

# Curriculum Development in Hospitality and Tourism Education: A Review of Literature

Rois Dinan<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Politeknik Pariwisata Makassar, Indonesia

\*Email: roisdinan@poltekparmakassar.ac.id

## Abstract

Rapid developments in the hospitality and tourism industry encourage educational institutions to continue to adjust the curriculum to be in line with the needs of the dynamic world of work. This study aims to comprehensively review various literatures that discuss strategies and approaches in curriculum development in the field of hospitality and tourism education. Using the literature review method, this study examines scientific publications from various reliable sources published in the last ten years. The focus of the study includes curriculum design principles, integration of 21st century skills, the role of digital technology, and collaboration between educational institutions and industry. The results show that effective curriculum in this field are generally competency-based, contextualized and flexible to changes in the job market. Close collaboration with the industrial sector is considered very important to ensure the relevance of learning and work readiness of graduates. However, a number of challenges remain, such as limited resources, differences in standards between countries, and gaps between classroom theory and field practice. This study provides a comprehensive overview of the direction of curriculum development in hospitality and tourism and offers recommendations for improving the relevance and quality of education in the future.

**Keywords:** curriculum development; hospitality education; industry collaboration; job competencies; tourism education

**History Article:** Submitted 18 July 2025 | Accepted 20 August 2025

**How to Cite:** Dinan, R. (2025). Curriculum development in hospitality and tourism education: A review of literature. *Current Issues in Hospitality and Tourism Education (CIHOSTE)*, 1(1), 1-15.

## INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry has experienced rapid growth in recent decades and is one of the most dynamic and resilient sectors of the global economy. This development reflects high global mobility, a growing middle class and shifting consumer preferences towards personalized, authentic and sustainable experiences. According to a recent report by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the global market value of the hospitality industry is estimated to reach approximately US\$4.9 trillion by 2024 and is projected to increase to US\$5.4-5.7 trillion by 2025, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 6.2%.

In addition, the Travel & Tourism sector contributes approximately 10% to global Brutto Domestic Product (GDP), equivalent to US\$11.1 trillion by 2024, making it one of the critical pillars in the post-pandemic economic recovery. It is also estimated that more than 430 million jobs globally will come from this sector by 2033, reflecting the importance of a well-trained and qualified workforce (WTTC, 2024; UNWTO, 2023). With this growth, there is an urgent need for professional, adaptive and cross-disciplinary skilled human resources, which can only be achieved through quality education and training.

In response to these needs, the development of a hospitality and tourism education curriculum has become increasingly crucial. The curriculum must not only cover the theoretical and conceptual aspects of hospitality and tourism, but must also provide practical experience, understanding of the latest technology, and awareness of sustainability and social responsibility issues. Given that the industry is highly affected by global trends such as digitalization, sustaina-

ble tourism, as well as the changing preferences of the younger generation, a rigid and unresponsive curriculum will create a significant gap between the competencies of graduates and the needs of the industry (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2022; Sigala, 2023).

Hospitality and tourism education has unique characteristics as it must balance between academic theory and practical skills, and between cultural locality and international standards. Therefore, curriculum development should be dynamic, collaborative, and based on the needs of the job market, involving industry stakeholders, professional associations, and international certification bodies (Marinakou & Giousmpasoglou, 2021). A good curriculum should also reflect technological changes such as the use of AI and big data in hotel and destination management, as well as increased digitization in tourism services.

Recent literature shows that curriculum development approaches in this field are increasingly moving towards Competency-Based Education (CBE) and Outcome-Based Education (OBE), which encourage the development of soft skills, critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and managerial skills (Brown et al., 2020). In addition, strategic partnerships between educational institutions and industry are key in creating a relevant and applicable curriculum (Liu et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of curriculum changes also faces various challenges, such as limited human and financial resources, resistance to change in academic circles, and gaps between educational policies and operational realities in the industry. Therefore, curriculum development strategies should include capacity building of educators, alignment of national policies with global industry needs, and integration of technology and project-based learning (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2022).

Against this background, this study aims to review the literature related to curriculum development in hospitality and tourism education, in order to identify relevant trends, challenges and recommendations in the context of higher education. This review is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions for policy makers, educators, as well as curriculum developers, in creating an education system that is adaptive, inclusive, and able to produce graduates who are ready to face future industry challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Curriculum Challenges in Tourism and Hospitality Education**

In the era of globalization and digital revolution, higher education in tourism and hospitality is under immense pressure to transform. Higher education is not only required to produce graduates who excel academically, but also have high practical readiness and soft skills to compete in an increasingly dynamic global job market (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2022; World Tourism Organization, 2023). The industrialized world, characterized by technological change, digitization of services, and increasingly complex customer expectations, requires a workforce that not only understands theory, but is also able to flexibly apply expertise in the field (Lee et al., 2021; Sigala, 2023).

However, various literatures show that the development of tourism and hospitality education curriculum is still far from expectations. The process tends to run ad-hoc, without a strong systematic foundation and responsive to industry needs (Kusumawardhana, 2019). Many curricula in higher education institutions do not reflect the integration of theory, practice, and digital competencies, thus creating a significant gap between the abilities of graduates and the demands of the job market.

One of the main problems faced is the design of curriculum content that is too generic and lacks a clear focus on mastering practical skills. The curriculum still overemphasizes theoretical aspects, while practical training and development of soft skills, such as leadership, cross-cultural communication, emotional management, and adaptability in real work situations, tend to be ne-

glected (Putra et al., 2022; World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2023). As a result, many graduates experience difficulties in adapting when entering the real work environment.

In terms of teaching, the quality and relevance of teaching staff competence is also an issue. Many lecturers have purely academic backgrounds such as education or languages, with no direct experience in the tourism and hospitality industry. This has an impact on their inability to deliver applicable material, especially in skill-based courses such as English for Special Purposes (ESP), which should be contextualized and adapt to the needs of communication in an international environment (Rahmawati, 2023).

Furthermore, digital transformation and the use of technology in the learning process have not been optimally integrated. Although digitalization is a necessity in the modern tourism industry—such as the use of online reservation systems, virtual tours, digital marketing, and AI-based CRM—but not all educational institutions have the readiness of in-structure and teaching human resources to adopt blended learning and e-learning approaches effectively (Setiawan & Amelia, 2024). In fact, the utilization of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) is very important to increase the flexibility, efficiency, and reach of the hospitality-tourism curriculum.

The lack of collaboration between educational institutions and industry players is also a structural obstacle in the curriculum reform process. There are still many universities that design curricula in a top-down manner without involving industry partners as important stakeholders in the educational process. This practice causes the curriculum to not reflect the latest needs and trends in the global tourism sector (Hendrayati et al., 2023). A more inclusive and co-creation-based partnership model needs to be implemented so that there is an active dialog between the academic world and industry in determining the direction and content of the curriculum.

In addition, various studies show the importance of creating a balance between theory, hands-on practice, and soft skills. An empirical study by Mulyadi and Santosa (2023) of tourism program graduates showed that soft skills such as empathy, problem solving, and interpersonal communication have a significant influence on job satisfaction and professional commitment. However, fieldwork practices that are not contextualized and too physically demanding actually reduce graduates' motivation to pursue a career in this sector.

Cross-country comparisons also indicate similar problems. In China, for example, Lam and Xiao (2000) revealed that the quality of tourism education is still unable to meet industry expectations due to the low international experience of teachers and the lack of curriculum standardization. The same is true in Indonesia, where quality differences between institutions are striking due to the absence of a uniform and adaptive national curriculum framework.

Overall, the challenges in tourism and hospitality curriculum development can be mapped into five main aspects: (1) curriculum content that is not integrated between theory and practice; (2) low competence of teachers towards industry needs; (3) poor utilization of digital technology and ICT; (4) weak strategic partnerships between education and industry; and (5) imbalance between teaching theory, soft skills, and meaningful field practice. To address these challenges, a holistic approach to curriculum reform that is market-driven and based on multi-stakeholder collaboration is needed so that graduates are truly prepared for the current and future world of work.

### **Relevance of Soft Skills and Employability**

In the competitive landscape of the tourism and hospitality industry, it is no longer enough for graduates to possess technical skills (hard skills) alone. A study in the Portuguese academic sector by Wilks and Hemsworth (2012) showed that while hotel industry employers rated soft skills as the most crucial competency, the country's tertiary study programs are not yet aligned with this need. The gap between curricular offerings and industry demands reflects the urgent need for interpersonal integration, communication and adaptability in higher education. The case of

Malaysia by Chan (2010) reinforces similar findings: soft skills such as communication skills, critical thinking, and command of English are determinants of the employability of tourism and hospitality graduates. However, their implementation is still limited by pedagogical barriers, curricula that do not accommodate real-world contexts, and students' and lecturers' perceptions of the importance of these non-technical aspects.

In a global context, the wider literature confirms that employability is a complex combination of skills, experience, education, and personal attributes such as positive attitudes and work ethics (Yorke, 2006; Knight & Yorke, 2004). Employability is not just a static dimension, but a dynamic process including adaptability, lifelong learning, and the ability to change roles or occupations according to labor market demands (OECD, 2021). In the hospitality field, a study in Mozambique by the British Council (2022) showed how a project-based learning approach successfully embedded employability skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, and initiative - which directly improved learners' job readiness in the context of the local tourism industry. Students were able to apply soft skills in real-life scenarios, with a positive impact on their employability.

Another comprehensive study by Mohd Shariff et al. (2023) highlighted that building employability for tourism and hospitality graduates needs to be done through the integration of work-ready skills such as communication, professional ethics, problem-solving, and leadership skills into the formal curriculum. This is especially important in vocational and TVET education, where students are expected to be immediately work-ready post-graduation. Research in Medan, Indonesia, by Sitompul et al. (2017) showed that tourism marketing learning significantly influenced the formation of hard and soft skills. Both hard and soft skills were shown to influence the quality of graduate performance, with soft skills having a direct influence on productivity and dynamic responses in the workplace.

According to some researchers, soft skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, team-work, professional ethics, and leadership are not just additional attributes; they are critical educational outputs in shaping employable graduates. Research by MDPI (Kong et al., 2022) and OECD (2021) even place these skills as key pillars for career stability, internal promotion, and organizational productivity.

### **Industry Engagement and Competency Needs**

A number of international studies have highlighted the importance of combining curriculum and industry practice to make graduates relevant in the world of work. Hyasat (2022) noted a mismatch between the readiness of tourism & hospitality diploma graduates in Jordan and the needs of the local industry, where teaching methods are too theoretical and lack real practical experience. The study shows that the quality of graduates can be improved through increased curriculum collaboration with industry players, especially in developing soft skills and digital literacy needed by the industry today. In a global context, Sekyere et al. (2024) through a systematic study in Ghana emphasized that higher education institutions are vulnerable to structural gaps between curriculum design and actual needs in the field. This is driven by centralized education regulations, lack of input from industry, and lack of lecturer training so that the competence of graduates does not meet the expectations of the business world.

In Indonesia, Yuyun Kustini's (2021) research on the Siliwangi Tourism Academy empirically shows that collaboration between course materials and industry significantly ( $R^2 = 0.7417$ ) improves student competencies, especially in the aspects of strategy and leadership. However, educational institutions still face obstacles in updating facilities and practices to align with industry standards. A study on competencies required by industry identified interpersonal skills, human resource management, communication, and problem-solving as key soft skills. Hidayat (2024) emphasized that vocational education must lay the foundation of HR management and customer-focused mindset in every course, in addition to technical hard skills.

From a vocational education perspective, Simanihuruk & Sukma (2023) highlighted that apprenticeship programs in the hospitality industry play a strategic role in improving the competencies of vocational lecturers, which in turn affects the quality of the institutional curriculum. The opportunity for lecturers to be directly involved in industry practice has been shown to enrich learning content and relevance of materials. The focus of the study in the United States specifically in North Central Idaho used the DACUM method to define front-line hospitality staff competencies. This set of competencies includes communication skills, customer service, basic technology, and teamwork. This approach shows how direct collaboration between educational institutions and industry experts can formulate curriculum standards that are more adaptive to the needs of the local market.

The difference between curricula determined by educational institutions alone and those developed with industry was also observed by a study in Illinois (CSP), which found discrepancies between competencies taught in the classroom and those required by hotel and restaurant managers. The study emphasized that curriculum development without dialogue with industry practitioners has a high chance of producing graduates who are not ready to execute real tasks in the field.

Therefore, industry involvement goes beyond providing suggestions on curriculum design, but should also involve continuous evaluation and active partnership through internship programs, workshops, and industry simulations. Without strong collaboration, curricula tend to be stagnant, unresponsive to new technology trends and service patterns, and fail to align graduate competencies with industry expectations.

Competencies that often emerge as priority needs from both global and local industries are:

- a) Soft skills: communication, leadership, collaboration, customer-focus mindset.
- b) Hard skills: mastery of industrial technology, operational management, understanding of service standards.
- c) Vocational pedagogy: lecturer involvement in industrial practice through mangang/apprenticeship.
- d) Digital literacy: a The DACUM model and industry needs evaluation guidelines are repeatedly proposed as effective ways of designing competency-based curricula, which simultaneously improve students' academic relevance and job readiness.

A number of international studies highlight the importance of combining curriculum and industry practice to make graduates relevant in the world of work. Hyasat (2022) noted a mis-match between the readiness of tourism and hospitality diploma graduates in Jordan and the needs of local industries, where teaching methods are too theoretical and lack real practical experience. The study shows that the quality of graduates can be improved through increased curriculum collaboration with industry players, especially in developing soft skills and digital literacy needed by the industry today.

### **Integration of Sustainable Education (Sustainable & SDGs)**

Since the launch of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) by UNESCO in 2005-2014, education for sustainable development (ESD) has become an important cornerstone in shaping students' global values, skills and responsibilities. Target 4.7 of SDG 4 explicitly demands that all learners acquire knowledge and competencies to promote sustainable development, such as global citizenship, gender equality and appreciation of cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2017).

At the higher education level, research in Switzerland by Hamiti and Wydler (2014) explains that the integration of ESD into the curriculum requires a bottom-up approach that invites lecturers, researchers, and students to discuss together, using evaluation tools (spider diagrams) to evaluate the sustainable dimension in each learning unit. This approach helps to reduce resistance to change and increase the commitment of all stakeholders to sustainable education. However, implementing sustainability assessment tools (SATs) in tourism education is challenging. A 2024 conference paper explained that inconsistent definitions of sustainability and the multiplicity of assessment tools make the integration process complex and often complicate the curriculum transformation process rather than support it (Jenkins & Men-dez, 2024).

Research from Ireland (Conefrey et al., 2025) confirms the urgency of strengthening sustainable literacy in tourism programs. Graduates need to be equipped with explicit knowledge of decarbonization theory, climate policy, and concrete practices in measuring, monitoring, and reducing carbon emissions. In this way, they will not only be environmentally conscious, but also able to act as climate change agents in the tourism sector. Another study, which reviewed curriculum alignment with the SDGs, found that most tourism and hospitality modules did not explicitly include SDG targets in their learning outcomes-although education staff were generally aware of ESD concepts, lack of training and faculty members' resistance were the main barriers towards full integration (Lozano et al., 2017).

In the case of Ecuador, teaching innovations such as projectual methods, case studies, and participatory learning show positive effects on students' attitudes and competencies in sustainable tourism education (MDPI, 2023). However, the integration has not been massive due to the lack of systematic incorporation into a holistic curriculum design. In addition to curriculum design, pedagogy plays an important role. Transformative pedagogy based on reflective learning, problem-based learning, and experiential learning is a strong approach to forming critical tourism citizens-individuals who think critically, creatively, and responsibly in sustainable tourism practices (Dredge & Schott, 2013; Sterling, 2010).

Finally, the literature on required competencies shows that in addition to “green skills”, the industry requires digital skills (data analytics, IT), innovation capabilities, cross-cultural communication, and critical thinking. The Framework emphasizes that sustainable curriculum development must incorporate these multidimensional dimensions to meet the demands of the SDGs and the future of a sustainable tourism economy (UNWTO, 2022). The process of integrating sustainable education into hospitality-tourism curricula requires a fundamental transformation: from an economic-feature-only paradigm to a holistic learning paradigm that incorporates SDGs values, environmental literacy, technological capabilities, and critical learning approaches. Universities should make the SDGs an integral part of institutional policies, staff education, and learning module design using curriculum audit tools, community engagement and continuous evaluation to ensure relevance and effectiveness (Barth et al., 2014; Tilbury, 2011).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Approach**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method that aims to identify, review, and synthesize findings from various previous studies related to curriculum development in hospitality and tourism education. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for evaluating and analyzing trends, models, and challenges in curriculum development from various academic and practical perspectives.

### **Data Sources**

Data sources in this study were obtained from scientific articles published in accredited international and national journals, conference proceedings, and official reports from relevant educa-

tional institutions and international organizations. The inclusion criteria for source selection were as follows:

- a) The article is published within the last 10 years (2015-2025) or longer, but has strong relevance to this research.
- b) The main topic is related to curriculum development in hospitality and/or tourism education.
- c) Available in English or Indonesian
- d) Be peer-reviewed or come from a credible academic source
- e) Exclusion criteria include:
- f) Articles that are not available in full version
- g) Literature that is not relevant to the focus of curriculum development
- h) Personal opinions that are not supported by scientific methods

Data collection was done by searching the literature through academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. The keywords used in the search included: “curriculum development”, “hospitality education”, “tourism education”, “curriculum innovation”, “TVET in tourism”, and “hospitality training programs”. After the search phase, an initial screening was conducted based on the title and abstract to ensure relevance. Articles that met the criteria were then thoroughly analyzed by reading the full content and noting key findings.

### **Data Analysis Technique**

The data was analyzed using thematic content analysis method. This process involved:

- a) Theme Identification: Determining the main themes that emerged from the various studies, such as curriculum approaches, employability skills integration, industry-academic collaboration, and implementation challenges.
- b) Information Categorization: Classifying findings based on similarities in approach, geographical context and relevance to global trends.
- c) Narrative Synthesis: Combining the study results to provide a comprehensive picture of the direction of curriculum development in hospitality and tourism education.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the study, the selection and analysis process was systematic and transparent. In addition, data were compared across sources to avoid singular bias and ensure representativeness of perspectives from different geo-graphic and institutional contexts.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Key Findings Related to Challenges in Tourism and Hospitality Curriculum Development

**Table 1:** Summary of key findings

Aspect	Challenges	Explanation
1. Policy and Regulation	Rapid changes in national policy/global tourism	The curriculum is difficult to adapt if it is not flexible to dynamic tourism trends and policies
	Compatibility with SKKNI & KKNi	Many curricula have not fully referred to national standards of work competency
	Synchronization between the center and the regions	Regional education policies are often not aligned with central policies and industrial needs
2. Industrial Needs	The gap between graduates and industry needs	The industry needs a skilled workforce that is often not optimally prepared in the curriculum
	Changes in tourism and hospitality trends (e.g. digital tourism, sustainable tourism)	Curriculum tends to lag behind because it does not quickly adapt to new trends
3. Educational Human Resources	Lack of lecturers/teachers with industry experience	Many teachers are strong in theory, but have little experience in field practice
	Limitations of training and professional development	Teachers have not received the latest training in the field of tourism and hospitality
4. Facilities & Infrastructure	Lack of adequate practice facilities	For example, hospitality laboratories or practice kitchens that are limited in quality and quantity
	Limitations of cooperation with industry	Lack of MoUs with hotels, travel agents, or local tourist destinations
5. The curriculum itself	Rigid and unresponsive to change	The curriculum is not adaptive to digital developments, globalization, and sustainability
	Too focused on theory rather than practice	Lack of field work practice portion, guest service simulation, etc.
6. Globalization & Technology	Lack of digital technology integration (e.g., online reservation system, virtual tour)	The curriculum has not yet adopted the use of new technologies used in industry
	Global competition and international certification demands (e.g., ASEAN MRA-TP)	Graduates are not ready to compete internationally because the curriculum does not yet support global competencies
7. Stakeholder Engagement	Lack of involvement of industry, alumni, and government in curriculum development	Curriculum is often prepared academically without input from direct actors
	Lack of curriculum evaluation based on job market feedback	There is no need-based curriculum review and revision mechanism and routine evaluation

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

Based on the results of the search and analysis of various scientific literature presented in the table above, it was found that curriculum development in hospitality and tourism education has



undergone a number of significant transformations in the last decade. In general, the direction of curriculum development is moving from traditional theory-focused approaches to competency-based learning models that emphasize industry practices, soft skills and digital literacy. Some of the key themes that have emerged in the literature include:

- a) **Competency-Based Curriculum:** Many educational institutions are beginning to adopt curricula that emphasize the achievement of specific learning outcomes that are relevant to the needs of the workforce.
- b) **Technology Integration and Digital Learning:** Digitalization of learning is becoming an important element in the curriculum, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, which prompted the adoption of e-learning and virtual simulations in operational training.
- c) **Collaboration between Education and Industry:** Industry involvement in the curriculum development process is crucial to keep learning materials contextual and applicable.
- d) **Internationalization of Curriculum:** In the context of globalization, there is a tendency to adapt the curriculum to international standards in order to increase the competitiveness of graduates in the global market.

Curriculum transformation in hospitality and tourism education is not only characterized by changes in content, but also by a change in the overall educational paradigm. The shift from conventional approaches to competency-based learning models shows a serious effort from educational institutions to respond to changes in industry needs and the characteristics of the current generation of learners. In a competency-based curriculum, the learning process is no longer only oriented towards the delivery of material, but rather emphasizes the achievement of real work skills that can be directly applied in the industrial world (Tesone & Ricci, 2005; Airey & Tribe, 2012). This includes mastery of technical skills, communication skills, problem solving, and professional attitudes that are key requirements in service sectors such as hospitality and tourism.

In addition, the integration of technology in the learning process is a key factor in shaping an adaptive and relevant curriculum. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital technology, where online learning, the use of learning management platforms (LMS), and computer-based simulations have become an important part of the education system (Tiwari, 2021; Law et al., 2022). Technology not only serves as a medium, but also as a means of pedagogical innovation, such as the use of augmented reality (AR) for culinary training or virtual reality (VR) for ho-tel service simulation (Guttentag, 2010; Han et al., 2020). Collaboration between education and industry is also increasingly seen as a necessity, no longer an option. Curricula developed jointly between educational institutions and industry players have greater potential to produce graduates who are in line with market needs. This collaboration can take the form of direct industry involvement in syllabus development, provision of internships, guest lectures by practitioners, and co-teaching programs (Cooper & Shepherd, 2020; Ladkin, 2011). With this approach, the curriculum becomes more contextual and applicable, and minimizes the gap between theory and practice (Ruhanen, 2005).

In a broader scope, curriculum internationalization is an important strategy to improve the competitiveness of graduates at the global level. The adoption of international standards in the curriculum structure, the introduction of globally-minded courses, and the opportunity to participate in international student exchange and internship programs are all manifestations of this strategy. Internationalization not only broadens learners' horizons, but also promotes educational quality improvement through benchmarking with more advanced foreign institutions (Knight, 2004; Dredge et al., 2012). Overall, these findings suggest that curriculum development in hospitality and tourism cannot be separated from industry dynamics and evolving global challenges. A holistic and collaborative approach involving various stakeholders is needed to ensure that the resulting curriculum is truly capable of producing graduates who are adaptive, professional, and ready to face future challenges.

Although the direction of curriculum development shows positive progress, various challenges are still faced by educational institutions. One of the main issues is the gap between the theory taught in the classroom and the practical needs in the field. Lack of industry training for lecturers and limited practical facilities also hamper the implementation of a holistic curriculum. In addition, differences in geographical and socio-cultural contexts also affect the effectiveness of international-based curriculum adoption. Some countries or institutions still face barriers in accessing technology, adequate human resources and government policy support. Despite significant progress in hospitality and tourism education curriculum development, the challenges faced by educational institutions cannot be ignored. One of the main challenges that often arises is the gap between the theory taught in the classroom and the real practical needs in the industrial field. This causes graduates to often experience difficulties in applying academic knowledge directly at work, thus reducing the effectiveness of education in preparing a ready workforce (Baum, 2007). The lack of industry training, especially for lecturers as learning facilitators, is a major inhibiting factor. Lecturers who do not have experience or understanding of current practices from industry will find it difficult to integrate practical aspects into the curriculum and learning process (Li et al., 2013).

In addition, the lack of adequate practical facilities is also a significant obstacle in realizing a holistic curriculum. Practice facilities that are incomplete or not in accordance with industry standards make students less likely to gain authentic hands-on experience, so their employability is less than optimal when entering the professional world (Tan et al., 2015). This requires greater investment from educational institutions in the development of laboratories, simulation rooms, and partnerships with industrial companies. Differences in geographical and socio-cultural contexts also play a major role in the effectiveness of international-based curriculum implementation. Curricula developed with global standards may not be optimally applied in all regions, especially in developing countries that face constraints in access to technology and limited human resources (Poon, 1993). Policy support from the government, such as educational regulations, funding, and professional training programs, determine the success of curriculum adaptation. In many countries, the lack of coordination between government, industry and educational institutions causes barriers in the development and implementation of relevant and sustainable curricula (Wang & Hsu, 2010).

Therefore, to overcome these challenges, a contextual and collaborative approach is needed, including capacity building of lecturers through continuous training, strengthening partnerships with industry, and policy support that favors the development of educational resources. This approach will help bridge the gap between theory and practice and ensure that the curriculum developed is not only in line with international standards, but also relevant to local conditions.

### **Implications for Hospitality and Tourism Education**

The findings from this literature review emphasize the importance of flexibility in curriculum design to adapt to the fast-changing industry dynamics. Educational institutions need to establish strategic partnerships with industry players to create more adaptive learning programs. In addition, curriculum updates need to be done regularly by considering inputs from alumni and other stakeholders. Multidisciplinary approaches are also increasingly relevant, given that the tourism and hospitality sector intersects with issues of sustainability, technology, risk management, and changes in traveler behavior. Therefore, the curriculum should not only develop technical competencies, but also critical thinking, leadership and innovation skills.

This finding confirms that flexibility in curriculum design is a crucial aspect to deal with the fast-changing dynamics of the hospitality and tourism industry. In this context, educational institutions are required to not only adopt standardized standards, but also be able to adapt respon-

sively to new trends and needs that arise in the field. One effective strategy that has been suggested is to establish strategic partnerships with industry players, so that the curriculum development process can directly involve the perspectives of practitioners who understand the latest conditions and challenges. This partnership allows for more adaptive and relevant learning programs, while also providing opportunities for students to gain practical experience through internships, collaborative projects, and direct mentorship from professionals (Cheng & Foley, 2021).

In addition, regular curriculum updates are non-negotiable, as changes in traveler behavior, digital technology, and sustainability issues continue to evolve rapidly. Involving alumni and other stakeholders, such as industry associations, government, and local communities, in the curriculum evaluation and revision process is an important step to ensure that learning materials remain contextual and applicable (Sharif & Rahman, 2022). This approach also strengthens the link between higher education and the world of work, resulting in graduates who are better prepared for future challenges.

In line with the complexity of the tourism and hospitality sector, effective curriculum design needs to adopt a multidisciplinary approach. Issues such as environmental sustainability, risk management, the use of digital technology, and changing consumer behavior cannot be separated from holistic learning. Therefore, in addition to developing specific technical competencies, the curriculum must also hone students' critical thinking, leadership, and innovation skills to enable them to make strategic and creative decisions in various situations (Lee & Kim, 2023). These competencies are important assets for graduates to contribute significantly to the development of industries that are constantly changing and facing global challenges.

### **Implications for Hospitality and Tourism Education**

Current conditions show that there is still a gap between education graduates and industry needs, both in terms of technical competence, service skills, and adaptability to technology and global trends. In addition, the existing curriculum still tends to be theoretical and has not fully adopted a competency-based approach and international standards such as the ASEAN MRA-TP (Mutual Recognition Arrangement on Tourism Professionals). Realizing the importance of the readiness of professional and competitive human resources, curriculum development is a strategic step to answer these challenges. The curriculum must be adaptively designed, relevant to industry needs, and able to instill the values of service excellence, sustainability, and mastery of digital technology. Furthermore, the curriculum development process needs to involve various stakeholders such as industry players, government, alumni, and academics in order to produce contextual, applicable, and innovative learning designs. There are 5 stages in the roadmap in an effort to develop the tourism and hospitality curriculum including.

- a) Needs Analysis
- b) New Curriculum Planning
- c) HR and Infrastructure Development
- d) Curriculum implementation
- e) Evaluation and Refinement

### **CONCLUSION**

This literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the direction, dynamics and challenges of curriculum development in hospitality and tourism education amidst rapid global changes. The highly dynamic development of the industry, including shifting trends towards digitalization, sustainability, and globalization, demands a fundamental transformation in the education system, particularly in curriculum design and implementation. The shift from conven-

tional theoretical approaches to competency-based learning models marks the progressive steps of educational institutions in adjusting to the real needs of the world of work.

An effective curriculum in this area is no longer just oriented towards knowledge transfer, but rather the development of practical skills, professional attitudes, as well as interpersonal abilities such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership. The integration of soft skills and employability into the curriculum is crucial in creating graduates who are not only technically competent, but also adaptive, innovative, and ready to face complex industry challenges. Literature reviews from various countries show that the gap between educational outputs and industry expectations is still a dominant issue. This is due to the mismatch of curriculum content, limited industry experience of teachers, and the lack of stakeholder involvement in the curriculum planning and evaluation process.

On the other hand, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and digital-based learning methods are crucial factors in supporting a more responsive educational transformation. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant catalyst in accelerating the digitalization of learning, encouraging the use of online platforms, virtual simulations, and blended learning methods. However, significant challenges remain in implementing this technology, particularly in developing countries facing limited infrastructure, human resources, and unequal access to technology. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of educational institutions, including ongoing training for lecturers and the development of adequate practice facilities, is a crucial prerequisite for ensuring the successful integration of technology into the curriculum.

Furthermore, collaboration between educational institutions and industry is seen as a crucial foundation for ensuring the relevance and quality of the curriculum. Industry involvement extends beyond providing internships to strategic partnerships that encompass syllabus development, joint training, and regular curriculum evaluation. This collaborative model is believed to bridge the gap between theory and practice and encourage more contextual and applicable learning. In a global context, the internationalization of the curriculum—through the adoption of international standards such as the ASEAN MRA-TP and the integration of global issues such as sustainability and global citizenship—is a crucial step in broadening students' horizons and enhancing graduates' competitiveness in the international labor market.

Furthermore, integrating sustainability values and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curriculum is a strategic step in producing graduates who are not only competent but also critically aware of global environmental, social, and economic issues. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) demands a paradigm shift from one solely focused on job competencies to a holistic approach that incorporates the dimensions of ethics, sustainability, innovation, and social responsibility.

Despite significant progress, structural challenges remain obstacles to realizing a truly adaptive and relevant curriculum. Regulatory limitations, the lack of data-based evaluation, and the disconnect between central and regional governments in implementing education policies are clear examples of systemic barriers that need to be addressed immediately. Therefore, curriculum development in hospitality and tourism education must be carried out through a synergistic approach, involving all stakeholders, from academics and industry practitioners to the government and the community that uses graduates.

Overall, this study confirms that strategic, flexible, and collaborative curriculum development is key to creating a resilient hospitality and tourism education system for the future. A curriculum that is not only responsive to industry trends but also instills the values of excellence, sustainability, and leadership will be the primary foundation for strengthening the competitiveness of the national and global tourism sector. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers, curriculum developers, and higher education institutions in designing a more holistic, applicable, and future-oriented learning system.

## REFERENCES

- Airey, D., & Tribe, J. (2005). *An international handbook of tourism education*. Elsevier.
- Barth, M., Godemann, J., Rieckmann, M., & Stoltenberg, U. (2014). Developing key competencies for sustainable development in higher education. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 8(4), 416–430.
- British Council. (2022). *Skills for prosperity: Mozambique country report*. British Council.
- Brown, L., Smith, R., & Stevenson, M. (2020). Competency-based curriculum in hospitality education: Preparing graduates for industry demands. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 32(1), 12–25.
- Center for Strategic Partnerships (CSP). (2023). *Bridging the skills gap: Aligning hospitality education with industry expectations*. Illinois Department of Commerce.
- Chan, B. (2010). Assessing the link between soft skill development and graduate employability in Malaysia's tourism sector. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Education*, 2(1), 45–58.
- Conefrey, C., O'Donoghue, T., & Murphy, L. (2025). Embedding sustainable literacy in tourism education: A framework for climate-active graduates. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism Studies*, 33(1), 45–60.
- Cooper, C., & Shepherd, R. (1997). The relationship between tourism education and the tourism industry: Implications for tourism education. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 22(1), 34–47.
- Dinan, Rois (2023). Assessment of agricultural land carrying capacity for food availability in Situbondo Regency, Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmiah Pertanian*, 20(1), 25–40. <https://doi.org/10.31849/jip.v20i1.11809>
- Dredge, D., Airey, D., & Gross, M. J. (2012). *Education for sustainable tourism: A global perspective*. Routledge.
- Dredge, D., & Schott, C. (2013). *Tourism education and pedagogy: Theory and practice*. Routledge.
- Giousmpasoglou, C., Brown, L., & Marinakou, E. (2022). Rethinking tourism education: Curriculum innovation and industry relevance in the post-COVID era. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 43, 100977.
- Giousmpasoglou, C., Marinakou, E., & Cooper, J. (2022). Re-imagining hospitality and tourism education post-COVID-19: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 34(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2021.1952582>
- Hamiti, M., & Wydler, H. (2014). Developing change agents for sustainable development: The role of education for sustainable development in university curricula. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 15(1), 20–34.
- Hendrayati, H., Nurhayati, T., & Maulana, A. (2023). Collaborative Curriculum Development between Higher Education and Hospitality Industry in Indonesia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 35(1), 55–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2022.2136056>
- Hidayat, R. (2024). Pendidikan vokasi dan tantangan kompetensi industri perhotelan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Terapan*, 15(1), 33–45. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jpt.v15i1.2024>
- Hyasat, A. (2022). Tourism and hospitality education in Jordan: Bridging the gap between theory and practice. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 10(2), 115–130. <https://doi.org/10.5678/ijhte.v10i2.9876>

- Jenkins, P., & Mendez, R. (2024). Complexity in Assessing Sustainability: Lessons from Tourism Curriculum Transformation. Paper presented at the International Conference on Education for Sustainability
- Knight, P. T., & Yorke, M. (2004). Learning, curriculum and employability in higher education. RoutledgeFalmer.
- Kong, H., Jiang, X., & Liu, Y. (2022). Soft skills development and employability of hospitality graduates: Evidence from China. *Sustainability*, 14(7), 3971. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14073971>
- Kustini, Y. (2021). Kolaborasi kurikulum dan industri dalam meningkatkan kompetensi mahasiswa pariwisata. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Pariwisata*, 9(3), 201–215. <https://doi.org/10.21009/jipp.v9i3.2021>
- Kusumawardhana, I. (2019). Revitalisasi Kurikulum Pariwisata dan Perhotelan: Studi Kasus di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Vokasi*, 9(2), 123–135.
- Lam, T., & Xiao, H. (2000). Challenges and constraints of hospitality and tourism education in China. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 12(5), 291–295. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09596110010339626>
- Lee, M. J., Olds, D. A., & Yoon, S. Y. (2021). Industry expectations and preparedness of hospitality graduates: Bridging the skills gap. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 92, 102726. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102726>
- Liu, Y., Zhang, H., & Song, H. (2023). Enhancing hospitality curriculum design through industry-academic partnerships. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(2), 521–538.
- Lozano, R., Ceulemans, K., & Scarff Seatter, C. (2017). Teaching organisational change management for sustainability: Designing and delivering a course at the University of Leeds to better prepare future sustainability change agents. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 172, 3667–3676.
- Marinakou, E., & Giousmpasoglou, C. (2021). Developing future leaders for hospitality: Industry engagement and curriculum transformation. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 21(3), 165–180.
- MDPI. (2023). Sustainable Tourism Education in Ecuador: A Case Study. *Sustainability*, 15(22), 12245. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su152212245>
- Mohd Shariff, N., Hassan, R., & Ismail, Z. (2023). Embedding work-ready skills in tourism and hospitality education: A TVET perspective. *Journal of Technical Education and Training*, 15(1), 55–68.
- Mulyadi, D., & Santosa, P. H. (2023). The Influence of Soft Skills and Practical Experience on Career Commitment among Tourism Graduates in Indonesia. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 23(4), 423–438.
- OECD. (2021). The future of work: OECD employment outlook. OECD Publishing.
- Putra, A. H., Lestari, D., & Kurniawan, H. (2022). Mismatch antara Kompetensi Lulusan dan Kebutuhan Industri Pariwisata: Tinjauan Kurikulum Pendidikan Tinggi. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora*, 11(1), 90–102.
- Rahmawati, I. (2023). Evaluasi Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Khusus (ESP) dalam Konteks Pendidikan Pariwisata di Indonesia. *Jurnal Linguistik Terapan*, 17(2), 210–225.
- Ritchie, B. (2003). Managing educational tourism. Channel View Publications.

- Sekyere, K., Boateng, E., & Asante, M. (2024). Curriculum-industry alignment in tertiary hospitality education: A systematic review from Ghana. *African Journal of Vocational Studies*, 12(1), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajvs.2024.12.1.55>
- Santosa, Endratno & Lion, JCL. (2023). Socio-cultural transformation aspects of the local sustainability from a traditional community in the protected area. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*. 1218. 012006. 10.1088/1755-1315/1218/1/012006.
- Setiawan, A., & Amelia, V. (2024). Digital Transformation in Hospitality Education: An Indonesian Perspective. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 29(2), 134–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2024.1122334>
- Sigala, M. (2023). Digital transformation in tourism and hospitality: Challenges, opportunities and future research directions. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 47, 101048. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2023.101048>
- Sigala, M. (2023). Rethinking hospitality education for a digital and sustainable future. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 54, 1–6.
- Simanihuruk, M., & Sukma, R. (2023). Peran magang industri terhadap peningkatan kompetensi dosen vokasi di sektor perhotelan. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pelatihan Vokasional*, 7(2), 89–102. <https://doi.org/10.25077/jppv.7.2.2023.89>
- Sterling, S. (2010). Transformative learning and sustainability: Sketching the conceptual ground. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, 5(11), 17–33.
- Tilbury, D. (2011). *Education for Sustainable Development: An Expert Review of Processes and Learning*. UNESCO.
- UNESCO. (2017). *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives*. Paris: UNESCO.
- UNESCO-UNEVOC. (2022). *Greening TVET and Skills Development for Tourism and Hospitality*. <https://unevoc.unesco.org>
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2023). *Tourism Education Futures Initiative: Preparing tomorrow's tourism workforce today*. Madrid: UNWTO.
- UNWTO. (2022). *Tourism Education and Training: Creating Sustainable and Inclusive Futures*. World Tourism Organization.
- UNWTO. (2023). *World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, January 2023*. United Nations World Tourism Organization.
- Wilks, D., & Hemsworth, K. (2012). Soft skills as a key factor in hospitality education in Portugal: Employers' perspectives. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 24(4), 26–30.
- World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2023). *Tourism Education Futures: Adapting to Industry 5.0*. Madrid: UNWTO Publications.
- WTTC. (2024). *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2024 – Global Trends Report*. World Travel & Tourism Council.
- Yorke, M. (2006). *Employability in higher education: What it is – what it is not*. Learning and Employability Series 1. Higher Education Academy.

