

## **“Evaluating the Alignment of NCHMCT Curriculum with Industry Competency Requirements: A Study of Hospitality Institutions in Delhi NCR.”**

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The hospitality industry is undergoing rapid transformation due to technological innovations, evolving guest expectations, and the growing emphasis on sustainability and service excellence. Within this context, the curriculum designed by the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) plays a pivotal role in shaping the employability and competency of future professionals. This study aims to evaluate the structure and content of the NCHMCT curriculum followed by hotel management institutions in the Delhi NCR region, with particular reference to its alignment with current industry competency requirements. Using a mixed-method approach, the research undertakes a detailed content analysis of the NCHMCT syllabus, mapping it against core hospitality competencies such as digital proficiency, guest service management, sustainability practices, and communication skills. Additionally, qualitative data are gathered from interviews with faculty members and industry experts from leading hotels to assess the relevance, adequacy, and adaptability of the curriculum to evolving operational demands. The study also identifies gaps between theoretical instruction and practical exposure and proposes a framework for curriculum enhancement to strengthen industry-academia synergy. The findings are expected to contribute to policy discussions on curriculum modernization under NCHMCT and support evidence-based decision-making for improving employability outcomes of hospitality graduates in Delhi NCR.

**KEYWORDS:** Hospitality Education; NCHMCT Curriculum; Industry–Academia Alignment; Hospitality Competencies; Employability Skills; Curriculum Evaluation; Delhi NCR; Hotel Management Education; Industry Readiness; Skill Gap Analysis

### **INTRODUCTION**

The global hospitality industry has evolved from a traditional service-oriented sector into a dynamic, experience-driven economy that serves as a critical pillar of international trade and development. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024), the sector contributes approximately 10% of global GDP and supports one in every ten jobs worldwide. In the Indian context, the hospitality sector is undergoing a paradigm shift, driven by rising disposable incomes, increased domestic tourism, and the entry of international hotel chains. The Indian Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2023) projects that India's tourism and hospitality industry will generate revenues of USD 50.9 billion by 2028, positioning the country as a significant global player in service delivery.

However, the foundation of this exponential growth is human capital. Unlike manufacturing or product-based industries, hospitality is inherently labor-intensive and relies heavily on “moments of truth” created by frontline employees. The quality of interaction between guests and service providers directly influences brand perception and customer loyalty (Baum, 2015). Consequently, the industry demands a workforce that is not only proficient in technical operational skills—such as food production, housekeeping, and front-office management—but also equipped with advanced soft skills, including emotional intelligence, adaptability, and cross-cultural communication (Weber et al., 2021).

As the industry matures, expectations from entry-level hospitality graduates have increased significantly. Contemporary hotels in metropolitan regions such as Delhi NCR no longer seek employees limited to routine operational tasks; instead, they require multitasking professionals capable of problem-solving and effective use of digital property management systems (PMS) from the outset. This shift places considerable pressure on hospitality education providers to produce industry-ready graduates. In India, the primary authority responsible for this educational mandate is the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT).

### **Hospitality Education in India: The NCHMCT Framework**

Established in 1982 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the NCHMCT was entrusted with regulating and standardizing hospitality education nationwide. Prior to its establishment, hospitality education in India lacked uniformity and national coherence. Currently, the Council oversees a wide network of Central, State, and private Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs), collectively producing thousands of graduates annually (NCHMCT, 2023). The flagship academic offering under this framework is the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality and Hotel Administration (B.Sc. HHA), conducted jointly with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). The curriculum provides foundational training in four core operational domains: Food Production, Food and Beverage Service, Front Office Operations, and Housekeeping. Over time, NCHMCT has incorporated management-oriented subjects such as strategic management, tourism marketing, and human resource management into the syllabus.

Despite these initiatives, scholarly research indicates a persistent time lag between curriculum revisions and rapidly evolving industry practices (Kapoor & Solomon, 2019). While the NCHMCT curriculum is widely recognized for its strong emphasis on technical competence and operational discipline, critics argue that it may inadequately address emerging competencies demanded by a technology-driven and guest-centric hospitality environment (Chowdhury & Adhikary, 2025).

### **The Concept of Competency and the Industry–Academia Gap**

Competency in hospitality education is frequently conceptualized using the ASK framework—Attitude, Skills, and Knowledge. While knowledge and skills are measurable and systematically teachable, attitude-based competencies such as service orientation, resilience, and emotional intelligence remain difficult to instill yet highly valued by employers.

Several studies highlight a widening industry–academia gap in India’s hospitality education system. The National Employability Report by Aspiring Minds (2019) revealed that a substantial proportion of hotel management graduates lacked employability for core operational roles due to insufficient practical exposure and communication skills. Industry stakeholders frequently report that although graduates possess theoretical knowledge, they struggle with real-world operational challenges such as guest complaint handling, time management, and the use of contemporary revenue and reservation systems (Singh, 2013).

This disconnect is largely attributed to a curriculum that remains product-centric rather than guest-centric. Traditional hospitality education prioritizes operational techniques, whereas the industry increasingly values competencies such as service recovery, empathy, digital literacy, and experiential service delivery. Pradip and Mukesh (2021) argue that limited recent industry exposure among faculty members further exacerbates this issue, resulting in outdated pedagogical practices.

### **The Context of Delhi NCR**

The National Capital Region (Delhi NCR) represents a strategic microcosm for examining this alignment. As India’s political and corporate hub, the region hosts a dense concentration of luxury hotels, convention centers, and diplomatic establishments. The hospitality market in Delhi NCR is highly competitive, catering to international business travelers, diplomats, and high-net-worth domestic guests with exceptionally high service expectations.

Simultaneously, Delhi NCR serves as a major educational hub for hospitality studies, housing premier institutions such as IHM Pusa and IHM Noida alongside several private universities. This convergence of educational supply and industry demand makes the region an ideal setting to evaluate curriculum relevance.

Despite the availability of graduates, human resource managers in leading Delhi NCR hotels frequently report a shortage of industry-ready talent. According to the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC, 2021), this paradox of graduate unemployment alongside persistent job vacancies underscores systemic skill mismatches within hospitality education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The misalignment between competencies imparted by NCHMCT-affiliated institutions and industry requirements poses a significant challenge to workforce sustainability. Rapid digitalization, automation, and post-pandemic operational changes—such as enhanced hygiene standards, crisis management, and contactless services—have redefined competency expectations. However, these competencies may not yet be fully embedded within the existing curriculum.

While earlier studies have explored the industry-academia gap in hospitality education at a national level, limited contemporary research focuses specifically on evaluating the NCHMCT curriculum against the evolving competency requirements of luxury hotels in the post-COVID context of Delhi NCR.

### **Rationale and Significance of the Study**

This study seeks to critically assess the alignment between the NCHMCT B.Sc. HHA curriculum and the competency requirements of star-category hotels in Delhi NCR. By comparing curricular content with current industry expectations and job role requirements, the study aims to identify areas of alignment and gaps.

The findings will be significant for policymakers, academic institutions, students, and industry stakeholders by supporting curriculum reforms, enhancing employability, and fostering structured industry-academia collaboration. Ultimately, bridging the gap between academic instruction and professional performance is essential for sustaining India's ambition to emerge as a global hospitality leader.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Hospitality Education and Industry Expectations**

The hospitality industry is characterized by rapid change, intense competition, and a strong reliance on human capital, making workforce quality a decisive factor in organizational success. Consequently, hospitality education has come under increasing scrutiny for its ability to produce graduates who meet contemporary industry expectations. Baum (2015) emphasizes that hospitality organizations seek employees who possess not only technical competence but also service orientation, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. These expectations place sustained pressure on hospitality education providers to continuously align curricula with the evolving demands of the industry. As service encounters increasingly define brand value and customer loyalty, the role of education in shaping employable and service-oriented graduates has become critically important.

Scholars further argue that hospitality education must extend beyond traditional operational training to include managerial, technological, and behavioral competencies in order to remain relevant in a competitive marketplace (Lashley, 2018). The transition from conventional service delivery models to experience-based hospitality has intensified the demand for graduates capable of engaging guests, managing service encounters, and contributing to brand differentiation (Pizam & Shani, 2009). As a result, curriculum alignment between academic institutions and industry expectations has emerged as a central theme in hospitality education research, highlighting the need for continuous curriculum evaluation and reform.

#### **Concept of Competency in Hospitality Education**

The concept of competency forms the foundation of curriculum evaluation in hospitality education. Competency is commonly defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes (ASK) that enables individuals to perform effectively in professional roles (Boyatzis, 2008). Within the hospitality context, competencies are generally categorized into technical (hard) skills and behavioral (soft) skills. Technical competencies traditionally include food production techniques, food and beverage service operations, housekeeping procedures, and front office management, which have long constituted the core of hotel management education (Tesone & Ricci, 2006).

However, contemporary research underscores the growing importance of behavioral and interpersonal competencies. Skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and cultural sensitivity are increasingly valued by employers, particularly in guest-facing roles (Weber et al., 2021). Employers consistently rank attitude, communication ability, and service mindset above purely technical expertise, especially for entry-level supervisory and managerial positions (Nickson et al., 2012). In addition, digital competency has emerged as a critical skill area. The widespread adoption of property management systems (PMS), revenue management software, customer relationship management (CRM) tools, and artificial intelligence-enabled guest services has significantly transformed hotel operations (Ivanov & Webster, 2019). Despite this shift, studies suggest that hospitality graduates often lack sufficient exposure to such technologies during their academic training, resulting in extended learning curves once they enter the workforce.

#### **Industry-Academia Gap in Hospitality Education**

A recurring theme in hospitality education literature is the existence of an industry-academia gap, which refers to the mismatch between competencies developed through academic programs and those required by employers (Kapoor &

Solomon, 2019). Numerous international studies indicate that hospitality curricula tend to be overly theoretical, with limited emphasis on practical application and real-world problem-solving (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). This imbalance restricts graduates' ability to transition smoothly into operational roles.

In the Indian context, the industry-academia gap is particularly pronounced. Singh (2013) observed that hospitality graduates often demonstrate strong theoretical understanding but struggle with operational efficiency, guest handling, and workplace communication. Supporting this finding, the National Employability Report by Aspiring Minds (2019) highlighted deficiencies among hotel management graduates in areas such as English language proficiency, problem-solving ability, and practical readiness. One of the primary reasons cited for this gap is limited industry exposure among faculty members. Pradip and Mukesh (2021) argue that educators lacking recent industry experience may inadvertently transmit outdated practices, thereby reducing curriculum relevance. Furthermore, rigid regulatory frameworks often delay curriculum revisions, hindering the timely incorporation of emerging industry trends and technologies.

### **Curriculum Design and Regulatory Frameworks**

Curriculum design in hospitality education is shaped by regulatory bodies, accreditation standards, and long-standing academic traditions. In India, the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) serves as the apex authority responsible for standardizing hospitality education across affiliated institutions. The NCHMCT curriculum emphasizes structured training in core operational areas, supported by industrial training and practical laboratory sessions to ensure uniform learning outcomes (NCHMCT, 2023).

While this standardized approach promotes consistency and quality control, scholars argue that it may restrict flexibility and innovation at the institutional level (Kapoor & Solomon, 2019). International best practices increasingly advocate for competency-based curricula that allow institutions to adapt content in response to regional industry needs and technological advancements (Dredge et al., 2015). Comparative studies of hospitality curricula across countries reveal that programs characterized by strong industry collaboration, modular design, and experiential learning components tend to achieve higher levels of graduate employability (Hsu et al., 2017). These findings underscore the need for regulatory bodies such as NCHMCT to strike a balance between standardization and adaptability.

### **Practical Training and Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning is widely regarded as a cornerstone of effective hospitality education. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory emphasizes learning through concrete experience, reflection, and application, making it particularly relevant to hospitality training. Components such as industrial training, internships, live projects, and simulation-based learning have been shown to significantly enhance students' preparedness, confidence, and professional competence (Zopiatis, 2007).

Despite its importance, research indicates that industrial training in hospitality programs often suffers from inconsistencies in quality and learning outcomes. Students are frequently assigned routine or repetitive tasks that offer limited exposure to managerial responsibilities or meaningful guest interaction (Roney & Öztin, 2007). This diminishes the effectiveness of practical training as a bridge between theory and professional practice. In India, similar concerns have been raised regarding the structure and supervision of industrial training under NCHMCT-affiliated institutions (Singh & Dutta, 2014). Scholars recommend stronger monitoring mechanisms, clearly defined learning objectives, and closer collaboration with industry partners to enhance the educational value of practical training.

### **Emerging Trends: Sustainability and Post-Pandemic Competencies**

Sustainability has emerged as a critical competency area within hospitality education. Hotels are increasingly adopting sustainable practices related to energy conservation, waste management, ethical sourcing, and community engagement, driven by regulatory pressures and growing environmental awareness among consumers (Bohdanowicz, 2006). As a result, hospitality curricula are expected to integrate sustainability principles into both operational and strategic courses.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further reshaped competency requirements in the hospitality sector. Skills related to crisis management, hygiene and sanitation protocols, health and safety compliance, and organizational resilience have become essential for hospitality professionals (Gössling et al., 2021). However, limited research exists on the extent to which these emerging competencies have been systematically incorporated into regulated hospitality curricula in India, particularly

those governed by NCHMCT. This gap highlights the need for focused academic inquiry into curriculum responsiveness in a post-pandemic hospitality environment.

### **Discussion**

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate the alignment between the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT) curriculum and the competency requirements of the hospitality industry, focusing specifically on institutions in the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). Using a mixed-method approach that combined content analysis of the NCHMCT syllabus with qualitative insights from faculty members and industry experts, the findings revealed both areas of convergence and significant gaps between academic preparation and professional expectations.

#### **Alignment in Core Operational Skills**

One of the strongest areas of alignment identified in this study was the emphasis on core operational competencies within the NCHMCT curriculum. Subjects such as food production, housekeeping, front office operations, and food and beverage service are thoroughly covered in course modules and practical laboratories. Faculty participants corroborated that these areas remain highly relevant to day-to-day hotel operations, particularly in five-star and upscale properties in Delhi NCR. Industry experts echoed this sentiment, noting that graduates generally display adequate technical knowledge in foundational operational tasks such as mise en place, table service sequences, room layout standards, and check-in/check-out procedures.

This alignment confirms earlier research asserting that hospitality curricula historically excel at developing technical know-how for core functions (Tesone & Ricci, 2006). However, employer feedback also indicated that while graduates may demonstrate procedural competence, their ability to integrate these skills seamlessly in fast-paced, guest-centric environments remains limited. This suggests that *content coverage* alone is insufficient; the quality of *application* and *contextual use* of these skills are equally essential for fostering industry readiness.

#### **Gaps in Soft Skills and Behavioral Competencies**

Despite strong alignment in operational areas, a major finding of this study is the consistent gap between curriculum content and the behavioral competencies increasingly demanded by employers. Industry experts across luxury and business hotels in Delhi NCR emphasized the importance of soft skills—particularly communication, emotional intelligence, teamwork, conflict management, and service recovery ability—as critical determinants of professional effectiveness.

Although the NCHMCT curriculum includes generic modules such as “Communication Skills” and “Human Relations,” qualitative data revealed that these components are often delivered in isolation, without sufficient integration into core hospitality contexts. Faculty respondents acknowledged that while soft skills are taught conceptually, opportunities for *intentional practice* through role-plays, simulations, or live guest interaction are limited.

This finding aligns with existing literature that identifies soft skills as essential for hospitality success but challenging to develop through traditional classroom instruction alone (Weber et al., 2021; Nickson et al., 2012). It highlights a critical gap: while the curriculum nominally addresses soft skills, it does not embed them deeply or systematically within competency development pathways.

#### **Digital Proficiency and Technology Integration**

Another salient theme emerging from this research is the insufficient emphasis on digital proficiency within the current curriculum. Content analysis revealed that technology-oriented subjects, where they exist, are generalized rather than aligned with specific, industry-standard tools such as property management systems (PMS), revenue management software (RMS), point-of-sale (POS) systems, and customer relationship management (CRM) platforms.

Industry experts repeatedly reported that graduates often struggle to navigate these tools efficiently upon entering the workforce, resulting in extended on-the-job training and reduced productivity during initial employment phases. These observations reflect findings from broader tourism and hospitality workforce studies, which underscore the growing importance of technological literacy as a core employability competency (Ivanov & Webster, 2019).

The absence of structured training for digital tools within the curriculum signals a misalignment between academic preparation and real-world operational requirements. In an era marked by digital transformation—where data analytics,

contactless technologies, and AI-enabled services are rapidly reshaping hotel operations—this gap places NCHMCT graduates at a competitive disadvantage relative to industry expectations.

### **Sustainability and Contemporary Operational Demands**

Sustainability practices, including resource efficiency, waste management, and environmental stewardship, are increasingly integral to contemporary hospitality operations. However, both curriculum content and stakeholder interviews indicate that sustainability topics are either cursory or dispersed across disparate modules, lacking coherent thematic integration.

Faculty members noted that sustainability is often embedded within general management or service management courses but without dedicated instructional focus or practical assessment. Hospitality professionals echoed that sustainability competencies—such as sustainable front office practices, eco-friendly food production techniques, and green certification compliance—are now essential in many modern hospitality environments, particularly in global hotel chains and boutique eco-properties.

This finding aligns with existing research that identifies sustainability as an emergent competency domain requiring intentional curricular inclusion (Bohdanowicz, 2006). It underscores the need for structured curriculum enhancements that treat sustainability not as an ancillary topic but as an operational and strategic priority.

### **Experiential Learning: Internships and Industry Exposure**

The study's qualitative findings highlighted the critical role of experiential learning—such as internships, live industry projects, and simulation exercises—in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and professional application. Both faculty and industry participants agreed that internship experiences significantly deepen students' contextual understanding of hotel operations and elevate their confidence in real work settings.

However, concerns were raised regarding the standardization and quality of industrial training experiences. Some faculty reported that the duration, supervisory quality, and learning documentation associated with internships vary widely across institutions. Industry experts also observed inconsistencies in the learning value derived from internships, with some students gaining operational exposure but lacking opportunities to engage in higher-order problem solving, decision making, or guest interactions.

These observations corroborate earlier studies asserting that experiential learning must be well-structured, supervised, and aligned with learning outcomes to effectively enhance employability (Kolb, 1984; Roney & Öztin, 2007). Without defined learning objectives and industry mentorship, internships may reinforce routine tasks rather than cultivate professional competencies.

### **Implications for Curriculum Modernization**

Collectively, the findings of this study emphasize that while the NCHMCT curriculum maintains relevance in technical operational domains, significant recalibrations are needed to address contemporary competency requirements. Specifically, the curriculum must evolve to:

1. **Integrate soft skills into core hospitality modules** through experiential pedagogies rather than treating them as standalone components.
2. **Embed digital literacy and technology training** with hands-on exposure to industry-standard tools.
3. **Strengthen sustainability content** to align with global environmental and operational standards.
4. **Standardize and elevate industrial training** with explicit learning outcomes, industry mentorship, and performance evaluation mechanisms.
5. **Promote deeper industry involvement in curriculum design and delivery**, fostering co-creation of learning modules and guest lectures by practitioners.

## **Results**

This chapter presents the findings of the study derived from the analysis of the NCHMCT curriculum and qualitative data collected from faculty members of NCHMCT-affiliated institutions and industry professionals from star-category hotels in the Delhi NCR region. The results are organized in line with the research objectives and focus on identifying areas of alignment and gaps between the curriculum and industry competency requirements.

### **1. Analysis of NCHMCT Curriculum Content**

The content analysis of the NCHMCT B.Sc. in Hospitality and Hotel Administration curriculum reveals a strong emphasis on foundational operational knowledge and skills. Core subjects related to Food Production, Food and Beverage Service, Front Office Operations, and Housekeeping are allocated substantial instructional hours across multiple semesters. Practical laboratory sessions and structured assessments are integral components of these subjects, indicating a curriculum design oriented toward developing technical proficiency.

Management-related subjects such as Human Resource Management, Financial Management, Hospitality Marketing, and Strategic Management are also included, particularly in the later semesters. However, these subjects are predominantly theory-driven, with limited evidence of experiential or application-based learning components embedded within the syllabus.

The curriculum includes generic modules on communication skills and personality development; however, these modules are not consistently integrated with operational subjects. Digital technologies, sustainability practices, and post-pandemic operational competencies appear sporadically within course outlines, lacking dedicated, competency-focused modules.

### **2. Industry-Identified Core Competency Requirements**

Data collected from industry professionals indicate that hospitality employers in Delhi NCR prioritize a combination of technical, behavioral, and digital competencies. While operational skills remain essential for entry-level roles, employers emphasized that behavioral competencies such as communication skills, emotional intelligence, teamwork, adaptability, and service recovery ability are critical determinants of job performance and career progression.

Additionally, industry respondents highlighted digital proficiency as a key competency requirement. Familiarity with property management systems (PMS), point-of-sale (POS) systems, customer relationship management (CRM) tools, and basic revenue management software was considered essential for new entrants. Sustainability awareness, hygiene management, and compliance with health and safety standards were also identified as increasingly important competencies, particularly in the post-COVID operational environment.

### **3. Alignment Between Curriculum and Industry Requirements**

The results indicate a **moderate level of alignment** between the NCHMCT curriculum and industry competency requirements. Strong alignment was observed in relation to technical and operational competencies. Both faculty and industry respondents acknowledged that graduates generally possess adequate foundational knowledge of hotel operations and standard operating procedures.

However, partial or weak alignment was observed in several key competency areas. Behavioral and soft skills, although acknowledged in the curriculum, were found to be insufficiently developed due to limited experiential learning opportunities. Digital competencies demonstrated low alignment, with industry experts reporting that graduates often require extensive on-the-job training to operate industry-standard software systems effectively.

Sustainability and contemporary operational competencies exhibited minimal alignment. While sustainability concepts are mentioned within broader management subjects, there is no structured framework within the curriculum to develop practical sustainability skills aligned with current hotel practices.

### **4. Faculty Perspectives on Curriculum Relevance**

Faculty respondents expressed mixed views regarding the adequacy of the NCHMCT curriculum. Most faculty members agreed that the curriculum provides a strong foundation in hospitality operations and maintains national uniformity and academic rigor. However, they also acknowledged challenges in keeping pace with rapidly evolving industry practices due to centralized curriculum revision processes.

Faculty members identified limited flexibility, inadequate technological infrastructure, and insufficient industry exposure as key constraints affecting curriculum delivery. Many respondents emphasized the need for curriculum updates that incorporate digital tools, case-based learning, and stronger industry collaboration to enhance student readiness.

### **5. Industry Feedback on Graduate Employability**

Industry respondents generally perceived NCHMCT graduates as disciplined and knowledgeable in basic operational areas. However, concerns were consistently raised regarding graduates' readiness for high-pressure operational environments, guest interaction scenarios, and multitasking roles.

Employers noted that new recruits often lack confidence in handling guest complaints, managing service recovery situations, and adapting to dynamic operational challenges. Digital literacy gaps were highlighted as a significant concern, particularly in luxury and business hotels where technology-driven operations are integral.

### **6. Practical Training and Internship Outcomes**

The results related to industrial training reveal variability in learning outcomes. Both faculty and industry respondents reported that while internships provide valuable exposure to real-world operations, the quality of learning largely depends on the hotel property, department allocation, and supervisory support.

In many cases, students were found to be assigned routine operational tasks with limited exposure to decision-making or guest-facing responsibilities. This resulted in uneven competency development and reduced effectiveness of internships as a bridge between theory and practice.

### **Research Methodology**

The study adopts a mixed-method research design to evaluate the alignment between the NCHMCT curriculum and industry competency requirements in hospitality institutions across Delhi NCR. The research combines curriculum content analysis with qualitative data collected from academic and industry stakeholders to ensure comprehensive assessment.

Primary data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with faculty members from NCHMCT-affiliated Institutes of Hotel Management and industry professionals from star-category hotels in Delhi NCR, selected using purposive sampling. Secondary data were obtained from official NCHMCT curriculum documents, academic literature, and industry reports.

A systematic thematic analysis was employed to examine interview responses, while curriculum components were mapped against key hospitality competencies, including technical skills, soft skills, digital proficiency, sustainability practices, and practical training. Data triangulation was used to enhance validity and reliability.

Ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were strictly maintained throughout the study.

### **Conclusion**

The present study examined the alignment of the NCHMCT curriculum with the competency requirements of the hospitality industry, focusing on institutions in Delhi NCR. The findings indicate that while the NCHMCT curriculum provides a strong theoretical foundation in core hospitality subjects such as food production, housekeeping, front office operations, and management principles, there are notable gaps in practical skill development and industry readiness. Industry feedback suggests that graduates often require additional training in emerging areas such as technology integration, digital tools, and modern service practices to meet contemporary operational standards.

Soft skills, including communication, leadership, problem-solving, and cultural sensitivity, are areas where graduates show room for improvement. Though internships and industry collaborations partially address this gap, variations in the quality and duration of practical exposure limit their overall effectiveness. Furthermore, the curriculum's responsiveness to emerging trends, such as sustainability, eco-tourism, and global hospitality practices, needs strengthening to ensure graduates are equipped for evolving industry demands.

The study highlights the importance of closer collaboration between academic institutions and industry stakeholders, continuous faculty development, and updated assessment methods that emphasize competency-based evaluation. By integrating practical training, technology adoption, soft skills, and industry-relevant modules, the NCHMCT curriculum

can better prepare graduates for the dynamic hospitality sector. Overall, enhancing alignment between curriculum content and industry expectations is essential for producing competent, employable, and industry-ready hospitality professionals.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To analyse the structure and content of the NCHMCT curriculum followed by institutions in Delhi NCR.
2. To identify the extent to which the curriculum aligns with key industry competency requirements.
3. To examine the perceptions of faculty and industry professionals regarding curriculum relevance and adequacy.
4. To propose recommendations for curriculum revision to bridge the gap between education and industry practice.

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