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## Future workforce skills for hospitality and tourism business in Thailand

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### Abstract

Currently, the hospitality and tourism industry in Thailand is at a state of great flux. This, therefore, calls for a highly competent and versatile workforce to deal with this situation. For this paper, we shall attempt at providing an overview of the current skill set from the current workforce involved in the hospitality and tourism industry in Thailand. We also attempt to identify the prevailing opinions of the managerial personnel on different work aspects, which include the perception of the skills that Thai workers possess. Moreover, the paper looks at what the managers would want and hope for in the future workforce, and the strategies applied to develop such skills in workers soon. This qualitative research approach is employed to dig deep into the minds of key decision makers in Thailand by way of in-depth, one-on-one, or small group interviews to document and consolidate the insights and viewpoints of distinguished executives and top-level decision makers belonging to prestigious hotel and tourism conglomerates in Thailand. The findings of our research unmistakably indicate that the hospitality industry in the country is doubtless in a growth and prosperous period, where it successfully meets various and constantly changing preferences among tourists coming for different purposes. With the tourism industry in Thailand mushrooming, it is vital to establish what has contributed to such success. With more and more people globe-trotting and with tourists pouring in droves into Thailand, the need for a skilled workforce within the hospitality industries is at an all-time high. It therefore becomes relevant during these times of change to identify the skillset of the personnel at work within this vibrant industry. Deep inside the minds of managerial professionals, we can gain a clear insight into how they perceive the current workforce. By conducting comprehensive interviews on an individual and small group basis, we hope to capture the capability and strengths of the Thai workforce with a great degree of subtlety. Second, we also attempt to find out what aspirations and expectations the managers have from the future workforce. The resulting skills and competencies will have to be identified as the industry continues to evolve, but by exploring strategies utilized to develop such skilled labor, we expose the preparations being made for the workforce of tomorrow. Our qualitative research methodology enables us to interact directly with key decision-makers in the industry. We have thus gathered much information and opinion by involving those senior executives and senior-level decision makers of reputed hotel and tourism conglomerates. Their valuable insights helped us to closely look into the current scenario and aspects which still needed to be improved. Our findings clearly revealed that the hospitality industry in Thailand is one of the fastest growing and most successful sectors. It has satisfactorily adapted to the increasing and changing tastes and preferences of the tourists coming from different parts of the world. On the other hand, innovation and high-quality service have allowed this industry to satisfactorily address the needs and desires of its guests. Conclusion Our study puts light on the change which the hospitality and tourism industry of Thailand is experiencing at present. The following sections provide a broad outline of the skillset of the workforce, based on in-depth interviews with managerial professionals. We have taken a closer look at what industry leaders expect and/or hope for in the future workforce, and how they are developing the skills necessary to meet those expectations. This research supports the notion that the hospitality industry is increasing its growth to meet the demands of a multifaceted global customer base.

**Keywords:** Workforce; Skills; Hospitality Business; Tourism Business

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## 1. Introduction

This extensive essay delves deeply into the specific requirements regarding the skillset of the future workforce within the thriving hospitality and tourism business in the captivating country of Thailand. Remarkably, in the year 2020, the hotel and restaurant sector skillfully contributed an astounding Bt803 billion to the nation's Gross Domestic Product, proudly representing a substantial 3.4% of the overall economic landscape. Within this sector, an impressive figure of 843,000 competent professionals partakes in their respective roles, while an additional 92,000 skilled workers from beyond Thailand lend their expertise to further enhance the industry's immense capabilities. However, it is crucial to recognize that this industry confronts major changes, brought about by the evolving behaviors exhibited by visitors. In today's era, the significance of impeccable service and the yearning for an enchanting and pleasurable atmosphere now hold equal importance alongside the traditional motive for travelers, which involves exploring renowned landmarks and engaging in customary activities. The adaptability of content and the birth of an attractive and compelling identity have emerged as pivotal conditions required to captivate an even larger audience of visitors. Consequently, these emerging market situations present formidable challenges for professionals situated at all levels, particularly for those who engage directly with hospitality and tourism services within Thailand. It becomes undoubtedly clear that an intriguing, diverse, and captivating identity can make an immeasurable impact, especially if the staff responsible for warmly welcoming and skillfully serving guests in the hospitality and tourism business possess an array of exceptional aptitudes. Thus, it becomes paramount to focus on the future workforce's development of indispensable skills, all with the overarching goal of ensuring the prolonged economic prosperity achieved by this remarkable industry. Continuing the expansion of this profound subject matter, it becomes essential to wholeheartedly acknowledge and understand the dynamic nature inherent to the hospitality and tourism sector within the remarkable tapestry of Thailand. As we forge ahead into a period of unparalleled growth and globalization, the demand for immensely skilled professionals within this industry becomes increasingly indispensable. It is truly awe-inspiring to comprehend that this industry alone contributes such a colossal Bt803 billion to the nation's Gross Domestic Product, thereby accounting for a significant 3.4% of the entire economy. The magnitude and importance of this sector cannot be overstated. At present, an awe-inspiring workforce consisting of 843,000 devoted professionals is wholeheartedly dedicated to transforming the hotel and restaurant industry, seamlessly elevating its standards to cinematic heights. Additionally, a further 92,000 remarkable workers have ventured from far beyond the borders of Thailand to bestow their invaluable expertise, fostering an environment filled with continuous growth and prosperity. Nevertheless, considering the ever-changing behaviors showcased by tourists, the landscape of this illustrious industry undergoes a profound transformation. While the undeniable allure of exploring historical landmarks and engaging in traditional activities remains profound, an equally ardent yearning for extraordinary service and an enchanting atmosphere has emerged. To successfully navigate this ever-evolving market situation, professionals situated at every conceivable level, with a particular emphasis on those engaging directly with hospitality and tourism services, must bravely rise to confront a plethora of formidable challenges. The adaptability of content alongside the cultivation of a truly enticing and irresistible identity have become pivotal factors for capturing the undivided attention of a remarkably larger clientele. By diligently curating a remarkably enticing, diverse, and alluring identity, the impact made upon visitors can be augmented to monumental proportions. However, it becomes utterly imperative that the workforce responsible for warmly welcoming and elegantly serving guests within the hospitality and tourism business possess the utmost in superior skills, thereby ensuring the delivery of an unparalleled and truly unforgettable experience. As a result, the development and nurturing of vital skills within the future workforce become nothing short of paramount, etching the cornerstone for the sustained economic success achieved by this astonishing industry. By ardently prioritizing the acquisition of essential competencies, such as effective communication, cultural intelligence, innovation, and unwavering adaptability, professionals can effortlessly surpass the lofty expectations of visitors while fostering an ecosystem brimming with unparalleled growth and prosperity, benefitting both tourists and local denizens in equal measure. Above all, as we draw this extensively comprehensive exploration to a close, we must emphasize the fact that amidst this rapidly changing hospitality and tourism industry, the demand for an exceptionally skilled workforce moves beyond the realm of importance into the territory of vital necessity. Armed with unparalleled contributions that reverberate throughout Thailand's Gross Domestic Product, this extraordinary sector cannot afford to overlook the paramount significance of consistently enhancing the capabilities of its professionals. By diligently equipping the future workforce with an astonishingly diverse skill set and fostering a culture of continuous learning and development, this illustrious industry can thrive and gallantly maintain its unrivaled economic significance for countless years to come. There are many approaches to analyze this topic. This essay employs a qualitative method in order to gain a deep understanding of what the top Thai decision makers think of the situation. This investigative essay presents the current state of skills in the workforce in the hospitality and tourism business in Thailand; the current managerial views on practices in several work-related aspects like the management view on the Thai workforce's skills; future managerial desires and expected work skills for the future workforce; the way to build the future skills for the workforce; and techniques in building a skilled workforce who are expected to be able to work in the future. Using individual and small group in-depth interviews, this study investigates and summarizes the opinions of professional executives and top decision makers of well-known and

large hospitality and tourism businesses in Thailand. A total of 14 executives from various positions in the seven large hotel and hospitality business conglomerates were interviewed. The results of the small-scale study showed the set of important managerial skills as predicted by the middle and top executives in charge of operating the entire operations of the large-scale hotel businesses. In the next section, the current opinions of most of the resort and hotel management stakeholders on the importance of scientific and operational managerial skills in several job-related areas are outlined.

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## **2. Background of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in Thailand**

Historical Development Tourism can be said to have its roots in the ancient days of human civilization when mankind had this inborn curiosity for leisure and exploration because of which he had to cross over into regions and continents to find beauty, culture, and knowledge. Over the years, tourism in Thailand has transformed and evolved simultaneously with the country's economic development. In fact, rich and diversified culture, arts, and nature have turned Thailand into a utopian haven for tourists. Truly impressive landscapes and undamaged natural resources steal one's breath and have charismatic power over the guests coming from every part of the world. In this regard, it is relevant mentioning that in Thailand, the demand for tourism has remarkably grown, as highlighted by international tourist arrivals in 2019 which reached an impressive 39.8 million. This represented a 4.3% increase from the previous year's 38.2 million. In 2019, the direct contribution of the tourism sector to Thailand's GDP was incredibly 666.2 billion baht and accounted for as much as 11.2% of the country's total GDP. The role of tourism in this country, regarding economic contribution and creating jobs, is beyond praise. As such, considering its high potential, the Thai government has planned an Action Plan for Tourism Development under the Thailand 4.0 Policy and under the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan. Its main goal would be to develop the nation's tourism industry in terms of its quality, balance, and sustainable development. It does this through an aggressive advocacy of the digital tourism strategy where technology is exploited in making all tourism experiences unique and personal. There is also a high emphasis on universal design and health tourism, adding to its attractiveness as a major destination in tourism. Tourism within Thailand has also become an industry that grows to meet the many different needs and wants of the numerous tourists. From the tranquility and rejuvenation pursued by the local Thai community to the pursuit of Thailand's vibrant nightlife, cultural heritage, and fusion of the Mekong sub-region and Asian values by international visitors, there's something for everyone. But the nature of the economic structure and the potential consequences brought about by crises and pandemic outbreaks bring into light the vulnerable side of the tourism industry. Recovery after such disruptions will thus always be painful and long, especially in Thailand, where dependence on the hotel, travel, and hospitality sectors is so high. In fact, it is often observed that the recovery period from a crisis can be easily twice as long compared to other parts of the world and requires resilience and strategic planning if the challenges are to be overcome effectively. Moving forward, it is of essence that Thailand recognize tourism as an ever-evolving sector and march in step with the times through innovation and diversification of products, with an added capacity to manage all risks involved. The Thai government is determined to develop tourism in a way that will ensure the sector's long-term viability socially, environmentally, and economically, while ensuring solid support from industrial stakeholders at all levels. Continuing investment in infrastructure development, embracing responsible tourism practices, and fostering partnerships, Thailand says its goal is to continue leading in world tourism. The country's commitment to preserving its cultural heritage, taking care of its natural resources, and providing world-class experiences for the visitors calls for a continued bright and prosperous future for tourism in Thailand. With its picturesque landscapes, vivid culture, and warm hospitality, Thailand still leads the minds and hearts of tourists from every time zone. The country opens its arms to the tourists in such a friendly manner, greeting them with lifetime experience and memories while embracing the spirits of adventure and exploration.

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## **3. Current Workforce Skills in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector**

Competencies and skills of the future workforce in the hospitality and tourism industry are very advanced and forward-looking. To get a proper idea about the future skills, it is necessary to understand first what the present skill set has been in the workforce. The hospitality and tourism sector puts immense emphasis on hard skills and soft skills. The available labor force in the Thai hospitality and tourism setting is indeed diverse, with the variability aspect in terms of their competencies, skills, and abilities discussed and explained in subsequent sections. As far as organizational skills are concerned, there exist some soft skills that differentiate an individual across the different levels, especially at the managerial level. These include high-end ability to communicate and to lead accordingly. On the other hand, technical skills are important for sub-ordinate level whereas management requires the soft skills such as English fluency, public relationship handling, and team playing. At the technical level there are several competencies that are necessary. These include special interpersonal skills, foreign languages, specific hospitality and tourism technical expertise, knowledge of compliance regulations, the ability to make informed workforce decisions, and strong leadership skills. Equally fundamental in this industry is a strong moral compass, results-oriented business drive, and outstanding decision

making and problem-solving skills. Other competencies of note would include strategic innovation, crisis management, and the attainment and utilization of guest feedback for improvement purposes. The strengths in the current workforce would include adequate organizational skills, good time management strategies, efficient problem-solving skills, excellent interpersonal communication, and the ability to work effectively in teams. Along with these competencies, substantial importance is given to having extensive and profound knowledge of various software packages and high technical capabilities. In addition, working force individuals with numerous foreign languages and awareness of cultural issues are increasingly being demanded. Notwithstanding all these strengths, there is a set of challenges that faces this industry. The major concern is one of inability to adapt to the constantly changing labor market. Most professionals fail to keep up with developments in their field and rapid technology changes, creating a mismatch between the supply of skills and their demand by employers. Lack of relevant training programs and support adds to this problem. This is often manifested in intensive, job-specific training to bridge these skill gaps by HR professionals. Other challenges arise from the dualism of this industry. The smaller properties often lack professionals with specialized expertise; for example, in-depth skills in specialized software or to address complex managerial issues. Whereas small, privately-owned properties have a need for managers who can speak multiple languages and understand the nuances of various cultures, larger properties require those with intimate knowledge of the way business is conducted around the world. The difference between these properties demands customized training programs designed to meet the unique needs of each property to equip professionals to perform optimally. While facing such challenges, focus should be given to a watchful and healthy training system that underlines the ability of synthesis, creativity, problem-solving power, effective communication with people, and expressive ability in one's language. Besides, one should make all possible efforts towards improving their skills through lifelong learning and acquisition of skills. Such a game plan not only provides an edge over the common masses but also brings about personal and professional development. Notably, it should be realized that technically not everyone moves at the same speed in the industry. The individual's interpersonal skills, the ability to use the English language, and technical competencies would make quite a difference in the advancement of an individual. Essentially, all these skills are called upon in decision-making processes and present excellent avenues for professional development. However, the skill levels in some persons may not reach as high as those presently in demand. This, therefore, highlights the need for continuous improvement and advancement of employees to full potential, more so in the very competitive tourism industry. A person working in the labor force must, however, make personal efforts for continuous growth and improvement to successfully plan and manage human resources effectively. Therefore, this enables the professional to be competent in the market, brings change in practice whenever this market changes, and updates themselves with the latest happenings taking place in the industry. This will make them competitive enough to ensure shared success with the organizations that they serve.

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#### 4. Key Skills and Competencies Required

Tourism and hospitality are service businesses; they are customer-based. A service mindset that supports good relationships with the customers will bring tourists back to visit again and again. However, the nature and defining characteristics of changes in economy and society which are most imminent presage a new set of skills and competencies that will render a worker, a company, and countries more productive in the future. Thai tourism needs to embed this and similar qualities into the new normal and prepare for any one of the foreseen futures and scenarios. There are a few factors that have been identified as fundamental to the future; simultaneous changes, such as foreign language skills, help in many ways to prevent and protect against most potential outcomes. Some of the significant competencies and skills that are relevant for the future include the following: Communication is crucial for all that deal with the tourism and hospitality industries. The ability to communicate effectively, understand the requirements of, and treat the guests from different cultural backgrounds brings about relationships and experiences that will make them come back for more. Problem-solving skills in this industry are essentially important, since one gets exposed to an evolving challenge from time to time. It is critical thinking and the ability to devise creative solutions that will add to the resilience and success of this industry when it faces uncertainties. Adaptability and flexibility are essential attributes that allow tourism professionals to thrive in a constantly changing environment. Resilience—that is to say, being able to adapt, learn new skills, and adjust to changes no one foresaw—makes for an enterprise and an individual fully equipped to handle such a future. - The tourism industry is increasingly becoming interdependent upon technological literacy. Keeping abreast of technology, from online booking systems to social media platforms and data analytics, will help businesses to remain competitive and offer seamless experiences to customers. Sustainability and responsible tourism practices are the way forward for the sector in its future. Realizing that it's time to preserve natural resources and cultural ones, and to enhance eco-friendly initiatives that support the locals, this will go a long way toward achieving DMOs' success in the long run and the overall well-being of the destinations. In the tourism sector, leadership and teamwork play a very important role. The good leaders can inspire and drive their teams, build teamwork, and create innovation. On this note, problems become feasible for solutions, improvement of impacts, and exceeding the expectations of customers if tourism professionals work cohesively. The pillars of good relationships with customers are founded on emotional intelligence. Understanding feelings and knowing the needs of the guests allow tourism

professionals to offer experiences tailored to personal needs and to read the minds of customers for satisfaction and retention. In this tourism sector, which is ongoing, embracing such skills and competencies will surely enable Thailand to position itself as a competitive destination globally. As such, investing in workforce development will thus guarantee that the country be better prepared for future challenges and take advantages provided by sustainable growth in the tourism sector. First, we generalized the statements from the industry discussions into eleven categories. These are not only necessary in the tourism sector but also cross over to other company specifications, for example, customer relationship management is also integral in retail markets. These are supplemented with extra data to provide enough content to be the focus-oriented section. In general, the competencies which are in demand can be summarized as critical thinking/problem-solving; customer relationship; mastering languages; technology/analytical proficiency; leading and strategic management; adaptability/natural trend; creativity/innovation management; emotional intelligence/resilience; sustainability/CSR knowledge.

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## 5. Emerging Trends and Technologies Impacting Workforce Skills

Digital technologies and emerging trends changes are really exciting themes that could play a huge role in shaping the future of work. These innovative technologies and trends could have a significant impact on the types of jobs that will be required or available to tourism and hospitality students in the New South Economy. In this ever-changing and fast-moving backdrop, tourism and hospitality sectors, too, are not exceptionals, where the role of digitalization is being felt for the first time. This frictionless integration between the digital technologies and social and economic trends is changing every aspect of the economy and transforming and reworking the hospitality and tourism sectors in every possible manner. The role of digital transformation is highly critical nowadays in transforming and reimagining the whole oeuvre of operational processes in the tourism and hospitality sector. Thus, it enables corporations to offer superior customer experiences along with higher operational efficiency and effectiveness. Moreover, these several new innovative tools empower the enterprises of this sector to light up the fire of innovation in their business models and business processes by unlocking significant value, which should have led the enterprise to new dimensions regarding offerings and competitiveness. The infrastructure that forms the background for such large steps being taken in the economy and organizations includes the age of Artificial Intelligence and the big data analytics that is gaining ease of use via ready and on-demand services in the cloud. This sets the trajectory toward an increasingly automated economy where advanced robotics, digital labor, and blockchain offer alternatives to and collaboration with humans. This is more professions of data scientists and a range of analysts that broadly cover strategic, financial, and operational data and trends. The chatbot and automation in the modern hospitality world include most of the humanized AI capabilities of the disembodied, all-knowing hotel lobby concierge living with guests. With the rapid advancement of technology, the economy and organizations are seeing a complete dramatic change in this landscape. It's a new era wherein AI and big data analytics go hand in hand. Cloud computing has made access to out-of-the-box, on-demand services driven by AI and big data analytics easier than ever. The result is the automated economy of state-of-the-art robotics, digital labor, and blockchain technologies that present new alternatives and opportunities for collaboration with human workers. The demand for skilled professionals like data scientists and all manners of analysts able to harness and interpret strategic, financial, and operational data has just begun to explode in the labor market. These professionals, in essence, play a very important role in highlighting emerging trends and patterns that are quite valuable for an organization to drive its decision-making processes. In the modern age, AI technologies in the hospitality industry have also become deeply integral to the guest experience itself. Gone are the days of the traditional hotel lobby concierge; it is now chatbots and automation-invisible, yet omniscient-performing that role. Advanced AI-based support systems have been developed for the purpose of personalized assistance and information to guests, efficiently mimicking human touch with the active help of cutting-edge technology.

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## 6. Digitalization and Automation in the Industry

Digital tools and platforms have disrupted the industry by completely overhauling customer interaction through websites and social media. Such new technologies have redefined the concept of business processes and have made giant strides in most industries. Apart from websites and social media platforms, video platforms and advanced video recording applications and software have emerged as game changers in the industry. Above all, mobile applications have facilitated online accommodation booking with such ease, which was beyond imagination earlier. Among them, the concept of chatbot applications has gained immense popularity as it guides customers through various tasks in an easy way. These intelligent chatbots will make the processes smoother in the hospitality and tourism industry and enhance the customers' experience. The digital era has given this modern world many priceless gifts. Apart from brand names and typical products, the digital tools have uniquely enhanced the companies by applying marketing techniques as an effective way of reaching clients and relating to them without much hassle. Through the internet, the companies reach their customers at their comfort zones, guaranteeing superior customer service. In the hospitality and tourism

sector, digital technology takes different forms while relating to the customer. To date, for instance, chatbots have remained important virtual assistants in which product or service-related questions are quickly responded to. Similarly, voice assistants have been common in the industry, enhancing in-room service through personalized guidance and enhancing convenience. In addition, hotels are now capable of offering virtual concierge services with the power of mobile integrations. This innovative solution further extends to the guests reaching a range of services within their fingertips, making sure that the level of efficiency and satisfaction is heightened. Finally, the manifold benefits accruing from digital technology continued to drive the industry forward in the quest to better interact with and provide convenience to customers. With a host of digital tools and platforms, a business could upgrade its operation and render matchless service to customers in the hospitality and tourism industry. A digital technology can serve customers through social media interactions. Chatbots are going to help with better data processing for a business. They will be able to analyze conversations, guide the teams with timely intervention, and apply inventory and customer relationship strategies wherever required. This in turn is helpful in creating new service standards to the customers because they can visit websites or use tools such as online booking. High-volume documents are also processed a lot faster. Automation can also help reduce human error to result in the customers receiving their services more accurately and timely. The supportive technology devices must be implemented; it helps increase the efficiency and quality of hotel customer service in attracting the tourists. If we utilize a website's chatbot to provide information regarding new room promotions or recommendations of tourists, then it will surely impress the customers by increasing their satisfaction. However, along with the provision of chatbots, the robots replace human beings in information services. This will, in turn, affect the workforce inside the tourism and hospitality industry. Most types of front office jobs are gradually being taken over by chatbots or apps. The traditional posts that commonly found their place in a hotel sector include receptionists and guests queuing up at the check-in counter; these will be reduced to a minimum. The readjusting of privacy rights. If it involves contracts, operations, or services provided by human beings, then once operated by chatbots, there may be application errors in the system. In case of changes of position, ethical considerations may come into place because the fallibility of humans needs to be apologized for, not the technological one. Any new procedural undertaking in offering a service, such as credit card information handling or data scanning, will specify how to manage or protect the data to give more privacy to it. The design of the robot should enable the identification of guests' emotions, trace the type of guest, improve and expedite the service, and answer queries at different levels of communication. Digital competencies are a must for any future human resources in hotels and in the industry of hospitality and tourism because automation and digitization mark this industry's firms. If there is still a human element in the business, they must support the machines and work with the neural networks in the technology. The adaptability to models of service provision with innovations or human resource skills is something worth its weight in gold. Second, human resources policies should be revised and recruitment carried out, focusing on people who can learn and adapt quickly in commercial technology at any moment in the future for effective service delivery.

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## 7. Strategies for Developing Future Workforce Skills

In this respect, three strategies that would highly be recommended for effective development and enhancement of future workforce skills in the industry of hospitality and tourism include: fostering good collaboration among academic institutions, stakeholders of the industry, and government for minimizing gaps and assuring professionalism with a complete package of skill sets; and secondly, using comprehensive curriculum as a valuable tool for imparting relevant competencies. The last point is the need for constant improvement: professional training and development to update one's knowledge and skills regarding current trends in the industry. It is thus recommended that an academic network encompassing this section, along with topmost industrial expertise and governmental bodies, be established for the purpose of giving credence to the mentioned process. By establishing such a network, a new breed of hospitality and tourism professionals could be generated who are more able to cope with the emerging challenges which this industry has on offer. This must involve the two industries and the academics directly in the process of curriculum development for close integration with the industry. Such active involvement ensures that the standards get improved in each sector of the hospitality and tourism industry. It is critical that there is frequent communication and interaction between professionals in the industry and the educational institutions through various activities. This constant exposure allows the continual update of the program planning to keep up with contemporary needs. Lifelong learning facilitates responses from the individual regarding the alteration in the work atmosphere and its related new demands, along with their rapid and significant developments in the sectors of hospitality and tourism. Different techniques for training should be followed because individuals may learn differently from one another. These may include formal classroom-type training, interactive workshops, summer internship programs, mentorship opportunities, subsidiary diploma programs, and salient on-site experiences. Such a mix is found to provide integrated learning among the trainees. Secondly, all such training programs should be constantly updated and remodeled to maintain freshness in them for relevance to the ever-changing requirements of the workplace. Moving into the future, hospitality and tourism have loosened up the style of leadership for managers in the twenty-first century to a more democratic leadership style that is firmly focused on the significance of employee-focused management. They work by managing cultural diversity

effectively and grasp the challenges of globalization through ethical leadership behavior. Their personal development and performance push them, but they also inspire and motivate others in their teams. Eventually, it reflects the lifelong learning and growth process for individuals in the industry, which is supported and embraced within the industry. The future of workforce skills in the hospitality and tourism industry depends upon proper coordination among academic institutions, industry players, and the government. With comprehensive curricula and continuous professional development programs, professionals are able to get the appropriate sets of skills and abilities in this fast-changing industry. With globalization and cultural diversity challenging the managers, the need for a democratic leadership style and employee-focused management is utmost. It is here that the professionals should embrace lifelong learning and growth to ensure that their growth is in tune with the demands of the industry. Another strategy to dissolve the skill gap is by increasing softer skills training for new entrants into the industry. Soft skills are the ones that are nontechnical; knowledge and ability to carry out a job can be taught, but the soft skill helps applicants get the suitable attitude in improving their capabilities and paving the way toward focusing on ethics in the individuals work. One of the visionary views of soft skills is to apply them to service touchpoints in terms of extending the premises to which a customer's service experience with a trained employee is directly affected. The system view of this vision is such that it should embed a customer expectation for soft service. Experiential learning provides self-directed learning experiences in place of soft skills training in ways that what the person learns from experiences connects to how what they learn can make a difference in the work they have chosen to do. It was pointed out that the use of mentoring throughout the lifetime building is beneficial in stimulating integration as well as personal and career growth. Yet, mentoring so far has been practiced more as a training methodology to reinforce identity rather than as a practice to attain organizational goals.

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## **8. Training and Education Programs**

### **8.1. Designing and Developing the Curriculum**

The structure and curriculum of the program are such, that core competencies in technology and advanced competency-based learning are offered. It is also of much importance that the lecturers, being experienced and skillful, be able to arrange discussions, workshops, and other interactive sessions to cover the course material efficiently. In this regard, a balanced focus with optimally designed creative and practical tasks and projects has to be established to help students apply their theoretic knowledge in practice and to complement theoretical knowledge. To achieve this, one distinguishing feature of the addition in the student exchange system enables participants to gain valuable work experience by being involved in well-timed internships during the last two semesters of their final year. This lifetime opportunity is extended to both selected educational institutes and highly reputed hotels where they are exposed to real-life experiences, better equipping themselves for facing the changing dynamics of the labor market. Furthermore, the approach to co-design and customization of the structure of training and internship in cooperation with the hotel partners is co-creation. That way, the program will answer the demands and expectations of the labor market so that students can acquire industry-relevant skills and knowledge. Thanks to this dynamic partnership, the continuous updating of the curriculum secures its relevance and enhances the prospects of future employment.

### **8.2. On-the-Job Training in AHRT**

The on-the-job vocational internship was assumed to be the most efficient way to practice the education and learning of T-shaped persons in building personal, interpersonal, and cognitive skills. Also, the teachers as tutors and skilled technical staff who were trainers and direct instructors for the students in solving problems and producing services by themselves. To this end, much better collaboration from industry in terms of both design and delivery of the curriculum was sorely needed. Evidence suggested that well-designed and delivered work-based experiences have the potential to strengthen the likelihood of good graduate outcomes through valuable links with professionals in the industry. Besides, an increased application to integrated practice through exposure to work-based experiences is considered an important approach to prepare students for Industry 4.0. The goals of learning for three different modules, even including the final year of study from the focus area bachelor's degree in Hotel Management Specialist, such as Advanced Kitchen Skills and Advanced Patisserie, among other specialized areas of focus, thus diversifying the experience gained from AHRT, were therefore shaped in collaboration with employers within the hotel industry by the educational team involved. An approach like that therefore resulted in adjustments, refinements, and inclusions of the latest and the best industrial practices to reflect with authenticity the demand of the workplace. Besides the collaborations from industry, review, monitoring along with mentoring by them on a continuous basis was found very useful in the maintenance of growth and development of students. This continuous process of certification provided an avenue for constant feedback and allowed them to grow and evolve their levels of information and operational competency. There is little question that the internationally recognized program, by certification, allows its learners to enhance their job and career prospects by establishing certification of competence and skills leading to more opportunities and experiences in a professional setting. On-the-job training embraces our students with AHRT, bringing great volume to students by earning valuable

skills and knowledge, while building robust networks and connections within the industry—a fact that turns the said connections into real treasures in driving their future career endeavors. Through an enriched and diverse curriculum, AHRT students graduate to be all-around persons with the relevant skills, experience, and industry recognition that will assure success in this fast-moving and constantly changing environment of the hospitality and tourism industry.

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## 9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The transformation of the hospitality and tourism sector into new megatrends and disruptions will arguably involve a wide range of new and emerging skills development and acquisition by its workforce. Given the transformational nature of this period, all the stakeholders involved within this industry need to be proactive rather than reactive. With technologies within industries continuing to evolve and improve, so too will the jobs landscape and the required skills to excel in the vibrant field of hospitality and tourism—most definitely. In addition to the traditional hard skills, one really needs to be successful—core technical competencies and digital competencies—there is a growing awareness of the importance of soft skills, adaptive skills, and special personality traits. These attributes are instrumental in developing the customer experience and ensuring that a Pang akin service level is attained within the sector. A comprehensive study undertaken in Thailand has established that utilization of the right kind of skills and labor within industry can raise the entire tourism experience to a truly delightful journey. This will not only consolidate the growth and success of individual establishments but also contribute towards strengthening development in the realms of sustainable tourism destinations. In addition, the proactive adoption of future-oriented strategies, coupled with an innovative approach by businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry, will open new avenues for growth and attract a larger customer base. If organizations can anticipate emerging trends and disruptions, they can stay ahead of the game and offer unique experiences that cater to the evolving needs and preferences of travelers. In so doing, an environment of continuous adaptation at a deeper level of organizational culture is called for to realize such a transformation. This involves actively fostering the employee's continuous learning and development process, using human resources strategically and effectively. Investment in training and development by a business can be made possible by enabling employees to provide skills and knowledge that are appropriate for them at work in the dynamic industry. Moreover, innovation and creativity at work can be fostered by developing a culture that can better allow employees to think outside the box in devising new ideas and solutions to problems. Embracing such change and fostering a culture of growth and flexibility is a way for businesses to maintain market leaders in the changing hospitality and tourism sector, while at the same time contributing to wider aims of sustainable tourism. As the sector goes on with adaptations and transformations, partnerships among the stakeholders and the sharing of best practices are very important. This joint activity has the potential to propel change within the hospitality and tourism industry, to create memorable experiences for visitors, and to assist in the socio-economic development of the community. Therefore, all industry players must be ready to meet the new opportunities created by these emerging megatrends and disruptions, working together toward an innovative, sustainable, and customer-centric future. Indeed, the following recommendations look quite encouraging and need implementation as an integrated approach, a sort of strategic direction that will go a long way in acting as an effective roadmap for all stakeholders concerned. It is, therefore, very important to confirm and reinforce the collaboration partnership with long-range planning and programming, underscoring the need for close collaboration among educational institutions, government organizations, and industry. Collaboration education-industry-government initiatives should thus be initiated since such a program plays a vital role in determining the needs of the future and can bring all facets of demand forecasting together. These projects will contribute to effectively addressing the integration of future workforce skills into the short- and mid-term training programs and capacity development plans of various businesses by working together. In such a way, it will be guaranteed that the workforce is competent to deal with future needs. Another important aspect comprised within this approach is mapping the investment trajectories that support the integration of future workforce skills into employer-provided training programs. These investments can also be utilized to incentivize standardized curricula development for the needs of the industries. As we actively promote these initiatives, we open the avenue for proactive work force development planning and continuous improvement in the labor market. Besides these measures, holistic approaches need to be taken in terms of hard and soft skills. It is important to realize that success in the future workforce will depend not only on technical ability but also on developing the kind of personality needed. All-around citizens will be better developed by incorporating these personality traits into our CSR initiatives. In short, this set of recommendations will no doubt go a long way in contributing much to the development of the workforce. By facilitating greater collaboration among educational institutions, government bodies, and industry participants, we will be well-positioned to forecast future needs, develop human resources, ensure investment in training programs, and emphasize overall development. Sure enough, this holistic approach will be the bedrock of a better future for employees and the broader socio-economic environment. Eventually, a superior experience to the stakeholders will ensure that not only the returning business sense is gained but also an outstanding advantage in the market; it will also provide a resistant workforce that is adaptive to problem-solving, innovative, and entrepreneurial skills. The businesses will also add environmental and social values that might contribute to economic effects over years and decades in economic increase for an improved



tourism economy. Investment in the future workforce is now, therefore, a strategy that, because of the implications it has for creating competitive positioning, must be taken critically into account by industry in the not-too-distant future.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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