Relevance of Virtual Learning in Hospitality Sector "A research in Marriott group of Hotels"

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ABSTRACT

The success or failure of modern business organizations depends on the quality of their human resources. Well-trained and highly developed employees are considered as a cornerstone for such success due to pandemics as it created a lot of chaos in the industry due to complete lockdown. Virtual learning is a learning experience that is enhanced through utilizing computers and/or the internet both outside and inside the facilities of the organization.

Literature Review uncovers the presence of GAP primarily in the area of Analysing and exploring the impact of specific variables which might affect Learning Evaluation and their effect on performance and productivity which are all based on respondent's perceptions and attitudes while filling the questionnaires. The study is descriptive with the purpose to investigate the relationship between the Micro modules in Virtual learning and how they impact employee's performance and productivity, how their skills grow up with the virtual learning. It also explains the relevance of self-paced learning for skill up-gradation of employees in the hospitality sector particularly for Marriott hotels located in Delhi and NCR, analysis and interpretations made as a part of the study concluded that Virtual learnings are essential to employee performance.

Therefore, it was recommended that effective virtual learning programs and micro-module carefully set learning plans should be provided to all employees to enable them to enhance their skills and upgrade their knowledge.

Keywords: Virtual Learning, Employees, Performance, Productivity, Hotels

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I- Introduction

Present organizations are confronting extensive competition, persistently changing technological and business environments. Virtual learning is a learning experience that is enhanced through utilizing computers and/or the internet both outside and inside the facilities of the organization. Among many advantages you will find virtual learnings are great for employees, Employees who have the online learning they need to do their jobs effectively are more confident in the workplace. They are also more satisfied with the organization as a whole and are less likely to leave. Gone are the days when guests were happy just receiving "Please" and "thank you" or getting service with a smile. Although those go into the recipe for proper etiquette, It's just not enough. Satisfied customers are looking for a memorable experience and dynamic service where it counts. From receiving quick service to bending the standard practices. It remains our responsibility to understand how we can better connect with every individual and then provide online learnings to retain the staff and it will also help the organization to cost-saving and benefit the employees as Time-saving and can be accessed from anywhere and anytime around the globe. They will receive these small virtual learnings on an online platform on their accounts and will be specifically for their job roles. It will also enhance the skills of the employee which leads to growth in their career. When the employee skill increases, they lead to Guest Satisfaction and helps the organization to grow more and earn more profits.

II - Literature Review

The relevance of virtual learning covers that how important it can be in the hospitality industry. Small modules of virtual learning can help the employees to understand the guests better than what they expect and how their satisfaction can be increased alongside growth in personal career and enhancing own personal skills. Literature Review uncovers the presence of many papers we have studied.

Vishnu Narayanan.V, 2004 states that This study envisages the need of eLearning in hospitality and tourism in Indian subcontinent and how it open new avenues for the people, their understanding and perception of new technological development in hospitality and tourism domain.

Benckendorff P, 2007 quoting that Generation Y employees do devote a large part of their working week to paid employment and that employees recognize that this may be interfering with their work. Contradicted by Cantoni, Kalbaska N., 2009 explains that This research has assessed the presence of eLearning courses in the hospitality and tourism fields, classifying existing online courses according to their providers in four different groups: academic, corporate, destination management organization, and independent but fails different research strategies could be adopted to provide maps with finer granularity

Tsong-Zen Liu, 2015 shows that their paper study shows the influence of E-learning in the Hospitality management perceived behaviours, satisfaction and continuance intentions. The findings of this study showed that students' continuance intention of e-learning was strongly determined by satisfaction and confirmation of the learning management system (LMS).

Mohammed R., 2016 states that their paper study shows support findings from a large number of reviewed research papers reveal that learning and development have a positive relationship and a strong positive impact on employee's performance and productivity.

Nair, Revi and George, Babu P., 2016 quotes that issues and challenges in the adoption of e- learning in hospitality education, with special reference to Singapore. Hospitality being a 'high-touch' profession and many hospitality related skills being largely intangible, there has been significant industry resistance in technology adoption.

Nair R., Babu P., 2017 emphasises that in his paper Students, industry professionals, and hospitality instructors interviewed by us believed that there is still a place for traditional face-to-face instruction in hospitality, despite all the promises given by the technologies.

Through these research papers, it can be concluded that employees need to be fully trained to increase their efficiency. Various factors determine employee satisfaction. It can be made out from the papers that the measurement of study variables and their effect on performance are all based on respondents' perceptions and attitudes while taking the learning sessions.

There needs to be a better understanding between online learning variables and what influences employee satisfaction. so, would like to go beyond it and explore the unexplored part to an extent.

III - Research Methodology

A-RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is virtual learning important in the hospitality sector?
2. What are the factors on which virtual learning depends?
3. Does virtual learning help the employee to increase their skills and customize the learning according to their job role or designation?
4. Does virtual learning impact employee skills and performance and are they remotely accessible?

B-Objectives

- This paper intends to highlight the importance of virtual learning
- To explore the factors influencing skill enhancement in virtual learning.

C-Analytical Framework
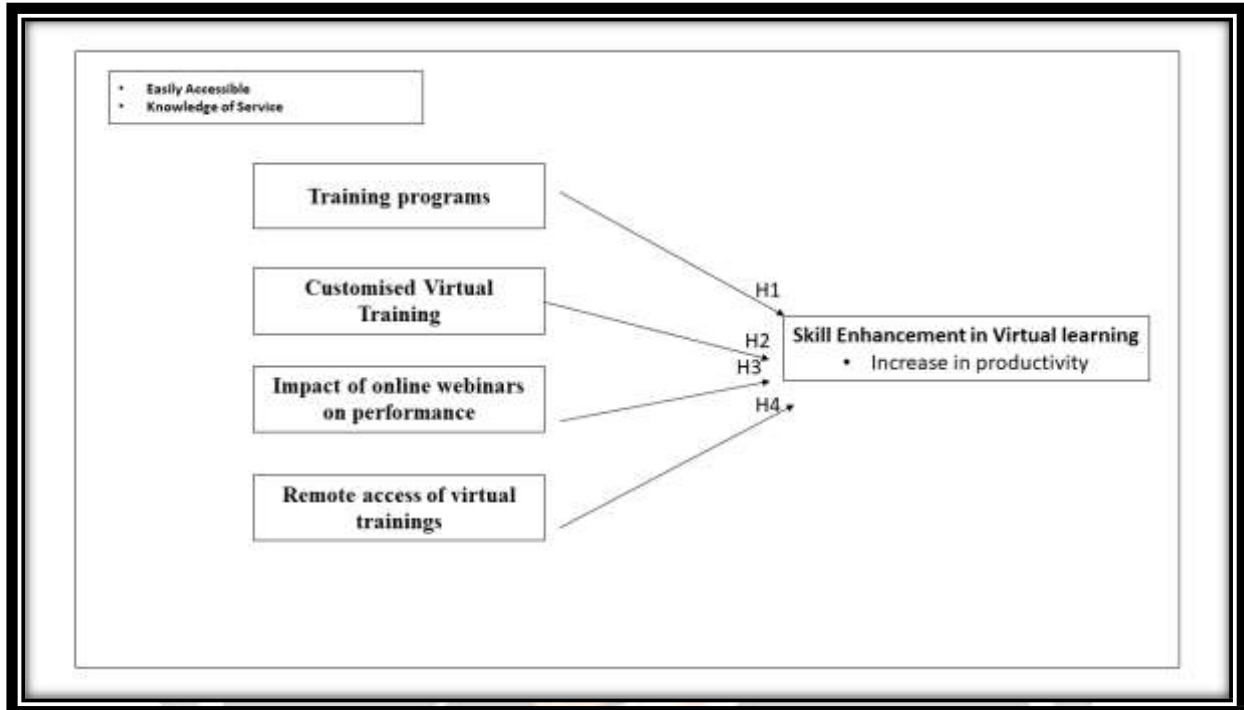
D - Data & Variables

The data collection method used for this study is primary source- A questionnaire, which is made on google forms and floated individually on social media platforms. The questionnaire was sent to 150 respondents out of which 130 responded. After cleaning the data126 responses were left. To check the reliability of the data Cronbach's Alpha test is used and then to check the relation between the variables correlation and regression are used. With the help of SPSS, the data is statistically calculated.

Variables are explained below:

Learnings Programs: Lorenzo Cantoni, 2009, Online Learnings stands out to be an independent variable. It means the learnings over the Internet. It is often referred to as virtual learning. It is a kind of distance learning for which you don't need any physical learning room or Trainer, Videos are recorded and uploaded on the server and There exists a very strong relationship between the online learnings and employee productivity and skill enhancement.

Customized Virtual Learning: These are the small sessions or small recorded videos specifically for some particular topic. They generally help the employees in their day-to-day tasks and more on the basics of the department that which are being revised for every employee after a certain period, so that employee regains the ability.

Impact of Online Webinars on performance: A webinar is an event held virtually which is attended exclusively by an online audience and they can ask questions from the industry experts and get clarity on their problems or the questions they asked. These webinars or workshops can help the employees to rethink and work on the situations on which earlier they were lacking and that will also satisfy the employee.

Remote access of Virtual Learning: Benckendorff P, 2007, Online virtual learnings can be accessed from anywhere around the globe and available for 24*7*365. It can be accessed according to the availability of the employee.

Employee Satisfaction: M. Laškarin Ažić, 2017, Employee satisfaction can be determined by the frequency of good feedbacks he/she gets from the guest. This will show that the employee had worked on the skills and the areas in which they were lacking, which they knew, and after that, to work on it they took the virtual

learnings.

E - Expert Interview

The interview was done with the 4 leaders of the core department in Hotels which are Kitchen, Front Office, Housekeeping, and Food & Beverage Service. They started with the bottom level employees like those who are under the supervisor level, they straight away come to them and ask to open the portal, what they understood from their behavior is that they don't want to use technology and be simple as it is. Then come middle-level and top- level employees, review for them is very good even they ask for more virtual learnings and online webinars. According to the leaders after the online learnings or the online webinars, they took their assessment and it is done based on their work style and after a month, a change in their work style and behavior leads to the results. So what they figure out is that virtual learning have a positive impact on the employees, and major workforce is Bottom level (under supervisory Level) they are not that tech savy that's the reason they deny for virtual learning otherwise some of them have gone for virtual learning modules and there was a positive change in the employees behaviour and their knowledge. At the end we can all state that virtual learning is important as it has positive impact on employees.

F-HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Based on the review of the literature and considering rational views following hypothesis were formulated:

H1: There exists a Correlation between learning programs and skill enhancement in virtual learning.

H2: There exists a Correlation between Customised Virtual Learning and Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning

H3: There exists a Correlation between the impact of Online webinars and Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning.

H4. There exists a Correlation between remote access of virtual learnings and Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning.

IV - Data Interpretation and Analysis

Table – 1 Conversion of Likert scale in numerical scale

A Likert scale is used to know the skill enhancement in virtual learning in the hospitality sector. The responses gathered from the questionnaire are then changed into the numerical scale (Table -1)

Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	2
Neutral	3
Agree	4
Strongly Agree	5

Table - 2 Descriptive Statistics

Mean	30.43650794
Standard Error	0.539075756
Median	30
Mode	34
Standard Deviation	6.051110353
Sample Variance	36.61593651
Kurtosis	-0.749370899
Skewness	0.227061185
Range	24
Minimum	21

Maximum	45
Sum	3835
Count	126
Confidence Level (95.0%)	1.066897825

The above chart states that the average age in our data is 30, the median is also 30, and the Highest frequency is 34. For the Kurtosis, the normal value is 3 and is recognized as mesokurtic but we have negative kurtosis which is -0.75 so it is platykurtic and for the skewness, if it is less than -1 or greater than 1, the distribution is highly skewed, if skewness is between -1 and

0.5 and 1, the distribution is moderately skewed. If skewness is between -0.5 and 0.5, the distribution is approximately symmetric and the skewness in our data is 0.25 so for the age variable data is symmetrical.

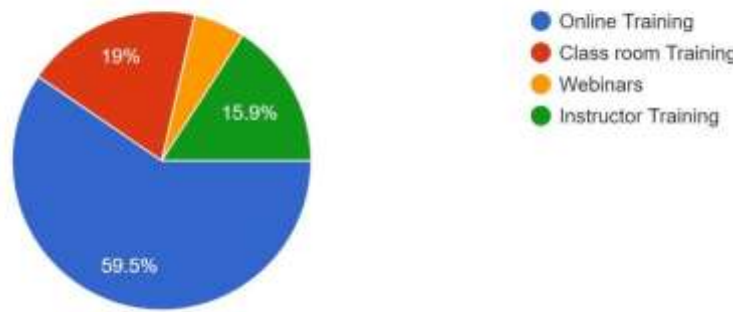What kind of Training programes you think which gives you more experience ?
126 responses

Figure – 1

The above figure shows that Online learning gives more experience.

Table -3 Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.885	5

Cronbach's Alpha value should be above 0.7 for the data to be considered reliable, so in our above table – the value is 0.885 which states that data is reliable.

Table -4

Correlations between Learning programs and Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning

		Learning Programs	Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning
Learning Programs	Pearson Correlation	1	.531**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning	Pearson Correlation	.531**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation values always range between -1(strong negative relationship) and +1 (Strong positive relationship). In the above table correlation between Learning Programs and Skill enhancement in Virtual Learning is .531 which states that there is a positive moderate relationship.

Table – 5

Correlations between Skill enhancement and Customized virtual learning

		Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning	Customized Virtual Learning
Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning	Pearson Correlation	1	.692**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
Customised Virtual Learning	Pearson Correlation	.692**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the above table correlation between Customized virtual learning and Skill enhancement in virtual learning is .692 which states a good positive relationship between them, which means Customized virtual Learnings are effective for skill enhancement in virtual learning.

Table - 6

Correlations between Skill enhancement in virtual Learning and Online Webinar performance

		Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning	Online Webinar Performance
Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning	Pearson Correlation	1	.718**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
Online Webinar Performance	Pearson Correlation	.718**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In the above table, we can see the correlation between online webinar performance and skill enhancement in virtual learning is .718 which is highly relatable between them. That means Online webinars are more powerful in skill enhancement in virtual learning.

Table – 7

Correlations between Skill enhancement in virtual Learning and Accessibility in Virtual Learning

		Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning	Accessibility in Virtual learning
Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning	**Pearson Correlation**	1	.619**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	126	126
Accessibility in Virtual learning	**Pearson Correlation**	.619**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	126	126

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The above table shows the correlation between Accessibility in virtual learning and Skill enhancement in virtual learning is .619 which states a good relationship between them. That means accessibility is also a very important component and helps the employees to enhance their skills.

Regression

Table -8

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. An error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.803a	.645	.634	.586	1.779

a. Predictors: (Constant), Online Webinar performance, Learning Programmes,

Customized Virtual learning, Accessibility in Virtual learning

b. Dependent Variable: Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning

In the above model summary, our adjusted R square is .634 or 63.4% which means our independent variables can appreciably predict the movement of the dependent variable.
The Durbin-Watson test value should be near 2 which means that there is no autocorrelation detected in the sample. So, the value in our table 1.779 that states that there is no autocorrelation.

Table - 9

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	75.685	4	18.921	55.046	.000b
	Residual	41.592	121	.344		
	Total	117.278	125			

a. Dependent Variable: Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning

b. Predictors: (Constant), Online Webinar performance, Learning Programmes, Customized

Virtual learning, Accessibility in Virtual learning

Table – 10

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.003	.344		-.010	.992
	Learning Programmes	.251	.092	.193	2.713	.008
	Accessibility in Virtual learning	-.094	.135	-.079	-.697	.487
	Customized Virtual learning	.399	.122	.367	3.281	.001
	Online Webinar performance	.433	.062	.472	6.973	.000

a.   Dependent Variable: Skill Enhancement in Virtual Learning

Overall, the model is a good fit, and all the criteria for running regression are met.

V - Discussion & Difference

After the statistics as per the data collected and have done the telephonic interview with their bosses and they told that after every learning they get assessed for it. As per the questionnaire filled by the employees and after the interview with their bosses, they told that at the very starting employees were not comfortable with virtual learning but with time they were getting used to it now. Online webinars have impacted their performance very positively but some of the employees were found with some problems as well but overall virtual learnings are helping the employees in enhancing their skills and performance.

They can give incentives to the employees to make them more involved in virtual learning. Employees should be given targets that they have to complete on a particular number of hours and they have to do some selected learnings every year, which should be mentioned in their scorecard.

VI - Conclusion

The research has accessed the presence of relevance of virtual learning in the hospitality sector. The research used qualitative-quantitative methodology to tackle the research goals presented above in the objectives. Still, some of the employees have the perception that only taking physical learning is important. Here we have found new variable which are customized virtual learning is very important because we can not give common information but we need to provide our employees with the relevant knowledge of their department so that's why the learning should be customized according to the need of the departments. And second is Impact of online webinars on performance so in that we can see these are kind of online group discussions and ask their queries more openly rather than in Offline mode due to the fear of what others will think and even now adays Sars-Coivd-19 pandemic is there so there is always a risk of getting infected whether it is employee or Guest and in Hospitality guest is treated as god, So to keep the safety in mind everyone should have Virtual learning and virtual webinars and it will save the So many costs (Electricity cost, Maintenance cost, Training cost etc). SO Those who are at the bottom level think that because of a lack of knowledge of the technology they are not able to access online learning. Employees at the middle and top-level have very good feedback about virtual learning as they can understand and listen to the trainer effectively. After this study, it is seen that a maximum number of employees have shown their interest in online webinars as they can understand more from them. It can be concluded that virtual learning helps the employee to enhance their skills and they are interested in virtual learning.

Customized virtual learnings are important for the employees because for every designation learning can be different so that no other employee have to work on those learnings which are not necessary or needed at that point of time for them. Learnings will be scheduled in chronological order so that employees can learn step by step. Overall, it can be concluded that virtual learning in the hospitality sector is much relevant.

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