how to prepare and handle various dishes by combining food technology and innovations. Although the theoretical aspect of the program is small, nonetheless, I wish 100% of the course are done through activities and demonstrations."

Another industry practitioner who had his education from KTU emphasized that:

> "Demonstration which was used as part of the teaching and learning methods during my time in school helped to be visually engaged in the teaching process. Demonstrations were highly utilised in courses such as food development and technology, catering, food and beverage production etc. In fact, I enjoyed those periods since they were interesting and mind engaging. Demonstrations are not boring like theoretical reflections and discussions in the lecture room. Hence, I preferred demonstration than those methods."

The narratives above connote to the observations made by Della et al. (2021) and Hsu (2018) where demonstration was highly optimized in teaching and learning of skill-based hospitality education. Moreover, the effectiveness of demonstration as confirmed by lecturers and students from technical universities reflect the empirical findings of Della et al. (2021) and Hsu (2018). Demonstration as a grounded skill-based pedagogy in literatures are visually engaging and interesting. Thus, hands-on illustrations by instructors enable students to connect their minds by optimizing their visual sensory to concepts been demonstrated to them. Essentially, demonstration becomes one of the effective pedagogies that can be used by other universities. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast that train and produce majority of (59%) of tourism and hospitality graduate must incorporate demonstration as one of the pedagogies to enable instructors/lectures develop better visual connection with their students for effective learning outcomes. The study has demonstrated that, the teaching and learning framework of hospitality and tourism education do not incorporate demonstration. Nonetheless, course such as catering, hotel management and tour operations are integrated in the program's model. Optimal development of skills in these areas are very paramount to industry performance

(Civak, 2021) hence the need for these three universities to provide the needed environment, capacities and logistics to facilitate optimal use of demonstration. Technical universities are able to optimise demonstration as a pedagogy to availability of facilities such as kitchens, food processing and development laboratories etc. Inspiration can be borrowed from KTU and ATU to better position demonstration as a pedagogy in skill-based hospitality education among the other three universities.

Availability and Effectiveness of Practical Activities

Skill-based tourism and hospitality education are dominantly delivered through practical education. Indeed, the finding of the study confirms this narrative where practical activities were highly utilised in both technical universities (KTU and ATU). As already discussed, integrated course within tourism and hospitality education in KNUST, UG and UCC are not practical based hence adoption and utilisation of practical activities as one of the pedagogies is very minimal. Excerpts of the interviews are provided below:

> *We combine demonstrations with practical activities. The demonstration is used by instructors while practical activities are used by students as part of the learning process. Students are given weekly practical assignments in various modules within course of the program. Students also engage in various practical lessons at the food preparation centers and laboratories. For instance, food technology, equipment handling, event organizing, beverage production, etc. are largely taught through practical activities. Practical activities also form part of the end of semester examination process of students.* (Lecturer/Instructor, KTU)

Another lecturer at ATU stressed that:

> *About 65% of the skill-based hospitality education is areas such as food production, food technology, food handling, catering, beverage production, etc. are delivered through practical activities. Students are taken through practical lessons and series on each module every week. Practical activities are highly supervised by instructors and lectures for best outcomes. Moreover, practical activities are integrated as part of the outcome assessment and evaluation in both mid and end of semester examinations.*

The study probe further to assess the preference and effectiveness of practical activities as part of pedagogies of technical universities. Findings of the study showed that preference and effectiveness of practical activities were very high. Nonetheless, lack of and practical logistics were identified as key limitations that undermine integration of practical activities as part of the pedagogical process of skill-based tourism and hospitality education in technical universities. For instance, one student at KTU indicated that:

> *"Practical activities are best when it comes to teaching and learning of models in catering, food and beverage, food production and technology, etc. Practical activities enable me in particular to try my hands on things that are taught in class. They offer me the opportunity to identify errors and most of the practical modules while perfecting them for a better industry-fit. Regardless of the advantages of practical activities, myself and some other colleagues encounter resource limitation for effective engagement in practical lessons. Most of the logistics we use for the program such as food materials, kitchen logistics, etc. are provided by students. Some of us*

with limited financial resources find it extremely difficult to fully resource ourself for effective participation in practical lessons."

Another student at ATU stressed that:

"I prefer practical lessons than the other pedagogies. Reasons being that, practical lessons enable me to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Mistakes and errors made in the practical lessons are corrected for future performance. In fact, practical lessons enable me to develop skill-based capabilities that match industry expectations. Nonetheless, practical lessons are very expensive. Undergraduate students in particular find it extremely difficult to meet all the financial resource and logistic requirements for effectively involvement in practical lessons. The food stuffs and other logistics we use for catering, food and beverage production, food technology, food handling, etc. are purchase or rented by students. Some of us with limited financial capacity therefore find it difficult to fully participate in practical lesson."

The narratives above align with observations made by Farsari (2022); Ndou et al. (2019) and Carvalho et al. (2021). According to Farsari (2022) practical activities are best for skill-based academic programs that seek to equip students with first-hand industry and entrepreneurial skills. Food and beverage preparation, event organizing, catering services are highly skilled-based. Moreover, these courses equip students with relevant skills to setup SMEs in the tourism and hospitality sector. This explains why practical activities provide best teaching and learning experience for tourism and hospitality students in technical universities (Ndou et al., 2019). Despite being effective, students with limited financial resources encounter limited participation practical learning thereby undermining their skills acquisition and learning outcomes. Financial and logistics support must be integrated as part of the learning framework to enhance the effectiveness and inclusive progressive participation of students in practical-based lessons.

Availability and Effectiveness of Interactive Discussions

Availability, utilisation and optimisation of interactive discussion were more pronounced in KNUST, UCC and UG. Utilisation of interactive discussions were moderate in the two technical universities. The courses and modules within tourism and hospitality educations (tour operations, human resource management, principles of management, entrepreneurship, etc.) are not practically intensive. This explains why interactive discussions were highly utilised in the three traditional universities.

"The courses and respective modules with the tourism and hospitality education framework are not practically intensive. Hence majority of teaching are delivered through interactive learning. Students are often divided into various groups for discussion and assignments on various topics. Lecture materials and resources are also delivered through interactive discussion which is optimized through full student participation." (Lecture at UG)

Another lecturer at KNUST also stressed that:

"Courses within the program are not practically or skill-based hence interactive discussions are dominantly used as the main pedagogy within the tourism and

hospitality education at KNUST. Courses such as tour operations, event management, entrepreneurship, marketing, human resource management, etc. are abstract and theoretically based. Hence instructors and lecturers rely more on interactive learning. Students are normally grouped for various assignments and discussions on topics and constructs."

Indeed, both students and lecturers had some challenges regarding effectiveness of interactive discussions. The challenges centered on ineffective participation in interactive discussions on the part of students. For instance, one of the students indicated that:

"We find it difficult to collaborate during group assignments. Some students often do not participate in group assignments and discussions. I think, it undermines the effectiveness of interactive learning."

Another student at UCC also stressed that:

"I find it difficult to focus during discussions at the lecture halls. Sometimes I get divided attentions between lectures and social media notifications from my smartphone."

Another lecturer also indicated that:

"Although interactive discussion is very convenient and easy to use, nonetheless, its impact on learning outcomes is quite low. Some students do not participate in group assignments and discussions. Some students also get divided attention between their phones and lectures."

These narratives are consistent with the findings of Boluk et al. (2021); Olenych et l. (2021) and Steriopoulos et al. (2022). According to Boluk et al. (2021), interactive learning is best for abstract and less practical intensive teaching and learning. Essentially, the courses and modules within the tourism and hospitality education framework of the three traditional universities are based on theories, concepts and models. Essentially, traditional university education is expected to equip graduates with abstract knowledge, competencies and abilities that enable them to translate theories, models and concepts into real work problem solving (Olenych et l., 2021). Interactive discussions provide students opportunities to articulate theories and models to through research and group assignments. Nonetheless, the challenge of passive participation is widely recognized in literature as a major limitation of interactive learning. Studies such as Chen et al. (2022) and Wong et al. (2021) observed similar challenge where 45% of students were active participants in interactive learning. Majority of students are caught in the web of divided attention during lecture hours. Social media usage is very significant among students hence they find it difficult to actively engage and contribute in interactive discussions.

Availability and Effectiveness of Theoretical Reflections/Experiential Learning

Theoretical reflections/experiential learning was highly utilised in the three traditional universities (KNUST, UCC and UG) and the two technical universities (KTU and ATU). Theoretical reflections/experiential learning is delivered through PowerPoint presentation that combine lecture resources with graphic, visualized models, concepts can and constructs. According the instructors/lecturers, theoretical reflections/experiential learning is integrated

in tourism and hospitality education framework across all the universities to enable student develop skills, abilities and competences to translate theories into practice in real world work.

> *"Theoretical reflections/experiential learning is fully integrated into the teaching and learning procedure. Students are exposed to different theories and models through visualized PowerPoint presentations. Lecture notes are also delivered in PowerPoint presentation where students are allowed to expand their horizons on compressed materials."* (Lecture at KNUST)

Another lecturer at ATU indicated that:

> *"Although, majority of the course and modules and practical, nonetheless we expose student to theoretical reflections and experiential learning. This is done to enable student understand theories, models and concepts in tourism and hospitality such as service quality, customer services, brand loyalty, professionalism, entrepreneurship and marketing. Essentially, the skills they acquire through reflective learning enable them to transition theorical concepts into problem solving skills on the job."*

Another lecturer at UG indicated that:

> *"The university offers only postgraduate tourism and hospitality education which is geared towards equipping graduates with skills and abilities to solve industry problems through innovations, policy and research. Hence majority of the modules and courses are delivered through reflective learning."*

The study observed that majority of the students that preferred reflective learning were postgraduate students who were already industry practitioners. It was observed that most of the postgraduate students wanted to fill some managerial and leadership competency gaps hence they found theoretical reflective teaching and learning as an effective pedagogy that meet their educational needs. For instance, one postgraduate who was interviewed stressed that:

> *"I am a manager of a three-star hotel in Kumasi. I enrolled in this postgraduate program to enhance my skills and competency in management and leadership in hospitality management. Hence, I prefer reflective learning since it enables me to develop wider knowledge in theories and models on leadership and management which are translated into problem solving in real world work."*

Another industry practitioner who received postgraduate hospitality management education from UCC indicated that:

> *"I work at the at the Catering Department at Parliament House. My boss encouraged me to enroll in tourism and hospitality management in 2016 which I did. I needed to enrich my managerial and leadership abilities at the unit hence the decision to heed to the recommendations of my boss. In fact, reflective learning was used in major parts of the teaching and learning process at UCC. It actually exposed me to diverse theories and models in areas such as service quality, management, human resource management, customer service, sustainability etc. which have enabled me to develop better problem-solving skills."*

These narratives are not different from the observations made by studies such as Wong et al. (2021); Ngwenya et al. (2022) and Amangeldi et al. (2023). Leadership and managerial competences and skills are very paramount to the development of the tourism and hospitality sector (Ngwenya et al., 2022). Postgraduate students must therefore be exposed to different strands on theories, models and concepts within the framework of theoretical reflective learning (Amangeldi et al., 2023). This pedagogy enables students to learn on their own through experiential learning by way of wide research. Extensive research enables postgraduate students to be independent learners which in turn enable to them to better articulate theories and models that have translative effects in real world problem solving. In essence, theoretical reflective learning enables students who aspire to be frontrunners of the industry develop better leadership and managerial acumen skills and competences for progressive growth of the industry.

Conclusion

Pedagogies are paramount determinants teaching and learning outcomes. Bridging the competency gap on the part of tourism and hospitality graduates requires a comprehensive blend of effective pedagogies that meet the preference of students. This study explored the availability of pedagogies for skills acquisition within tourism and hospitality education across three traditional and two technical universities. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that; demonstrations and practical activities are dominantly used by technical universities than traditional universities. This is because, the courses and modules (catering, food and beverage production, food technology, event organisations, etc.) within the tourism and hospitality education at technical universities are practically intensive. These pedagogies are also effective since they drive hands-on and visual engagement of students in the teaching and learning process. Nonetheless, resource limitation challenges also undermine progressive participation of students in practical lessons within the skill-acquisition educational framework. Thus, student with funds constraints are no able buy learning materials and tools (example, kitchen logistics, food stuff, food processing machines, etc.) to fully participate in practical lesson at technical universities. Interactive discussions and theoretical reflective/experiential learning were more dominant in traditional universities that offer leadership, entrepreneurship and managerial skills to both undergraduate and postgraduates. Reflective learning is highly preferred by postgraduate students who desire to become frontrunners, policy framers, managers and leaders at the industry level. Thus, reflective learning equips and expose students to different theories and models that provide different assumptions to concepts customer service, human resource management, marketing, etc. under tourism and hospitality education. Considering the limitations of practical pedagogy, it becomes imperative that, government provide some financial support to students who enroll in skill-based tourism and hospitality education. Provision of financial resources to students will fully accelerate inclusive participation which will further enhance the effectiveness of practical pedagogy in skill-based hospitality education at technical universities. Moreover, traditional universities must embrace demonstrations as part of pedagogy for leadership and managerial skills acquisition for undergraduate tourism and hospitality students. These can be achieved through integrated field visits by partnership with firms within the industry.

Acknowledgements

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Contact email: vicom3000@gmail.com