Assessment of Quality of Hospitality Education in Kenya

Dorothy Rotich, Josphat Belsoy Sawe and Kamile Akgül

School of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management, Moi University, P.O Box 3900-30100, Eldoret, Kenya
Department of Visual Communication Design, Faculty of Communication, Yeni Yüzyıl University, Turkey.

Corresponding Author: Dorothy Rotich

Abstract
The aim of this paper was to assess the quality of hospitality education in Kenya. The objectives were to establish factors that have contributed to the quality of hospitality education in Kenya, determine factors that have led to the rapid growth of hospitality institutions, examine the student-instructor ratio in hospitality educational institutions, assess the curriculum content of hospitality programs, and to determine the factors that motivate students to pursue hospitality education. The research employed a survey design. Data was collected from 126 students and 7 heads of departments of seven institutions offering degree, diploma and certificate courses in hospitality. Three public Universities were selected purposively while four colleges offering diploma, certificate and craft based skills were selected by complex random sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The study established that though facilities exist in the institutions of learning for the delivery of hospitality education, many of them were not adequate for the student population and others were unsuitable in the current competitive hospitality market. The research therefore concluded that for quality education to be achieved in hospitality there is an urgent need to integrate all the aspects of resources like personnel & learning for effective and quality delivery.

Keywords: education, hospitality, Kenya, quality, Resources

INTRODUCTION
Hospitality can be traced to the days of the very first inns and taverns of 1700’s. In those days hospitality operated small food business outlets and later on as the hospitality industry grew, there was need for formal training (apprenticeship). The early apprenticeship programs developed were geared towards effectively preparing students for successful careers in the industry. The culinary schools were an outgrowth of early apprenticeship programs and were the earliest established formal programs for careers in hospitality, but their interest was at the back of the house (those departments that are not involved with direct reception of guests). The introduction of hospitality management programs however was tailored to produce graduates for all departments in hospitality establishments. It combined both classroom training with practical experience (Ismail, 2002). Hospitality management higher education’s historic origins have resulted in a strong vocational ethos permeating the curriculum. Knowledge about hospitality has been drawn from the industry and the world of work rather than from the many disciplines or other fields of enquiry, which can help to explain the industry. By the late 1990s there was a strengthening international movement, driven by higher education hospitality academics towards the liberation of hospitality management higher education from its vocational base and to explore the inclusion in the curriculum of a broader and more reflective orientation (Allisson and Mahony, 2003).

Hospitality Education in Kenya
Though tourist attractions existed in Kenya as early as the 6th century, it could not be commercialized due to lack of knowledge on commercialized hospitality and people were content with their traditional way of welcoming guests. It was not until late 1890’s and early 1900’s when the Kenyan Coast received a long trend of overseas visitors mainly business men from Asia and Europe. It is for this reason that catering and accommodation facilities were set up by foreigners, and local people were hired for menial jobs as they did not have training in hospitality. Tremendous growth was registered after the Second World War, with the peak in the late sixties and early seventies, the time saw the establishment of international chain hotels like the Hilton. (http://www.destination360.com/africa/kenya/history). With this growth the government saw the need to train its citizens for not only operational jobs, but also managerial positions in these hotels which considered employees with interest and not necessarily qualification. The fact that unqualified staffs were employed resulted in low productivity, failing standards of catering, and high labor turnover. Major hotel chains also sent their employees abroad for further training. However,
while not a cure, training was recognized as a remedy for that situation. (Mayaka, 1999)

Soon after independence, the Government of Kenya realized the potential the tourism sector held in the economic development of the country. However, a glaring handicap to the development of this sector was the lack of qualified human resource, particularly among indigenous Kenyans. The Government thus approached the Swiss Confederation with a plan to establish such a training institution for this purpose – a move that saw the first batch of Hotel Management trainees enrolled at Kenya Polytechnic in 1969. But soon the Government realized the need to train not only managers but also the other cadres for the industry that was increasing gaining importance. This led to the establishment in 1975 Kenya Utalii College, of a fully-fledged hospitality and tourism training institution to train management staff for the industry. (http://www.Marsgroupkenya.org). It was not until early 1990’s that institutions of higher learning recognized the deficit for management staff in the market and introduced hospitality education courses. The first degree course in hospitality was introduced at United States International University (USIU) tailored for managerial careers with an emphasis on practical applications. Since then, several institutions of higher learning have followed suit with similar programs (Sindiga, 1994, Mayaka, 1999). However it is becoming apparent that the teaching institutions seem to be unable to commit resources required to adequately train students for the market hence the need for this study to answer the following objectives:

OBJECTIVES
1. To establish factors that have contributed to the quality of hospitality education
2. To determine factors have led to the rapid growth of hospitality institutions and their implications to the future of the hospitality industry
3. To examine the student-instructor ratio in hospitality educational institutions
4. To assess the curriculum content of hospitality programs
5. To determine the factors that motivate students to pursue Hospitality education

SIGNIFICANCE THE STUDY
The tourism industry in Kenya currently receives thousands of visitors, there is therefore a need for the Hospitality education sector to produce personnel that are adequately prepared to handle this important market. The findings from this study are important to scholars, entrepreneurs of hospitality education institutions and practitioners as it will provide a basis for future research and basis for evaluation of hospitality education.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Mayaka and King (2002) established that the representatives of Kenya’s peak hospitality and tourism training institutions have expressed the view that there is a wide gap between industry and educator expectations. Specific details on hospitality education can be found in literature, though very limited. However in recent years, specific articles on the development of hospitality education have been developed in United Kingdom, Australia, and Italy. A pilot study by WTO (1997) discovered that most hospitality education and training systems currently in existence were characterized by a high degree of inertia and rigidity which respond to the static principles inherent from the past. The result is that reactions to questions of strategic importance are slow. The WTO (1997) stated that an analysis of hospitality education and needs constitute the first step for any education system aiming to offer quality.

Sindiga, (1996) observed that in order to improve the quality of tourism and hospitality services, the key may be continuing vocational training and education. The stake holders in the industry must also be educated on the advantages of continuing education and the impact on the quality of employee productivity. As the needs for skilled labor continue in line with industry growth, the key areas in the education system need to be clearly examined such as; students selection procedure in order to minimize attrition from courses and later from the industry, staff development opportunities for tutors in educational institutions particularly in terms of updating industry knowledge and experience and the balance of training provided between operatives, supervisory and management levels. Apart from training individuals to meet the operational needs of tourism and hospitality, there’s a parallel need to educate industry leaders and managers which traditionally has been provided through on job-training. However the size, complexity and sophistication of the hospitality industry call for more strategic thinking-quality hospitality education.

Challenges facing tourism and hospitality education in Kenya include: identification of training needs of the various sectors of the industry, the formulation of an appropriate human resources development policy in the context of broader strategy, harmonization of education standards and the development of consultation mechanism linking industry and education providers and for cooperation in curriculum development and training initiatives. There is also need for institutions of higher learning to show a gradual move from teaching craft skills to more managerial skills and for recognition on the part of the education sector concerned with vocational training of the complimentary nature of their services. Formal education system should be designed to
cooperate and build on the training systems run and needed by hospitality industries (Gamble, 1992).

Quality of Education
Two principles characterize most attempts to define quality in education; the first identifies learners’ cognitive development as the major explicit objective of all education systems while the second emphasizes education's role in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and in nurturing creative and emotional development (EFA and GMR, 2005). Quality determines how much and how well children learn and the extent to which their education translates into a range of personal, social and developmental benefits. It is the teaching and learning process that brings the curriculum to life, determines what happens in the classroom and subsequently the quality of the learning outcomes.

Enabling Inputs for Quality Education
Other things being equal, the success of teaching and learning is likely to be strongly influenced by the resources made available to support the process and the direct ways in which these resources are managed. It is obvious that schools without teachers, textbooks or learning materials will not be able to do an effective job. In this sense, resources are important for education quality – although how and to what extent this is so has not yet been fully determined. Inputs are enabling in that they underpin and are intrinsically interrelated to teaching and learning processes, which in turn affects the range and type of inputs used and how effectively they are employed. The main input variables are material and human resources with the governance of these resources as an important additional dimension. Material resources provided both by governments and households include textbooks and other learning materials, availability of classrooms, libraries, school facilities and other infrastructure. Human resource inputs include managers, administrators, support staff, supervisors, inspectors and most importantly lecturers who are vital to the education process (EFA and GMR 2005). Other important factors having an indirect impact on teaching and learning are strong leadership, a safe and welcoming school environment, good community involvement and incentives for achieving good results (EFA and GMR 2005).

MATERIALS AND METHODS
A survey research design was used. Students from seven institutions offering degree, diploma and certificate courses in hospitality were sampled. Purposive sampling was used to select three public universities while complex random sampling was used to select four diploma, certificate and craft colleges. The sample comprised 126 students and 7 Heads of departments from these institutions. Data was collected using questionnaires. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data with the aid of SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
From the findings majority (60%) of the respondents were male while 40% were female. These results contradict the findings by (Pavesic, 1993; Ioannis, 2008) who found out that majority of students that choose to study hospitality management education were female. Majority of the institutions (42%) were established after the year 2000, (29%) between the year 1981-2000 and (29%) between the year 1960-1980. There was no significant difference on the dates the establishments were formed ($\chi^2=2.86, P= .867$). Majority (71%) of the departments were formed to cater for increased demand for qualified staff by the industry while 29% were formed to bridge the gap between education and the industry. There was a significant difference on the reasons for the formation of the departments ($\chi^2=1.286, P= .257$).

Education Level of Teaching Staff
The student instructor ratio in hospitality institutions was obtained by dividing the student numbers by the instructors. From the results majority (37%) of the instructors comprised 1st degree holders in the universities and middle level college, 31.5% in the universities were master degree holders while 29.6% in the middle level colleges were diploma holders. From all the institutions only 1.9% were PhD holders and none of the institutions had a professor on board. The results are shown in figure 1

![Figure 1: Education level of teaching staff](image)

Number of Students in the Institutions
The institution with the highest number of student was at 325, 3 institutions had 200 students and above, and 2 had students below 100. From these findings it is evident that there was high ratios between instructors & students in majority of these institutions, this is one indicator that quality of learning in hindered.
Status of the Lecture Rooms
From the responses, (35%) of the respondents indicated that the status of their lecture rooms were fair, 24% felt they were poor, 22% were good, a small percentage (14%) indicated that they were very poor while a very small percentage (5%) indicated that they had very good lecture rooms. The status of the classrooms were significant ($\chi^2=41.286, P=.000$). Good learning environment, comfortable seats are essential for productive learning. Though it cannot be concluded from these findings that the status of lecture rooms affect quality of hospitality education, it is evident that they could be a hindrance to excellence. Generally the state of the class rooms was stated as poor, congestion was rampant, and since the rooms were separated by boards it was very difficult to concentrate because of noise in other lecture room, most lecture rooms were also filled with uncomfortable seats.

Practical Laboratories
Majority (90%) of the respondents indicated that they had practical food laboratories while only (10%) didn’t have at all. Of those with laboratories, 54% indicated that the laboratories were replicas of the state of the art commercial kitchen, 38% indicated that they were modern while only a paltry (8%) were new. The responses on practical were significant ($\chi^2=20.667, p=.000$). Majority of the respondents who indicated the laboratories were like commercial kitchens implied that not much was learned from these laboratories, 32% felt the quality was fair while 5% felt the quality was poor. There was a significant difference among the implication of the laboratories on the quality of education ($\chi^2=32.667 p=.000$). It was therefore deduced that the status of laboratories were poor and their unavailability contributed to poor quality education.

Availability of a Library and Quality of Reading Materials
Majority of the institutions (71%) had a library while only (29%) did not have. The students were asked to rate the quality of reading materials in the library which included text books and other learning materials and how current those materials were. From the findings, 43% rated the quality of materials as very poor and poor, (40%) rated them as fair, 22% rated them as good while only (5%) indicated that they had very good quality materials. The results indicate the need for institutions to change from having outdated materials to current ones and probably adopt e-library.

### Table 1: Quality of Hospitality materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Implications of Learning Resources on Quality of Education
Majority (87%) of the students said that the quality was low as a result of state of hospitality materials, while only (13%) did not see any implications at all. These results of the learning resources were highly significant ($\chi^2=35.063, p=.000$). The learning resources play a vital role in the quality of education and should not be overlooked if quality in education is to be achieved.

Review of the Curriculum
Majority (58%) of the hospitality curricula had never been reviewed, 29% had reviewed it within the last five years while only 13% had reviewed within the last two years. Hospitality education like the industry itself is constantly changing hence any institution that wants to be highly competitive in terms of providing high quality education should review its curriculum as frequently as possible to keep abreast with the industry and student’s needs. The results are shown in figure 2

![Figure 2: Period of curriculum review](image)

Reasons for Pursuing Hospitality Education
Majority (42%) of students chose to pursue hospitality education as a result of ambition in terms of opportunity for employment, a desire to operate own business and desire to be independent. 30% chose the course due to lack of alternative as they did not do well in their O’Level exams or lack of financial resources or were forced to pursue the course. 25% chose it because of interest as they enjoy working with people, food, dining out, and traveling while only 3% pursued the course out of experience such as prior work experience, family background in the industry and contact with other students and faculty in hospitality management programs. The results were not significant ($\chi^2=19.349, P=.000$), hence this research disputes the belief that hospitality education is pursued by academically low achievers. The results are shown in figure 3
LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
The author did not use inferential statistics for analysis of data, which may have otherwise changed the results. The research also utilized research questions, hence no hypothesis was tested and there was no theory that supported this research.

CONCLUSION
It is evident that there are many colleges that offer hospitality related courses despite the fact that majority of them do not have adequate and current resources to cater for the students enrolled. High ratios between instructor and students were witnessed in majority of the institutions which is a hindrance to quality of learning. The status of the classrooms was found not to cause a lot of hindrance to education. Notable was the poor status of laboratories or unavailability which contributed to low quality of hospitality education.

The quality of learning resources was low despite it being vital in provision of quality education. Hospitality education like the industry itself is constantly changing; as a result institutions which want to be competitive in terms of providing high quality education should review curriculums as frequently as possible to keep abreast with the changing needs of the market. This research did not support the belief that hospitality education is pursued by low achievers academically. Based on the findings it was recommended that there should be review of written material on hospitality management, review materials used by instructors including syllabuses, texts among other teaching materials and modes, conduct evaluation of instructors. Curricula’s in use are very conservative and may not be sensitive to market demands and are hidden with other degrees like tourism, home science and business administration among others. Consequently, standardization of curricula for hospitality education to meet industry needs is vital and also redesigning hospitality curriculum as established by researchers such as (Mayaka, 1999; Lewis, 1993; Umbreit, 1992). Finally, the Government should set up an accredited body to foresee the quality of hospitality programs and examinations.

REFERENCES
Alison, M and Mahony, B. (2003). The liberation of Hospitality Management Education. International Journal of contemporary hospitality Management. 15 (1); 38-44
Ismail, A (2002). Front office operations & Management. Delmar Thomson Learning inch 1; 1-25
http://www.Marsgroupkenya.org
http://www.destination360.com/africa/kenya/history
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/