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2018

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Mazhinye, Rudo (2018) A critical investigation into the vocational curriculum alignment to the needs of industry: a case of the National Certificate (vocational) hospitality studies at a technical and vocational education and training college in Gauteng, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, https://hdl.handle.net/10539/26955

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A Critical Investigation into the Vocational Curriculum Alignment to the Needs of Industry: A Case of National Certificate (Vocational) Hospitality Studies at a Technical and Vocational Education and Training College in Gauteng

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ABSTRACT

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August 2018

Abstract

The National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)) hospitality studies qualification in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges is an aspect entrenched in the NC(V) policy documents in order to produce a skilled labour force for a sustainable economy. Its main purpose is to enable the students to attain the imperative theoretical knowledge, practical skills, applied competence and understanding required for employment or entrance into higher education. The primary purpose of this research was to investigate whether the current NC(V) hospitality studies curriculum in TVET colleges meets the requirements of industry. The interviews were used to explore; the perceptions of employers in the hospitality industry on the work readiness of the NC(V) graduates, the NC(V) graduates' and the lecturers' views on whether the type of training offered align to the needs of industry. The findings from document analysis were used to corroborate the findings in the interviews. The study has found out that graduates exit college without the basic practical hands-on skills and the soft skills that are deemed to be critical if they are to be employable. Hospitality services National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 2 – 4 practical activities were found to be insufficiently offered as compared to the theoretical aspects even if the Learning Outcomes (LOs) in the Subject Guidelines (SGs) for the subject are heavily laden with practical oriented learning outcomes. This revealed an undisputed need for the inclusion of both current practical and theoretical knowledge within the NC(V) hospitality studies qualification so that the graduates are in possession of contemporary and relevant skills to gain employment and transferable skills to traverse the labour market, thereby maintaining their employment. Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) was found to be missing within the curriculum, and it was recommended that WIL with credits be made a part and parcel of training as it would help in the attainment of both the hard- and the soft-skills that students would not acquire in college. The study established that due to the dual professional nature of TVET lecturers, it is difficult for colleges to employ fully qualified lecturers who are in possession of both the trades and the proper vocational pedagogical training coupled with current and relevant industrial experience needed for the implementation of any vocational curriculum. A lack of training resources was found to be one of the impeding factors in the implementation of this curriculum. Partnerships were illuminated as one aspect that could help colleges build a vocational curriculum that aligns to the needs of industry. The NC(V) hospitality curriculum has also been found to be outdated and lagging behind the ever changing world of technology. In vocational programmes this can be a warning sign for the end of that programme and the institution that offers it.