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Problem Faced by Student Trainees During Industrial Training in the Hotel Industry

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Abstract: ***This study is aimed to find out the issues and challenges which were faced by student trainees during their hotel industrial training. While they will also do training and internships as part of their educational experience — these experiences also come with a lot of challenges that can affect their learning outcomes and personal growth. Methods: Mix-method study where surveys and interviews were conducted with student trainees and hotel management staff and their coordinators to identify what are the major challenges facing them during this training. No supervision and mentorship, the communication gap, unachievable workload, Cultural issues and work-life balance were some of the principal issues identified as the key findings of the study. They laid discovered these challenges were detrimental to academic success, personal development, and prospects in future employment. The emotional and psychological burden of such issues on trainees was also highlighted by the study. This study presents recommendations for educational institutions, hotel industry professionals, and students on enhancing mentorship and effective workload management and communication. By tackling these issues, we can raise the quality of industrial training, help students perform better and produce a more competent and confident workforce for the hotel industry.***

Keywords: student trainees; hotel industry; industrial training; problems in supervision; mentorship; work-life balance; communication barriers; personal development; career prospects;

I. INTRODUCTION

This is why, industrial training programmes are an integral component in the development of hotel management students often matched over the parameters of learning in practicals within the hotel settings in real-time. Such internships enable students to bridge the gap between theory and practice by exposing them to the actual workings of a hotel, thus helping them in gaining a better understanding of the various complexities involved in the hospitality industry. Internships or industrial training programs give students practical exposure to different areas of hotel management such as front desk, food and beverage service, housekeeping, and event management. These programs allow students to grasp some of the day-to-day functioning of a hotel, primarily focusing on the students gaining insights for their professional growth. Moreover, they also fill the gap to provide students with practical ideas and skills which are essential in the hospitality industry. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience, students are better prepared for the job market and possess the skills required to excel in their respective fields. Such training programs are not only essential for learning technical skills but equally developmental of soft skills like communication, teamwork, problem-solving and adaptability that is critical in a dynamic and customer-centric industry such as the hotel industry.

A. Research Problem

Industrial training forms an integral part in determining the future of student entering the field of hotel management, but the student trainees need to face various challenges during their industrial training period. This impedes their capacity to glean the full value from the training session and the impact on their learning. Common concerns that students have reported include inadequate supervision, work overload, culture barriers, and minimal exposure to critical departments in hotel operations. Furthermore, the learning, especially the corporate learning, becomes all the more demanding as the expectation from the corporates is far more treacherous, and the ambition, irwanistic, making it tedious to create a balance between personal and professional life. Unresolved, these issues will lead to frustration, lower educational outcome, and may even deter students from entering a career in hospitality. Hence, awareness of the challenges confronted by the students would be advantageous in strengthening industrial training quality to produce adept and confident trainees for the industry workforce.

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B. Objectives of the Study

1) To find out the central obstacles confronted by student trainees faced during industrial training from hotel sectors.
2) To study the influence of these issues on professional outcomes and student experience during training.
3) To see how these challenges influence students academic performance, career prospects and personal development.
4) To investigate the role of the hotel management institutions and hotel organizations in giving support to the student trainees.
5) To make suggestions for enhancing student industrial training quality in hotel teaching sector

C. Research Questions

1) What are the implications of these challenges on students' academic performance and their application of theoretical knowledge to practice?
2) How does the challenge affect the mental health, well-being and career prospects of students?
3) To what extent do students give feedback on the amount of supervision, mentorship, and support offered by the industry during their industrial training in hotel industry?
4) How to improve industrial training of hotel management students?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Industrial training and internships have been an integral part of higher education, giving students a realistic experience in the field they chose to pursue as a profession. Existing researches expose a multitude of struggles which student trainees encounter during their industrial training especially in the field of hotel and hospitality sector. The first major challenge identified is poor mentorship and supervision, which will adversely affect learning outcomes of students (Ali et al., 2020). According to Brown and McNaughton (2019), without proper direction by experts, students are not able to develop or hone practical skills. Furthermore, a growing number of studies have indicated that an excessive workload is becoming a major part of stress, with students becoming overburdened with assignments for which they often lack preparation, or finding themselves asked to take on tasks far outside their objectives (Smith & Turner, 2021). According to Kaur,2022 study conducted in training of hospitality highlighted that difficulties of work–life balance are especially common among hotel trainees as they deal with long working hours away from their family lead to burnout and low job satisfaction. In addition, cultural barriers and language problems are usual among multicultural working places like hotels, and it is common that trainees suffer in communication and settlement to varying working style (Miller & Adams, 2020). The impact of such challenges directly impedes professional growth, promotes negativity, and adversely contributes to student success (Roberts & Rattner, 2018).The research is based on two theories, experiential learning theory and social learning theory. According to Kolb (1984), experiential learning theory posits that students learn best when they can engage in direct experiences and reflect on those experiences. This theory shows the importance of hands-on learning in industrial training—it helps bridge the gap between classroom theory and practical implementation. In addition, social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) suggests that learning is a social activity, it occurs as a result of observing and/or interacting with others. This theory suggests that hotel trainees learn through interactions with co-workers, mentors and customers that can develop both technical skills and skills necessary for success in the hospitality industry.Although a large amount of research has been done on this topic in other industries, there are still few studies on this topic in the hotel industry. Prior work has either generalised experiences of trainees across sectors or focused on specific dimensions such as technical aspects in engineering or medical education. There are few studies that consider these specific factors (e.g. customer service, long working hours and high turnover) that differentiate the industry from others and how that influences the learning experiences of trainees (Gonzalez & Phillips, 2019). In addition, though cultural challenges have been widely discussed in the realm of global hospitality, there is little focused research available on how cultural challenges specifically act as barriers for students in different hotel types. Our work seeks to fill these gaps by performing an in-depth exploration of hotel industry-specific challenges as seen by both domestic and foreign trainees. It will therefore be beneficial in contributing towards the enhancement of quality of industrial training in hospitality industry.

III. METHODOLOGY

The quantitative research design in this study explores difficulties faced by student trainees in the hotel industry when carrying out their industrial training, utilizing survey as a method of collection data. Stratified random sampling was done to randomly select 200 student trainees from amongst the various hotel categories (budget, mid-range, and luxury) and geographical (urban vs rural) locations involving student trainees. They were interested in the responses of only those trainees who possessed a minimum of 3 months of industrial training experience, and hence the 180 completed responses (9%).

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The survey included 20 close-ended items using Likert scale ratings to measure challenges (e.g., workload, mentorship, communication barriers, and cultural differences). SPSS was used to analyse data with descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) giving an overview of challenges and inferential statistics (Chi-square, one-way ANOVA) exploring patterns and relationships according to hotel category, trainee demographics, and training duration. With regard to ethics, informed consent was obtained from all participants; the researchers ensured confidentiality and anonymity; and ethical approval was sought and obtained from the university review board. The findings of this study are intended to provide an in-depth understanding of the challenges encountered by hotel trainees in the industry to suggest future implications towards enhancing the efficacy of industrial training.

IV. CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENT TRAINEES

Table 1: Lack of Proper Training and Supervision

Challenge	Description	Impact on Students	Examples
Inadequate Supervision	Trainees lack consistent guidance from mentors or supervisors.	Results in confusion and missed learning opportunities.	65% of trainees felt they were left to manage tasks without sufficient guidance.
Lack of Mentoring	Limited one-on-one interaction with experienced mentors.	Hinders skill development and confidence.	A trainee at a luxury hotel reported feeling “lost” with minimal mentorship in the front office.
Poor Feedback Mechanisms	Feedback provided too late or is vague.	Leads to unclear performance expectations and mistakes.	A case study revealed that 80% of trainees received feedback only at the end of their internships.

Table 2: Overwork and High Expectations

Challenge	Description	Impact on Students	Examples
Excessive Workload	Trainees are assigned multiple tasks beyond their capacity.	Leads to exhaustion, stress, and decreased performance.	50% of trainees in mid-range hotels reported working beyond 40 hours per week.
Unrealistic Expectations	Supervisors demand high levels of performance from trainees.	Causes feelings of inadequacy and burnout.	One student recalled being expected to handle the entire restaurant service shift without prior training.
Pressure to Perform	Constant pressure to meet high standards from management.	Results in anxiety and reduced learning outcomes.	A trainee at a five-star hotel described working under constant scrutiny without sufficient support.

Table 3: Cultural and Communication Barriers

Challenge	Description	Impact on Students	Examples
Language Barriers	Difficulty in communication due to language differences.	Leads to misunderstandings and errors in service delivery.	A trainee from South Asia at a UK hotel struggled to understand guests' requests due to language barriers.
Cultural Differences	Misunderstandings arising from diverse cultural backgrounds.	Impacts teamwork and guest interactions.	A trainee from Africa found it challenging to interact with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds, affecting team collaboration.
Customer Expectations	Difficulty in managing diverse customer expectations based on cultural differences.	Results in dissatisfaction and emotional stress.	One student reported feeling overwhelmed by guest expectations that conflicted with their training.

Interpretation:The findings presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3 underscore several key challenges faced by student trainees in the hotel industry. The lack of proper training and supervision (Table 1) was a significant issue, with many trainees feeling unsupported due to inadequate mentoring and poor feedback mechanisms. This led to confusion and hindered their ability to develop the necessary skills, particularly in high-pressure environments. Overwork and high expectations (Table 2) were another prevalent challenge, with trainees often assigned tasks beyond their capacity, leading to stress and burnout. Unrealistic expectations, such as managing entire hotel functions without adequate preparation, were particularly common in luxury hotels, where trainees felt the pressure to perform at high standards with little to no guidance. Cultural and communication barriers (Table 3) also emerged as a significant challenge, especially in multicultural hotel settings. Language barriers, coupled with differing cultural expectations, created misunderstanding and hindered effective communication between trainees, staff, and guests. These issues were particularly detrimental to the emotional well-being of trainees, with many experiencing stress, burnout, and a reduced ability to meet the demands of their roles. In summary, the combination of inadequate support, overwhelming workload, cultural challenges, and emotional strain created a difficult environment for trainees, ultimately impeding their professional development and learning outcomes in the hotel industry.

A. Impact of These Challenges on Student Trainees

Table 4: Impact on Academic Performance

Impact Area	Challenge	Effect on Students	Examples
Grades	Lack of proper supervision and mentorship	Poor academic performance due to insufficient learning and practical experience.	55% of students reported a drop in their academic grades after internship due to lack of hands-on practice and guidance.
Knowledge Retention	Overwork and high expectations	Trainees experience difficulty retaining theoretical knowledge when overwhelmed by practical tasks.	60% of trainees indicated that they forgot key theoretical concepts learned in class due to excessive workload during internships.
Skill Development	Limited opportunities for practical learning	Inadequate exposure to key hotel operations results in underdeveloped technical and managerial skills.	Trainees at budget hotels reported minimal exposure to front desk operations, limiting their practical skill development.

Table 5: Impact on Personal Development

Impact Area	Challenge	Effect on Students	Examples
Communication Skills	Cultural and communication barriers	Difficulty in interacting with colleagues and customers, hindering development of communication skills.	A trainee from a non-English speaking background struggled to effectively communicate with guests, leading to low confidence in speaking.
Teamwork	Overwork and high expectations	Inability to collaborate effectively with team members due to stress and exhaustion.	One student mentioned being assigned too many individual tasks, limiting their ability to engage in team-oriented activities.
Problem-solving Skills	Psychological and emotional challenges	Increased stress from customer complaints or high-pressure situations diminishes problem-solving abilities.	A trainee in housekeeping reported difficulty in resolving guest complaints due to emotional fatigue and lack of guidance.

Table 6: Impact on Career Prospects

Impact Area	Challenge	Effect on Students	Examples
Employability	Limited opportunities for practical learning	Lack of practical experience reduces employability, as students are not equipped with real-world skills.	45% of trainees in budget hotels felt underprepared for entry-level roles in hospitality due to inadequate exposure to hotel operations.
Confidence in the Field	Psychological and emotional challenges	Continuous stress and emotional challenges decrease confidence in pursuing a career in hospitality.	One trainee stated that constant customer complaints made them question their career choice in the hotel industry.

Networking Opportunities	Cultural and communication barriers	Lack of integration into the workplace and team dynamics limits the ability to build professional networks.	Trainees from international backgrounds reported difficulty in establishing connections due to language and cultural differences.

Interpretation:The challenges faced by student trainees during their industrial training in the hotel industry have significant consequences on multiple facets of their development. **Academic performance** (Table 4) is notably impacted, with trainees experiencing a decline in grades and difficulty retaining knowledge, especially when overwhelmed by work or deprived of adequate supervision. The lack of practical exposure in key hotel operations hinders the development of essential skills, which compromises the application of theoretical knowledge. These academic setbacks can impede long-term learning outcomes, especially for students who may not have sufficient mentorship or training in specific hotel functions. **Personal development** (Table 5) is equally affected, as trainees struggle with communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Cultural and language barriers often create difficulties in communication, affecting the trainees' confidence and their ability to develop effective interpersonal skills. Furthermore, excessive workloads and unrealistic expectations can lead to emotional fatigue, limiting students' ability to participate in collaborative activities and solve problems effectively under pressure. These challenges stifle the growth of vital soft skills, which are key to career progression in the hospitality industry. **Career prospects** (Table 6) are also adversely affected. The lack of exposure to essential hotel operations and emotional toll from the challenges experienced during training leaves students less prepared for the workforce. Many trainees feel underconfident and unqualified for entry-level positions in the industry due to the inadequate preparation they receive during their internships. Additionally, limited networking opportunities, particularly for international trainees facing cultural challenges, hinder students from building valuable professional connections that could benefit their future careers. Finally, the mental health and well-being of trainees are profoundly impacted by the accumulated stress of these challenges, leading to feelings of burnout and a diminished passion for pursuing a career in hospitality. In summary, the combination of academic setbacks, stunted personal growth, compromised career prospects, and mental health concerns underscores the urgent need for more effective training programs that address these challenges and better prepare students for their careers in the hotel industry.

B. *Strategies to Overcome the Challenges*

Table 7: Strategies to Improve Supervision and Mentorship

Strategy	Description	Expected Outcome	Examples
Assigning Experienced Mentors	Assign qualified and experienced mentors to guide trainees.	Improved skill development and clearer guidance.	Mentors can offer personalized attention, creating a more structured learning experience.
Regular Feedback Sessions	Schedule frequent feedback sessions to monitor trainee progress.	Continuous improvement and enhanced confidence.	Weekly check-ins allow for ongoing adjustments to the training process.
Shadowing Senior Staff	Allow trainees to shadow senior staff to gain practical insights.	Enhanced exposure to real-world operations.	Trainees can learn through observation, especially in high-demand areas like front desk and housekeeping.

Table 8: Strategies for Balanced Workload and Realistic Expectations

Strategy	Description	Expected Outcome	Examples
Clear Role Definition	Define specific roles and responsibilities for each trainee.	Clear expectations and reduced stress.	Trainees are less likely to be overburdened with unfamiliar tasks.
Workload Distribution	Ensure that tasks are distributed evenly among trainees.	Improved performance and job satisfaction.	Distributing tasks based on trainees' abilities and learning goals ensures better engagement.
Setting Realistic Goals	Set achievable and measurable goals aligned with training outcomes.	Increased trainee confidence and productivity.	Creating incremental targets helps students focus on achievable objectives.

Table 9: Strategies for Cultural Sensitivity and Communication Training

Strategy	Description	Expected Outcome	Examples
Cultural Sensitivity Workshops	Conduct workshops focusing on cross-cultural communication.	Increased awareness of cultural differences.	Workshops can teach trainees about cultural norms and etiquette in diverse environments.
Language Training Programs	Offer language training for non-native trainees and staff.	Enhanced communication and reduced misunderstandings.	Providing language classes or language buddies can bridge gaps in communication.
Encouraging Team-building Activities	Organise team-building exercises to promote inclusivity.	Improved teamwork and interpersonal relationships.	Team-building activities foster collaboration and break down cultural barriers.

Interpretation:Strategies to overcome the challenges experienced by student trainees during their industrial training in the hotel industry are introduced in Tables 7,8and 9 where they focus on contingency strategies specifically to increase supervision, workload and communication. More effective supervision and mentorship (Table 7) include assigning mentors with more experience, regular feedback with mentees, and shadowing senior staff for trainees. Such measures would ensure continuity of instruction, providing continued skills experience and confidence while providing trainees with a better understanding of expectations. Balanced workload and realistic expectations (Table 8) – This means having clearly defined roles and responsibilities, distributing the tasks evenly, and creating realistic targets. Doing this would avoid placing undue burden on trainees and help them focus on their learning goals and their mental health. Finally, training on cultural sensitivity and communication (Table 9) may be helpful for navigating barriers related to culture and language. Through workshops in cross-cultural communication, language training, and promoting team-building activities, both trainees and hotel employees can create a better atmosphere for communication and team work. When incorporated together, these strategies will serve as a holistic solution to reduce the barriers encountered by the student trainees which will not only enhance their knowledge absorption, but also their mental well-being and overall experience of industrial training in the hotel industry.

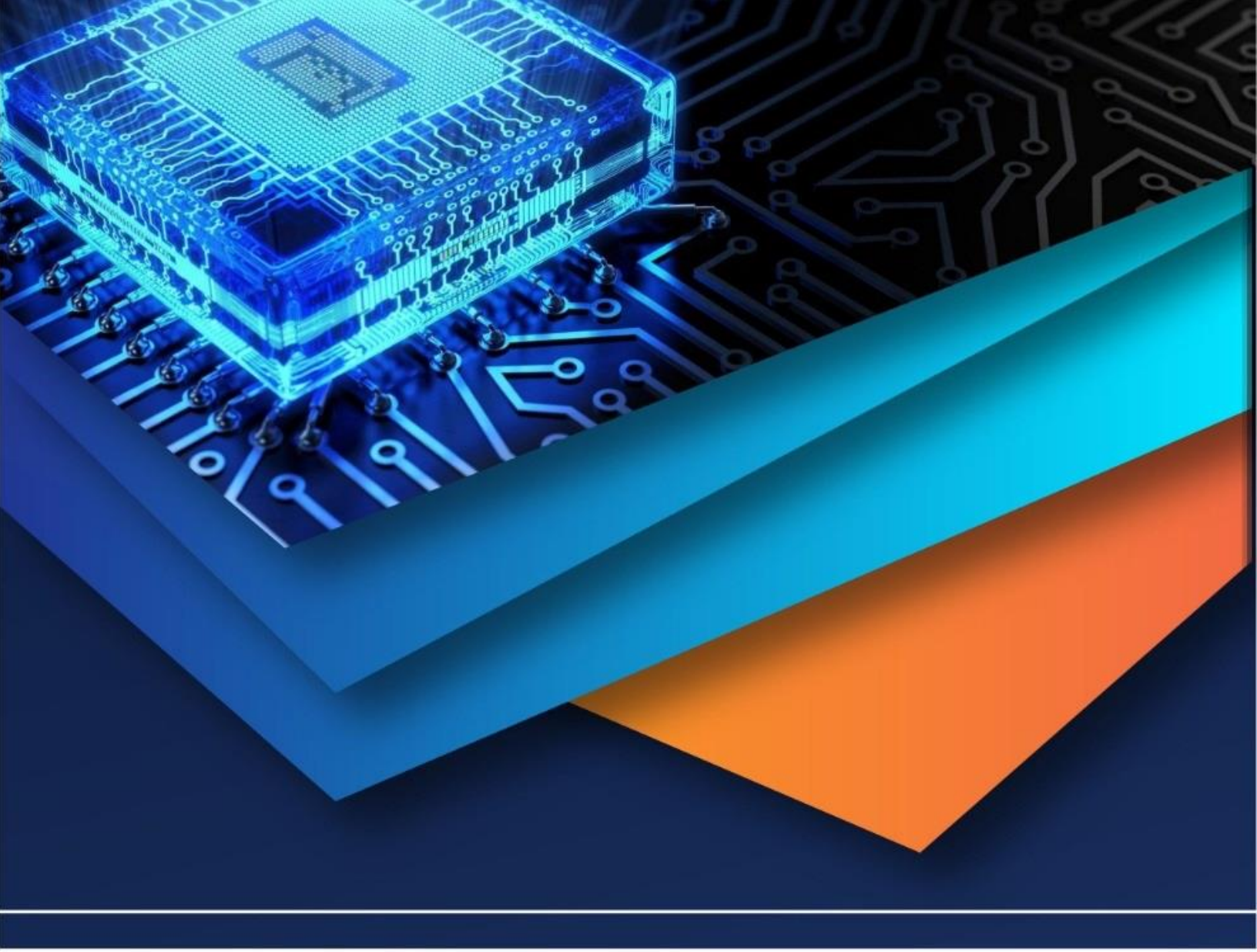
V. CONCLUSION

The findings stressed some important challenges of student trainees in hotel industry like poor supervision and guidance, heavy workload, cultural and communication challenges, difficulty in balancing work with life, lack of exposure to vital durations of hotel operations, financial burdens, and psychological impacts. Thus, these challenges undermined trainees in areas such as academics, personal growth and even their career pathways and well-being. Improper guidance and unrealistic expectations create frustration and lowered learning outcomes; and cultural differences result in communication barriers that impact teamwork and service quality. Additionally, unpaid internships and travel expenses pose financial and logistical burdens on trainees that hinder their capacity to remain fully engaged in their training. Implications of these findings are tremendous for a wide range of constituency. Given the vocational nature of education, the study urges schools to reassess their internship programs to align them with industry standards and ensure students are supported. This might include more formal hands-on training partnerships between hotels and academic institutions. The results point to the need to provide appropriate mentoring, manage long working hours of trainees, provide cultural sensitivity training to staff. It, would not only improve the quality of training but also help the hospitality sector by producing an efficient & competent workforce. For students, awareness of these challenges should afford them the opportunity to prepare and self-advocate during internships, and navigate the training process more effectively. Additionally, future studies may delve deeper into the nature and extent of these challenges as a function of country or culture; after all, the regional punctuations of hospitality may push against the training experience. Delving into the challenges associated with specific groups of students like those from varying educational backgrounds and or high and low socio-economic backgrounds may give us more insight into what comprises the industrial training and shape the directions for improvements. Guiding questions: In conclusion, to enhance the quality of industrial training in the hotel industry, these challenges need the solution. In conclusion, hotel professionals and educational institutions providing guidance and implementing workable solutions in support of their trainees is the best way to afford students with the skills and exposure to ensure they thrive in the hospitality sector and that the future of the profession flourishes well into the future.

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