The Feasibility of Remote Teaching and Training of Hotel Management

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Running Title: *Re - evaluating Hospitality and Tourism Education and Training Needs*

Abstract: *Whenever the world faces any unforeseen situation the first area that gets impacted is the academics; due to its nature and stakeholders involved. Generally immediate shutting of academic institutions is called for as a precautionary measure. The situation can be political, social, religious, geographical or biological. The Covid - 19 easily turned into a pandemic from being an outbreak in Wuhan, China. It spread rapidly causing disruptions in all areas of human personal and professional domains. Suddenly situation that we had no clue of was thrown at us. We can't give in to circumstances; instead we need to plan strategies to handle them. It is not a two – three days affair but something that is going to have a long term impact. Cities went into lock downs, countries sealed their borders. Within cities combat mechanism was being used by the local governments and organisations in turn planned their survival as well as operational strategies. Many people moved temporarily though; from being on site or office workers to remote workers owing to the circumstances of the pandemic. The hotel industry which has traditionally been people - centric had to opt for Work From Home. Covid 19 pandemic has exposed us to many challenges and to deal with them we all are required to exercise safety protocols. As a precaution it became the need of the hour. Like other courses the Hotel Management academics and training are also facing the need to venture into remote teaching and becoming the new entrants into academic cyberspace. All those who didn't think much of remote teaching - learning earlier suddenly were forced to embrace it, there being no other way. The recent happenings have led to transforming of teaching, learning and training. All academicians have had to innovate and find sustainable practices as students are available and are willing to learn; they may be at different geographical locations though. That missing parameter can be substituted with virtual options using technology; these have been tested and are being used in the last two years with some success. It has shown the possibility and a lot more can be done in this domain. Best available remote teaching and training models were studied and the most suitable for Hotel Management has been recommended. This paper encourages the hospitality educators re - evaluate hospitality education and training needs.*

Keywords: Academics, Pandemic, remote teaching, Covid 19, Hospitality

1. Research Design

a) Purpose

The purpose of this study is to re - evaluate hospitality education and training needs.

b) Scope

The scope is restricted only to the under graduate course in Hotel Management and does not cover any other courses.

c) Methodology

The Primary Data is collected through observational and Experiential Method as the researchers have been educators and hospitality trainers for over two decades. Researcher is teaching at a hotel management institute and has also been conducting training programs for the Hospitality Industry on a regular basis. Best practices are studied in Hotel Management colleges and hotels through observation and interactions with the Teaching faculty members and Training Managers of different hotels where she has conducted training programmes. She has spoken and discussed this topic with the hospitality educators from various hotel management colleges to understand and elaborate upon the methods that are being used/ can be implemented in conducting training and delivering course content remotely.

The secondary data is collected through journals and other published sources.

d) Limitations

- The study is restricted only to under graduate program in Hotel Management and does not cover any other courses.
- Data collection is qualitative in nature and could not be quantified.
- The study is based on observation and experiential methods and does not include any other data collection methods.

2. Review of Literature

Remote teaching learning or work isn't the future in academics or workplaces but it's the present. A new survey data revealed that remote work is a major benefit for employees. In fact, 34% of U. S. workers would take a pay cut of up to 5% in order to work remotely. And those who do work remotely say they're happy in their jobs 29% more than on - site workers. (Bernazzani, 2019). This also indicates that a professional or student engaged in well planned academic activities or job descriptions keeping in mind the remote work or delivery of content.

Increasingly aware of and increasingly receptive to what students want, higher education institutions are treading a fine line and creating quite the balance between traditional and new - age methods of teaching. In an age, where more and more students are trying to gain access to more knowledge and training, academic behemoths are opening doors and welcoming them, even if it isn't to their brick and mortar avatars. With distance learning, an academic solution that allows students to learn more and learn better and allows higher education institutions to reach out to more students, we have in place a system that democratizes and globalizes education. (Nair, 2020)

The prospect of hundreds of thousands of professors and students venturing into academic cyberspace for the first time has prompted some commentators to take to social media to predict that this period could alter the landscape long term for online education. "Every faculty member is going to be delivering education online. Every student is going to be receiving education online. And the resistance to online education is going to go away as a practical matter, " James N. Bradley, chief information officer at Texas's Trinity University, wrote in a LinkedIn post. Goldie Blumenstyk, at The Chronicle of Higher Education, went so far as to suggest that the corona virus could be a "black swan" moment - - "more of a catalyst for online education and other ed - tech tools than decades of punditry and self - serving corporate exhortations. " She continued, "It seems safe to say that this will be not only enormously disruptive but also paradigm changing. The 'black swan, ' that unforeseen event that changes everything, is upon us. "(Lederman, 2018)

Under the Indian Govt Skill India initiative, it is expected to train more than 500 million candidates in the coming 5 years' time. Each candidate would be assessed after training to understand if the candidate is ready to apply the skills learned in the practical world. The technology of online evaluation and viva can help to speed up assessment and it can also be standardized. (epravesh, 2020)

There is no learning quite like getting your hands stuck in and learning your profession by 'just doing it'. Allowing our learners to 'have a go' in a situation as close to real - life as possible will enhance the learning experience considerably, as we retain more information when we physically practice it, instead of just see or hear about it. Strong supporters of the learn - by - doing principle would argue that true skill, mastery and autonomy can only come from real - world practice. This is the learn - by - doing principle of adult learning, and we can bring this element into what we are teaching regardless of whether we teach online or offline, or our topic's industry.

When it comes to traditional face - to - face teaching or training, this principle is easy to grasp and execute. But what about it when we are delivering our training as an online course? How can you ensure that you are meeting the learn - by - doing principle of adult learning in an environment where we are not physically present to run practical exercises in person? Are you going to be teaching a new skill to your students in your online course? Online teaching requires very different approaches to teaching face - to - face for obvious reasons. But it is not so obvious how to do it differently. (cordiner, 2017)

Origination of tourism curriculum gaps as compared to vocational training and occupational skills. Tourism training has gone through phases that emerged from informal training to formal training. However, tourism training has been dominated by vocational oriented courses. The vocational training played a crucial role in providing the necessary industrial occupational skills, (Baum, 2002). However, occupations like bar attendant, waiter, porter/bell person, housekeeper, amongst other perceive life skill related occupation, had no formal training except informal on the job training in Zimbabwe. A notable distinction between tourism curriculum and tourism vocational training emanates from Zais (1976) cited in Baum (2002), thus, he defined vocational training as, a technical model directed toward specific skill and behavioral changes, whilst tourism curriculum is directed toward expanding one's awareness of human environment and how to cope with the environment. (Nhuta, 2015)

Despite its negative impacts on the Hospitality and Tourism (H&T) education, the COVID 19 pandemic situation has helped uncover the opportunities of alternative teaching and learning methods. Instructors have sought numerous active learning strategies to enhance student engagement and satisfaction in a virtual format; industry practitioners have designed customized virtual internships; and students have adopted the new mode of learning including Zoom classes, online discussion, and virtual group projects (Park & Jones, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). (Soobin Seo, 2021)

Viability of remote teaching and training in Hotel Management
The world has faced many unforeseen situations in the past few decades and whenever that happens the first area that gets impacted is the academics. It may be due to its nature and the stakeholders involved. Generally as a precautionary measure immediate shutting of academic institutions is called for. The situation can be varied in nature such as political, social, religious, geographical or biological. The Covid - 19 pandemic evolved from being just an outbreak in Wuhan, China in December 2019. It spread rapidly causing disruptions in all areas of human personal and professional domains. Suddenly a very newly discovered situation, something that we had no clue of was thrown at us. We can't really wait for situation to resolve itself and can't give in to the circumstances; instead we need to plan strategies to handle them and manoeuvre our lives around it. It wasn't a two – three days affair but something that was going to have a long term impact. Cities were locked down, countries sealed their borders. In the states and cities within combat mechanism was being developed by the local governments. Organisations either large or small had to plan their survival as well as operational strategies. Everyone prepared for what they termed as 'the new normal' Remote Work and teaching - learning is not the future of work but has become the present sustainable practice.

Many people have moved temporarily though; from being on site or office workers to remote workers owing to the pandemic. The hotel industry which has traditionally been people - centric had to opt for Work From Home (WFH).

Covid 19 pandemic exposed us to many challenges and to deal with them we all had to follow appropriate safety behaviours being the norms. It was more of physical distancing and social solidarity in the real sense. As we had to continue our work and extend support to all stake holders.

Like other courses the Hotel Management academics also faced the need to venture into remote teaching thus becoming the new entrants into academic cyberspace. All those who didn't think much of remote teaching earlier suddenly were forced to embrace it, there being no other way. The recent happenings have lead to transforming of teaching, learning and training. All academicians have had to innovate and find sustainable practices as students are available and are willing to learn; they may be at different geographical locations though. That missing parameter can be substituted with virtual options using technology; these have been tested and are being used in the last two years with some success. It has shown the possibility and a lot more can be done in this domain.

We have many options at our disposal now; we also learnt that we must not allow disruptions to affect our work and functioning. It is our time to experiment and develop a sustainable models. Remote teaching and training may facilitate these functions without the synergy of the physical connections with the students or trainees but we must remember that we had no choice. We need to make the best use of the options available to us; we must also remember that it's going to be the way forward. Millennials are comfortable using digital platforms. Technology can never replace a good teacher or trainer but they can enhance their effectiveness by bridging the gap – the lack of physical presence of students and professors in classrooms.

Distance learning has been there for many years now and some good open universities are functioning very well; they have built a great reputation among people and have helped them in furthering their education or up skilling themselves. Some of the best practices that can be adopted from them for remote learning are:
a) **Use of digital learning platforms** – in the recent times many digital learning platforms have been created for imparting education right from primary to higher learning.
b) **Online learning tools** – There are many educational tools that have been created with the purpose of facilitating teaching - learning and training among educators and learners. They are used to create online collaborative groups, administer and provide educational materials, measure student performance, use learning games and communicate with parents (in case of students) etc.
c) **Instructions/ lessons for students at remote locations**– Content can be designed for students keeping in mind the mode of delivery, mostly virtual or online.
d) **Interaction with experts through video conferencing** – Webinars and online sessions can be conducted and attended from the comforts of one's own location; making it convenient to have valuable sessions delivered by experts or industry leaders.

e) **Mentoring/ counselling or tutoring students** – Students can get in touch with their faculty or experts to seek mentorship.
f) **Personality development programs** – It is possible to have engaging and impactful programs on etiquettes and image development.
g) **Communication workshops** – Effective communication skills are a must no matter in which field the person is going to be working in. It is the backbone of teamwork and collaboration.
h) **Soft skills training programs** – Hard skills or technical knowledge is important and equally important are the soft skills or behavioural aspects or emotional intelligence.
i) **Access to remote resources (digital library)** – Digital libraries can be created with the content, videos and useful data that can be accessed anytime by the students, trainers or faculty members.
j) **Collaborative assignments and projects online** - students can work on collaborative assignments from their own locations thus contributing to varied facets of learning.

Reasons that make remote learning a viable option
With the modern living and options available to people; remote learning has gained prominence. People of all age groups can educate and up skill themselves. Additional certifications can be earned without missing their regular college or work. The conventional open schooling and distance learning programs have given way to remote virtual learning platforms due to the benefits that they offer. Some of them are:
a) **Choice** – Students can choose more than one course, the New Education Policy is taking this factor into account. Course or subject selection can be on the basis of the student's interest or career prospects.
b) **Flexibility** – These days just bachelors and masters degrees are not enough, organisations are seeking individuals who are ready to learn and up skill themselves on a regular basis. One has stay relevant.
c) **Economical** – They are cheaper than the regular full time courses and that is a huge saving for an individual. Millenials find this option a very viable one.
d) **Networking/ collaborating** – The learners meet people from varied fields, cultures and backgrounds at times different nationalities. Virtually though but connections are built that leads to newer experiences and learning. Networking is the key to success in these times.
e) **Quality in education** – The students or trainees are taught or trained by the best. There is no restriction on the availability of good resource person as we have gone past the 'physical location' barrier. People can join from any location around the globe.
f) **Personalisation** – the students or trainees can choose a format that works best for them. Customisation has helped in developing unique competencies and bringing out the best in individuals.
g) **Effectiveness** - If used well the distant or remote learners can outperform their contemporaries. Time and resources can be used effectively.
h) **Employability** – the students get coached by the best and build work networks which help them with mentoring and

employability not just during the learning period but also afterwards.

Requirements for implementing remote learning programs

It has been observed that the remote learning programs offer convenience and facilitate learning to every age group. To make it functional and accessible to all there are some basic requirements; some of them have been listed below:

a) **Online option for courses** – Many relevant programs and courses should be listed on the website or the brochure that allows people to choose the programs that they wish to take up. Governments and educational boards are supporting these; the New Education Policy is an example.

b) **Good database** – Database of learning resources, experts and learners should be maintained. Virtual search engines are the new opinion generators.

c) **Good network connection** – Whenever online platform is used its functionality is purely driven by good network connectivity. Government and private players are providing that option, in fact good network connectivity is a given these days.

d) **Uses of good computers** – Users need compatible computers and software programs. Computer manufacturing companies are making good use of the competitive market and products are superlative.

e) **Options for conducting webinars** – Remote learning should be supplemented with virtual contact or exchange programs. This enhances the effectiveness of the programs as there is synergy of the learners and trainers at one place.

f) **Student logins** – There should be options of registering students and logging them for taking classes and accessing content online. It has many advantages as reminders can be set, attendance can be recorded and grading can be done.

g) **Options to share assignments and activities** – Students can do notional studies; study kits containing the instructions and learning objectives can be shared with them.

h) **Options to evaluate and grade assignments** – There should be options available for learners to submit assignments and for teachers to grade them. It also helps in record keeping.

i) **Efficient system to conduct exams** – Remote learning program requires robust examination system. If students don't appear for an exam under the supervision of an invigilator it becomes imperative to use fool proof techniques.

j) **Ability to award certifications and degrees / diplomas** – The system should be able to accredit and award certifications and degrees to the successful students or learners.

k) **Employability** – Recruiters can be a part of this platform and employment options should be made available for students. This adds to make the program holistic and sustainable.

Conducting practical sessions online

Hotel management is a practical oriented course and practical sessions in the core subjects are needed for students to understand them well. The question then arises as to how practical sessions can be conducted remotely. Implementing the following simple teaching principles and methods will make conducting a practical session online possible. It will enhance the students' learning experiences as they are based on the principle of learn by doing; which is an effective technique in adult learning programs.

a) **Get visual** - Live demo is very effective as students learn by way of auditory, visual or kinaesthetic responses. Focus on the step by step processes such as while preparing a dish, each step should be shown on camera.

b) **Be on camera** - Look at the participants and talk to them virtually though; by often looking into the camera and addressing the students. This builds the connect with them.

c) **Screen cast or use demo videos** - Screen casting is when a software is used to film or record one's own computer screen live, with the faculty narrating the happenings or sequence of things. This will make it easier for the student to grasp what is being taught.

d) **Use the DEDICT method** - It is the step by step method to make the online practical class engaging and impactful.

D – Demonstrate
Faculty demonstrates the practical; such has making the white sauce.

E – Explain
Explain the recipe and the step by step process

D - Demonstrate
Demonstrate the activity / practical; for instance the making of white sauce.

I - Imitate
Encourage students to follow the activity and do what they see.

C - Coach
The faculty can give their feedback on checking what the students are doing, giving them the much needed advice all along.

T – Test
Conduct assessment; give them a quiz or an assignment related to the practical conducted.

3. Conclusion

There goes a saying, "Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and feed him for life". Teaching and Training are to enhance individuals' capabilities and competencies to deliver to his or her potential. In the VUCA world, there is a massive disruption taking place in almost all walks of life both personal and professional. Education is undergoing transformation.

This pandemic has put us into an unprecedented situation. Like other courses the Hotel Management academics is also facing the need to venture into hybrid teaching - learning. It is our time to re - evaluate, experiment and develop a sustainable model. Hybrid or blended learning is a great option for courses that have theory as well as practical components. Students can be on campus on most days of the week and some classes or training sessions may be delivered virtually.

Since remote teaching may facilitate teaching without the synergy of the physical connection with the students but it was the only option that worked during pandemic where classes were going on for all students remotely (as schools

and colleges were closed) Millennials are comfortable using digital platforms. Technology can never replace a good teacher but they can enhance his or her effectiveness by bridging the gap. Taking cue from the success of distance learning, online learning can built a great reputation among students and help them in their education or up skilling themselves. Remote teaching - learning programs offer convenience and facilitate learning to every age group. Re - learning and Re - skilling have become the norm to exist. Constant learning and up gradation using technology and other tools, make teaching and training imperative for any organization as well as for the individuals.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are also excellent platforms for online learning as it suits the needs and requirements of the working professionals too. Investment in Training and Learning with precise execution and certifications is the way forward to stay relevant.

Taking a cue from all of these the hotel management colleges can design hybrid or blended learning programs that make use of both online and offline face to face teaching.

Suggestion is for all educators and trainers to further explore the blended learning model, evaluate the remote teaching - learning options for Hotel Management education and training that will work for all colleges or training set ups irrespective of their sizes.

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