

**Exploring the Management of the Practical Component in the Hospitality National
Certificate Vocational Programme at a TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal**

By

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DECLARATION OF THE STUDY

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I declare that the dissertation entitled *Exploring the management of the practical component in the Hospitality National Certificate Vocational programme at a TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal* is my own original work. All sources consulted and cited in this study have been appropriately acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the accepted academic conventions.

I, further declare that no artificial intelligence tools were used to generate the conceptual content, arguments, analysis or interpretation presented in this dissertation. The intellectual work, including the development of ideas, construction of arguments, analysis of data and conclusions drawn, was undertaken solely by the researcher. Limited use of digital language-support tools, including Grammarly, was made for spelling, grammar and language refinement purposes. In addition, artificial intelligence-assisted tools were used only to assist in identifying areas where arguments required strengthening or clarification; such tools did not generate, rewrite or contribute substantive academic content.

I also declare that this dissertation has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for any degree or examination at this or any other institution of higher learning.



Signature: _____

Date: 24 February 2026

DEDICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is profoundly and humbly dedicated to the enduring memory of my late mother, Fikile Iris Ngcobo, whose spirit of resilience and quiet strength remains my most enduring source of inspiration. Though she is no longer physically present, her beliefs in the transformative power of education continues to guide my scholarly pursuits. It is my deepest regret that she did not live to witness the completion of this work, yet it is my fervent hope that this achievement honours her legacy and sacrifices she made.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored how TVET lecturers manage the practical component of the Hospitality National Certificate (Vocational) programme at selected TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The exploration was motivated by persistent concerns about the disconnection between theoretical instruction and practical training in vocational education, and the implications this has for graduate competence and employability. Given the centrality of practical training in Hospitality education, the study sought to examine how practical components are implemented, assessed, and supported within TVET institutions.

A qualitative research approach was adopted within an interpretivist paradigm, using an exploratory case study design. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with eight (8) purposively selected participants, comprising Hospitality senior lecturers and Heads of Department from selected campuses offering the Hospitality programme. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants had direct experience in managing and implementing the practical component. The data were analysed thematically to identify patterns related to the management, delivery, and assessment of practical training.

The findings revealed that, although lecturers recognise the importance of practical training in developing vocational competence, its effective implementation is constrained by systemic and institutional challenges. These include limited resources, inadequate training facilities, time pressures and assessment practices that prioritise compliance over authentic skill development. Lecturers employed adaptive strategies to mitigate these challenges; however, such practices were largely informal and unsustainable. The study concluded that strengthened institutional support, improved resourcing and closer alignment between theory, practice and assessment are essential for enhancing graduate work readiness within the TVET Hospitality programme.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
FET	Further Education and Training
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
ICASS	Internal Continuous Assessment
ISAT	Integrated Summative Assessment Task
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAT	Practical Assessment Task
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
VET	Vocational Education and Training

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Context and Background

There is widespread belief that Vocational Education and Training (VET) is most suitable to provide citizens with the middle-level skills needed in the country to drive the socially responsive and industry-led economic growth strategies (OECD, 2009). The proliferation of VET programs has been associated with the conception that the middle-skill occupations are declining relative to high and low-skill positions. In part, this is often attributed to the use of computers to automate routine tasks undertaken in middle-skill positions, as well as expanding globalisation and eroded minimum wage (Lerman, 2017, p.182). In other countries such as Bangladesh, the government aimed at attaining middle-income positions in 2024 through means of Technical Vocational Education and Training programs (Alam et al., 2023). By this, they recognised the potential that this sector could bring to the economic progress that would sustain employability by creating a skilled workforce that would ensure that the labour force rate grows (Asian Development Bank, 2015). However, in the South African context, Sibiya & Nyembezi (2018) pointed out that VET programs have didactic prospects that could improve the country's economic growth due to the increase in skilled workers. The confidence that ascribed to the potencies of this sector was not always mirrored by practice. Recent studies in 2025 and 2026 such as Street, Sikaka, & Baard (2025) still affirm to these existing discrepancies.

It is evident from these predictions that in South Africa (SA), the VET is intertwined with aspirations for economic development at one end and the need to empower the people with relevant skills to meet the ever-increasing demand for innovativeness at the workplace at the other end. Given the well-known historical background of 'toxic exclusion' such as delaying or denying (at worst) access to the structures of opportunity for a significant segment of the country's population, it should not be surprising that in present-day SA, the gap between policy ambitions for expanding participation and/or acquiring access to the industry to complete the practical training aspect is yawning. When considering the mileage of reforms that were covered within SA's democratic dispensation, this outcome is disappointing. In real terms, efforts made to open the 'doors of learning' as espoused in the Freedom Charter¹ helped with 'theoretical learning'. Levers that could

¹ A foundational document that was signed by the progressive forces in 1955.

help agents in the VET sector to open the doors for ‘practical learning’ wider for those students who are studying, so that they can acquire relevant skills, remain concealed. The concealment of pathways for accessing industry training tarnishes the ideal of completing the course of study expected of students. Whereas the task of simplifying what occurs as complex partnerships between the post-school education sector and industry is ongoing. In the meantime, we are ethically bound to evaluate ways by which the practical component can be assessed to free the students to make informed progress on other relevant outcomes.

This research study is based on understanding ways in which the assessment of the practical component of Hospitality in SA’s Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges is managed. The National Certificate Vocational (NCV) was introduced in Technical Vocational Training (TVET) (formerly known as Further Education and Training (FET)) with effect from January 2007. As the country approaches the second decade from this commencement date, it is imperative to assess if college-industry partnerships have been firmly established. This outcome may affect the student assessments and graduations negatively. From inception, the NCV programmes were identified as a priority to address what was conceived as skills deficits in the South African economy (HRDC, 2014). Notwithstanding the status accorded to this certificate, the progress between its conceiving, developing, and implementing is suspected as rushed and haphazard. As if it were an afterthought. According to Mabunda and Frick (2020), the NCV curriculum was disseminated after a relatively short development phase in 2006 and successively made operational in January 2007. Ngidi (2022) further asserts that the implementation of the NCV Curriculum was targeted to address issues of scarce skills. Ideally, the NCV qualification should prepare students with the necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills applicable to the modern industries and/or contemporary opportunities in the emerging patterns of available work.

Politically speaking, the widening gap of the VET across racial lines in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) came through difficult years of resisting unequal provisioning of education. It came after the 1976 Soweto uprising. At the time of transition from apartheid’s draconian policies, 123 technical colleges were already established by 1990, albeit segregated along racial lines. The majority of these, 67 were reserved for Whites whose population was approximated only 10% (3% for Indians, 8% Coloured groups). However, there were only 45 colleges that catered for the Africans who constituted close to 80% of the population (TVET Sector Review, 1992). In the post-

1994 period this middle-level post-school pathway was not given priority. At least, not in the immediate years following the democratic transition, as a result, many colleges were closed. However, as time progressed, this mistake was corrected. Legislatively, TVET colleges are managed in terms of the FET College Act 16 of 2006, which confers the responsibility for the registration of students, provision, and delivery of the curriculum, as well as assessment to the public college. This Act emphasises that all colleges must provide quality education and training in all qualifications. This qualification is designed to give students who have passed Grade 9 an opportunity to do vocational subjects.

In keeping with the vision of expanding VET, the Department of Education (DoE) developed a learning programme called NCV which was intended to be an alternative to finishing the National Senior Certificate (NSC) (DoE, 2007). It was anticipated that the NCV programme would take three years to be completed, which is broken down to NQF levels 2, 3 and 4. In some respect, this meandered for three years in the TVET controversy that led to nowhere and was rather viewed as unjust, or as some political maneuvering to keep young people longer in training with the view to massage the worrisome statistics on the NEET [Not in education, employment, or training] phenomenon. The NCV qualification is split into theoretical and practical components. The practical component can either take place in a simulation room, workshops, or a real workplace environment. However, at this stage long-lasting and meaningful partnerships with the industry have been firmly established. And this has given rise to the despondency that NCV qualifications do not assist students to make the espoused transition from educational training to employment. Nonetheless, the 2023 guidelines for Internal Continuous Assessment (ICASS) insist that there must be two learning components for the NCV programme, consisting of a practical and theory division, which was designed to be implemented in a ratio of 60% and 40% respectively.

The practical section was intended to prepare students adequately with key knowledge areas that would equip them for the Integrated Summative Assessment Task (ISAT) and skills which are required in the workplace. In the NCV curriculum, the hope for adult youth's employability was placed on the practical component. In keeping with the public image, Allais (2017²) argued that,

² Allais, S. (2017). Towards measuring the economic value of higher education: lessons from South Africa. *Comparative Education*, 53(1), 147-163.

in the first place, work experience is gained through doing work. In modern times, paid work has become the means through which individuals earn a living through employment. Buthelezi (2018) promoted the idea that the most relevant skills needed to be developed was to make the human labour ready for the field of work. As such, TVET Colleges must contribute significantly to the skill needs of a country. In building a strong case for the relevance of this sector, it is often argued that in countries such as the Republic of Korea, TVET Colleges were able to improve on the vocational skills needs of that country (Maclean and Lai, 2011). This required careful thinking around the curriculum and the vocational subjects offered. They must be seen as having a connection with the world of work. Interestingly, the pressure about proper preparedness for work is imposed on the supply side to find appropriate assessment methods to be in place as a way of guiding the management of how students' readiness is measured. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013) described the assessment as a way of informing how students were progressing by making informed decisions that helped both lecturers and students to identify strengths and weaknesses.

Furthermore, the National Certificate (Vocational) assessment guidelines list various methods of assessment such as baseline, diagnostic, formative and summative assessments for the measurement of students' readiness for the work. Baseline assessment recognises prior knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes of the students. This assists lecturers in planning learning programmes that will help in filling identified gaps. Diagnostic assessment is used to identify the nature and causes of learning barriers. It provides relevant data for the lecturer's intervention, such as giving advice, providing suitable support, and formulating intervention strategies accordingly. Formative assessments are used to monitor and support teaching and learning in determining the strengths and weaknesses of learners and give them feedback on progress and determine whether the students are ready for summative assessment. Summative assessment gives an overall picture towards determining the competency of the student to proceed to the next level. In view of the focus of this study, assessment for learning falls within formative assessment. Assessment cannot be separated from teaching and learning as it measures the learning outcomes to improve learning facilitation, the curriculum, learning design and conditions for learning (Coetzee, Botha, Kiley, and Truman, 2019).

So far, I have discussed in this section the conditions that led to turning TVET programme as being targeted for middle-level vocational skills in broad terms. Furthermore, I hinted at the phasing-in of the NCV curriculum in SA and highlighted the limitations of binary provisioning of the NCV programmes through theory and practice. In the following discussion, I pay particular attention to the specific subfield of hospitality. To reiterate, this study focuses on the Hospitality programme. The said programme has four vocational subjects, namely Food Preparation, Hospitality Services, Hospitality Generics, Client Services, and Human Relations. These vocational subjects are coupled with the practical component that is envisaged to take place in a real or simulated workplace environment. Currently, all programmes are assessed in theory and the practical component. However, in most programmes, the practical component is not effectively done, and there is little knowledge regarding how college lecturers and their industry partners can manage this particular concern. As a result, the implementation of hands-on assessment for learning is somehow negatively affected.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

My motivation to conduct this research was informed by my personal experience as a lecturer in one of the TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. During my work experience as a TVET lecturer, I was faced with the challenge of trying to balance between the theoretical teachings of my specialisation (hospitality) and managing the practical component. I noticed that most of what was taught to the students was basically theory, and no serious emphasis was made on the practical aspect. In fact, most of the students who were lucky to graduate complained that they were lacking in terms of filling in the practical component that was required in most workplaces. They decried that, after graduating from the TVET college, they had to relearn these skills in private informal programmes to gain real-work practical skills that would be useful in the workplace. Therefore, from my personal experience and the testimony of students who had graduated drew my curiosity towards exploring how the practical component of the hospitality programme can be managed by TVET lecturers in synergy with workplace expectations. This would improve the effectiveness of the curriculum and the advantage this would have on TVET graduates.

1.3 Problem Statement

The literature in this area indicates that the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) curriculum has not yet been adequately reviewed to address the skills shortage in South Africa (Elliot, 2010). DHET (2012) insists that the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) should play a significant role in aligning vocational education and skills training in TVET institutions with employers. The DHET (2012) clearly stated that FET Colleges faced challenges with NCV Levels 2-4 in 2007. When NCV started in 2007, its main business was to ensure that learners were properly channelled towards work-related experience. From the college's perspective, its focus was solely on the throughput rate. Most of the time spent with learners was in class, doing theory, not practical, workplace-related work. There were also questions about lecturers who lacked industrial qualifications. TVET colleges have 60% of the emphasis channelled to theoretical learning and 40% to practical learning. In some programmes, 80% of the emphasis is on Theory and 20% on practical components, whereas it is supposed to be 60% practical and 40% theory, as stated in the subject guidelines. In addition, the infrequent practical lessons conducted are not held in a well-equipped, work-simulated environment or in a real workplace. Mesuwini (2015) reported that the TVET colleges have been blamed for separating theory and practice. In turn, this has caused the programmes to fail to meet the needs of the learners and the changing demands in society and the economy.

Although the implementation of the practical component is influenced by factors such as institutional resources, lecturer competencies, policy implementation and industry partnerships, these are not examined as independent areas of inquiry. Rather, they are considered as contextual conditions that shape how the practical component is managed within the Hospitality programme. Accordingly, this study focuses on the management of the practical component as the primary unit of analysis, with contextual factors examined only insofar as they enable or constrain effective curriculum implementation and practical training. The following research questions guide the current study.

1.4 Main Question

- How do TVET lecturers understand and describe effective assessment practices for managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme?

The following are sub-questions that can emerge from the general question.

- i. Has the NCV curriculum been revised to ensure that learners are prepared to be work-ready?
- ii. How do TVET lecturers at the selected campuses for this study manage the practical component of the hospitality industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa?
- iii. What recommendations (if any) of managing the practical components in the Hospitality programme?

1.5 Aim and objectives

The aim is to explore the management of the practical components of the Hospitality programme and propose a more effective approach.

1.5.1 Research aim

The hospitality programme is important in a country where tourism is often reported to be a growing sector. In that light, this study sets out to critically explore how the practical component of the hospitality programme is managed within an institutional context. In doing this, it may be useful to pay considerable attention to planning, resource allocation, assessment practices, and industry integration. In this way, it would be possible to identify strengths, gaps, and system-wide challenges that influence the effectiveness of practical training. While institutional resources, lecturer competencies, policy implementation and industry partnerships are recognised as important influences on vocational education, they are examined in this study only insofar as they shape the management of the practical component. Consequently, the primary focus of the study is curriculum management and the institutional processes through which practical training is planned, implemented and assessed. Drawing from the findings, this study proposes a contextual,

responsive and sustainable management framework that enhances coordination, accountability, industry alignment and the quality of experiential learning of the students.

1.5.2 Research objectives

To achieve the above aim, the following objectives are set:

1.5.2.1 Main objective

To explore how TVET lecturers at the selected college for this study manage the practical component of the hospitality programme in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The following are the study's sub-objectives.

- i. To ascertain if the NCV curriculum has been revised to ensure that learners are prepared to be work-ready
- ii. To identify how TVET lecturers at the selected campuses for this study manage the practical component of the hospitality industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.
- iii. To provide recommendations (if any) of managing the practical components in the Hospitality programme.

1.6 Literature Review

This section summarises the reviewed literature regarding TVET lecturers at the selected campuses on managing the practical component of the hospitality programme.

1.6.1 Practical components of assessments

The DHET established practical assessment tasks (PATs) for each vocational topic at levels 3 and 4 in TVET colleges (DHET, 2013). The PATs were created to reflect the types of practical tasks that employees would be expected to execute in the workplace, as well as to demonstrate their degree of applied competence in the industry. The PATs were designed in such a way that these activities could be implemented over time with regular revisions. Tasks were established to assess students' cumulative skills so that they cover all learning outcomes in accordance with the applied

competence needed by the curriculum. They need to be adjusted so that students do not copy tasks from previous year to another. DHET (2018) outlined that there was a need for three practical tasks per subject that would be used to assess the practical competencies.

Even if these processes are clearly documented on paper, there is a mismatch between what is necessary and what is applied in practice. TVET colleges' primary mission is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Researchers such as Kilbrink (2012), Olowoyo, Ramaila & Mavuru (2020) stated that feedback from TVET colleges revealed that their expectations of practical courses are not being satisfied by the college's programs. In agreement, Sebetlene (2016) reported that TVET have been faulted for separating theory and practice. In return, this has brought the alleged mismatch between what they offered, and workplace demands. Sebetlele emphasises the need to ensure that the practical aspects of TVET programs receive premium attention, as necessary trick to meet what is required in the world of work. The dearth of research that pays considerable attention to the issues of curriculum, especially the dedicated focus on the practical component, has contributed to the concealment of TVET colleges' reason for existence (*raison d'être*). This research will contribute to a crucial dimension towards the corrective.

The corrective is important on many fronts. Chief among these is improving the status, so that the TVET colleges become institutions of choice for scores of learners exiting basic schooling. For these reasons, others have pointed to a plethora of problems that are plaguing the TVET sector in SA. For instance, Wadekind (2014) drew a long list that includes lack of coherence, articulation, poorly coordinated funding mechanisms, poor linkages to industry, a distorted labour market, and a system marked by the low morale, poor work ethic, and low professional self-esteem among educators which has led to TVET colleges being perceived as an inferior choice. It will be difficult to address all the tabulated issues simultaneously. As such, this research focuses on the practical component, which can be regarded as a precursor to linkages with industry. This aspect is so crucial that the sixth principle of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) commits to eliminating all forms of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation (United Nations Global Compact, 2024). According to this principle, students in TVET must be given a fair opportunity to access all facets of the curriculum relevant to the occupations they have chosen and related employment opportunities. The colleges, as well as the industries that are supposed to stimulate the economy, reside in societies wherein people live.

1.6.2 Implementation of the practical component in the hospitality programme

It is widely believed that, in recent years, the tourism industry has undergone continuous progress and transformation, becoming one of the largest, most remarkable, and fastest-growing economic sectors globally (World Travel and Tourism, 2017). The advancement of the hospitality industry requires a competent, well-educated, and highly trained workforce to succeed in a competitive labour market (Commission on Higher Education, 2017). These changes in the hospitality and tourism sector increase the level of complexity and emerging concerns regarding sustainable development. For instance, the greater need to examine the quality of hospitality and tourism education. For this reason, strengthening internship programs has been considered a viable solution for this sector (Fong, 2014). The internship programme is advantageous to student interns, as it provides an opportunity to gain hands-on experience with the theories learned within the classroom (Nicolaidis, 2014; 2015). Academic-industry partnerships have long been practised, yet complaints about job mismatches persist, and outcomes have not been particularly encouraging (Castro, 2014). Despite the many benefits mentioned in the various studies regarding internships, there are also many challenges, such as low salary, long working hours and shifts, the negative behaviour of superiors, lack of mentorship, and a poor working environment, associated with internships (Yiu & Law, 2012; Seyitoglu, 2014; and Farmaki, 2018).

Shereni (2019) posits that the hospitality industry places more emphasis on practical skills, and students must possess these skills to be employable. TVET colleges have been earmarked for playing an important role in ensuring that critical skills are imparted to students. To that end, the practical component has become an integral part of the hospitality programme at the TVET college and is used as an avenue to develop learners' process skills and understanding of the nature of hospitality. It is widely believed that it increases the motivation and hands-on experience. As such, understanding how lecturers manage practical is crucial, as they implement the curriculum. However, it is worth noting that in the South African TVET sector, there is a dearth of research on how lecturers implement practical in hospitality. Therefore, this study will not only help identify challenges, deficiencies, and gaps in the management of the practical component. It may also be seen as providing valuable information on how to manage this practice effectively. A critical dimension of this debate is the competence and entrepreneurship of young people for self-employment.

1.6.3 Competence and Work Process Knowledge

Competence in vocational education is a contested, multidimensional concept, as it involves more than the ability to perform tasks; it also encompasses the knowledge, judgement, and contextual awareness that inform performance. In hospitality education, competence cannot be reduced to the completion of routine tasks; it must be understood as the integration of theoretical understanding and practical capability within real-world work situations. Rauner (2007) conceptualises competence as the acquisition of practical knowledge through engagement with complex, non-routine problems requiring specialised knowledge, thereby positioning competence as problem-solving rather than mechanical execution. By contrast, Alexakis and Jiang (2019) emphasise transferable competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving, reflecting a broader employability-oriented perspective. These conceptualisations illustrate that competence is not fixed but shaped by the expectations of the vocational field and the realities of the workplace.

Hospitality scholarship has produced numerous competencies lists to clarify what work readiness entails. Castro (2014), Nolan et al. (2010), Millar et al. (2010), and Johanson et al. (2011) identify combinations of leadership, customer service, ethics, technical knowledge, sustainability awareness, and interpersonal skills. The significance of these lists lies not in their precision, but in what they reveal about the sector's evolving expectations. Their variation indicates that hospitality competence is context-dependent and continually redefined by industry demands. Rather than treating these lists as prescriptive, they can be read as signals of how the hospitality sector negotiates the meaning of employability. Ineson and Alexieva (2011) similarly argue that competencies only gain meaning when demonstrated in authentic settings, reinforcing the view that competence is relational and situated.

This perspective is extended by Nicolaides and Kearney (2012), who emphasise the strategic positioning of interns within implementation domains so that competencies are developed in context rather than in abstraction. Such an approach foregrounds the importance of institutional–industry partnerships, since competence formation requires exposure to real work processes. When theoretical knowledge is detached from its application context, graduates may appear knowledgeable yet struggle to perform effectively in practice. The recurring concern in the

literature is therefore not merely a skills gap but a contextual gap, where opportunities to integrate theory and practice are limited. This concern is particularly relevant for TVET colleges, where practical components are intended to bridge this divide.

Debates on the theory–practice relationship further illuminate this issue. Papier (2012) shows that TVET curricula often fail to meet students’ expectations for realistic training, suggesting a misalignment between curriculum intentions and vocational realities. Winch (2012) frames theory and practice as dualistic domains that are frequently organised separately, while Kilbrink (2012) challenges this separation and argues that authentic vocational learning integrates both. Therefore, these debates indicate that competence emerges from the interplay between theoretical and practical knowledge within work processes. For this study, this insight is crucial because the management of practical components in hospitality programmes influences whether such integration is enabled or constrained, thereby shaping the development of vocational competence.

1.6.4 Conceptual Framework of the Study

In this study, I draw primarily on Curriculum Management Theory and the vocational knowledge perspectives of Rauner (2007) and Gamble (2009). Rauner’s concept of work process knowledge refers to vocational knowledge that develops through engagement in real work processes rather than through classroom learning alone. It emphasises that competence is formed when learners participate in meaningful tasks that reflect the sequencing, coordination, and problem-solving demands of actual occupational contexts (Null, 2023). Gamble (2009), by contrast, highlights the interdependence of theoretical and practical knowledge, arguing that vocational performance requires both conceptual understanding and the ability to act in context. Taken together, these perspectives orient the study toward understanding how competence is developed through the deliberate organisation of learning experiences.

Building on these ideas, the conceptual framework assumes that vocational competence results not just from curriculum coverage but from how the curriculum is enacted and experienced (Hendrawati, 2025). Curriculum Management Theory highlights the organisational dimensions of teaching and learning, particularly in planning, resourcing, and supervising practical components. This implies that the educational value of practical training depends on its structure within the programme (Null, 2023; Hendrawati, 2025). Therefore, the framework positions the practical

component as a managed element of the curriculum, whose contribution to learning is influenced by institutional conditions and lecturer practices.

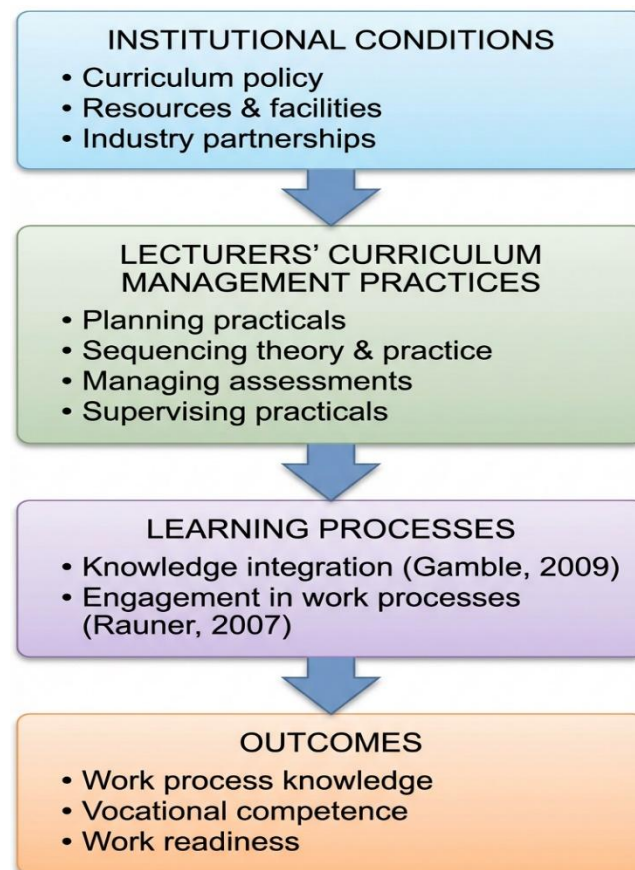


Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework guiding the study on the management of practical components in TVET hospitality programmes.

The framework further suggests that vocational learning occurs through interaction among learners, tasks, and contexts. In hospitality education, students are expected to operate in dynamic service environments that demand judgment, coordination, and responsiveness. Merely exposing them to such environments does not automatically produce competence. What is important is how learning opportunities are organised and linked to conceptual understanding (Gamble, Parker & Moroz, 2020; Null, 2023). Therefore, lecturers' decisions regarding the timing, design, and supervision of practical activities are crucial in shaping students' vocational development (Hendrawati, 2025).

On a broader level, the framework emphasises relationships among institutional conditions, lecturers' curriculum management practices, student learning processes, and competence outcomes (Null, 2023). Institutional resources, facilities, and industry partnerships determine what is feasible in practical training, while lecturers' management practices influence how these possibilities develop into learning opportunities (Gamble, Parker & Moroz, 2020). These processes affect whether students can connect theory with practice and engage in meaningful work activities. The conceptual framework thus guides the study by clarifying the relationships under investigation and providing a lens for examining how the practical component is managed (Hendrawati, 2025). A more detailed theoretical and conceptual discussion is provided in Chapter 2 of this study.

1.7 Research Methodology and Design

In this section, the research design and methodology are presented, with particular emphasis on the research paradigm, research philosophy, research methodology, and research strategy. A cursory look is also given to the sampling strategy, sample size, data collection instrument, data collection and data analysis. All these processes were selected with utmost care and consideration, in line with the nature of the study and the research questions being addressed.

1.7.1 Research paradigm

This study uses the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is selected to ensure that participants' views and responses are prioritised and that interpretations are presented from their perspective. The interpretivist paradigm is appropriate for this study because participants share a universal view. This paradigm enabled me to understand the experiences of TVET lecturers in the hospitality programme and how they managed its practical component (Morrison, Cohen & Manion, 2017). This study is projected from a social science perspective. Therefore, it is essential to understand the pedagogical content knowledge that these lecturers engage with in their teaching in the hospitality programme. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017) state that an interpretive paradigm is designed to understand the subject world of human experience. Therefore, gaining knowledge of TVET lecturers' understanding and practices is essential to attach meaning to the world to which they function. Since people's focus on interpretation depends on their subjective experiences and on how they construct their social world (Creswell, 2014), the study has relied on individual

perspectives to interrogate and deepen understanding of the practical component phenomenon within a defined space of hospitality programme(s).

1.7.2 Research design

Research design refers to the strategy employed by researchers in answering their research questions (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2014). The selection of the research design depends on the research problem and research question. The function of a research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the research questions as unambiguously as possible. The research design is applied to facilitate the smooth flow of the research process and to make it efficient, yielding relevant information within reasonable costs, time, and effort. Common research designs include the exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory research designs. In this study, the exploratory research is considered as the most appropriate research design. The exploratory research design is relevant to this study as this study provides new insights into the practical components of assessments in selected programmes in TVET colleges.

1.7.3 Research Methodology

Kothari (2014) posits that research methodology is the means of systematically addressing the research problem and of conducting the study scientifically. This definition aligns with Van Zyl's (2014), who defines research methodology as the activities undertaken by researchers during the research process, including sampling techniques, sample selection, research instrument design, data collection, data storage, and data analysis. Thus, research methodology refers to the process by which the study's primary and secondary data are presented, the methods used to collect the data, and the steps employed at each stage of the process. Dudovsky (2016) noted that qualitative, mixed-methods, and quantitative research methodologies are the three most common. In this study, qualitative research was deemed appropriate because it seeks to understand a specific event or process within a particular setting and allows the researcher to interact with participants in their natural environment. Furthermore, it provides an in-depth analysis and understanding of the practical components of the assessment in the selected programmes.

1.7.4 Research Strategy

Kumar (2024) defines a case study as an in-depth analysis of a single entity. A case study allows participants to freely express their ideas, views, and experiences in their natural settings and this makes it possible for the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomena (Cohen et al., 2018). These views are in line with Saunders et al. (2014) who reported that case study provides rich and thick descriptions of the participant thoughts, feelings and lived experiences about a particular phenomenon within a specific context. Case study is an appropriate research strategy when the researcher is seeking to understand a specific event or process in a particular place. In this research, I have adopted the case study approach as a suitable research strategy, as it allows the researcher to interact with lecturers in their natural setting, thereby facilitating an in-depth understanding of how the assessment of practical components is used in the selected programme.

1.7.5 Population and Sampling

Probability and non-probability sampling are two common techniques used to sample populations (Bambale, 2014). Non-probability sampling uses a non-statistical approach in selecting units from a sampling frame, whereas probability sampling uses statistical procedures to select units from the entire population (Etikan, Alkassim, and Abubakar, 2015). In this study, purposive sampling is considered a suitable non-probability sampling strategy. In purposive sampling, researchers select participants for inclusion in the study based on their judgments or characteristics (Cohen et al., 2018). Purposive sampling is used to construct a sample that meets the researchers' specific needs. The focus of this study is based on a single college in KwaZulu-Natal with four campuses that currently offer a hospitality programme. From each participating campus, 4 Hospitality lecturers were identified, 1 senior lecturer, and 1 HOD, making up a total of 8 participants, as shown below.

CAMPUSES	NO OF SENIOR LECTURERS	NO OF HoD	TOTAL
CAMPUS 1	1	1	2
CAMPUS 2	1	1	2
CAMPUS 3	1	1	2
CAMPUS 4	1	1	2

These participants were purposively selected based on their relevant experience in teaching hospitality at a TVET college and in managing the department of hospitality.

1.7.6 Research instrument and data collection

Data collection instruments are also known as research instruments. They are instruments used to collect data from participants, and common instruments include interviews in qualitative research and questionnaires in quantitative research (Zikmund, 2017). In this study, interviews were considered as the most appropriate data collection instruments. Semi-structured interviews are selected because they allow the researcher to probe participants beyond the interview schedule. Interviews were used to collect rich data, and participants had the opportunity to express their ideas and voice their opinions without being directed, thereby allowing the researcher to generate new insights into the phenomena. According to Montoya (2016), semi-structured interviews allow participants to express their opinions freely and to generate new ideas on the topic under discussion.

1.7.7 Data analysis and interpretation

In this study, the thematic approach to data analysis was employed. This method involved systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a dataset, in which the data were categorised into themes and then analysed with respect to the identified themes and their contribution to answering the research questions. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to identify and interpret collective meanings and experiences. Thematic analysis is a flexible method because it allows researchers to interpret data in different ways. In

the thematic analysis, the researcher constructed meanings from the dataset, as well as the assumptions and ideas underlying participants' explicit statements. Thematic analysis provided the researcher with many forms that suit a variety of research questions.

1.7.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Flick (2024) defines trustworthiness as the soundness of research in relation to its appropriateness and the integrity of its results. In qualitative inquiry, trustworthiness is used to support the claim that the findings warrant attention. Creswell and Poth (2023) assert that the quality of qualitative research is determined by credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility refers to the truthfulness and accuracy of the data collected. According to Kumar (2024), credibility concerns the accuracy of documentation, the reliability of data sources, and the absence of errors; Kumar (2024) also emphasises the use of trustworthy and credible research instruments. In this study, credibility was ensured through voluntary participation, non-coercion, and full disclosure of the study's purpose and participants' rights before data collection commenced.

Transferability refers to the extent to which a study's findings can be applied to other contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Although the findings of this qualitative study are not intended for generalisation, transferability was enhanced by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research context, methods, and procedures, enabling readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar settings. Dependability, defined by Babbie (2021) as the stability of findings over time, was addressed by using a consistent interview schedule for all participants and by clearly documenting each stage of the research process, as suggested by Creswell (2021) and Walliman (2021). Confirmability, which concerns the objectivity of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2023), was ensured by grounding the findings in participants' accounts rather than the researcher's personal views. To minimise bias, the researcher engaged in repeated reflection during data analysis and provided participants with their interview transcripts for verification, allowing them to confirm that the recorded data accurately reflected their experiences.

1.7.9 Ethical considerations

Ethics refers to the principles and codes of moral behaviour that guide the research process and ensure the protection of participants identity (Silverman, 2020). In this study, ethical considerations were carefully observed, as the research involved human participants and examined their professional experiences. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and no participant was coerced or deceived at any stage of the research process. Prior to data collection, participants were provided with an informed consent form written in clear and accessible language, outlining the purpose of the study, the nature of participation, and their rights, including the right to withdraw from the study at any time or to decline to answer questions they were uncomfortable with (Babbie, 2021). The informed consent process ensured participants' confidentiality and anonymity, unless they chose to be identified. To ensure that no harm resulted from participation, the researcher avoided questions that could cause physical, psychological or emotional distress and ensured that participants did not feel pressured during the research process (Creswell, 2021). Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by not collecting personal identifying information, such as names or contact details, thereby ensuring that responses could not be linked to individual participants (Babbie, 2021). In addition, formal permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant institutional authorities before data collection, in accordance with ethical research practice (Kumar, 2024).

1.8 Outline of the study

The outline of this study is presented below. The study is divided into five chapters, with rich and informed content:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the Study.

Chapter 1 presented the introduction to the study, its background and context, problem statement, objectives, research questions, motivation for the study, significance of the study, definitions of key terms, and an outline of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review with contextual and conceptual framework

The second chapter presents a literature review on the management of practical components in Technical Vocational Education and Training. The chapter provides a detailed description of the theoretical framework and its relevance to this study.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The chapter explains the study's research design and methodology, research approach, data collection methods, and sampling procedures.

Chapter 4: Presentation of findings

The chapter examines the management of practical in the hospitality programme across the different campuses, with the aim of collecting fieldwork data to be presented and discussed in relation to the research questions. Additionally, the analysis of the data addressed the research questions by drawing from the literature review to further validate and support the findings of the study

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations

This chapter summarises the debates and the conclusions drawn from the findings. The data conclusions are presented, along with recommendations and suggestions for future studies.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the study by situating it within the broader context of vocational education and training, with particular emphasis on the role of TVET colleges in developing middle-level skills necessary for economic growth and employability in South Africa. The chapter outlined the historical, political and policy background of the TVET sector and highlighted the introduction and intended purpose of the National Certificate (Vocational) as a key vocational qualification. Attention was given to the centrality of the practical component in vocational education, particularly within the Hospitality programme, and to the persistent challenges associated with integrating theory and practice. The chapter further presented the study's rationale, drawing on the researcher's professional experience and observed gaps in the management and assessment of

practical training. The problem statement, research questions, aim and objectives were clearly articulated to guide the study. In addition, the chapter provided an overview of the literature informing the study, introduced the conceptual and theoretical framework underpinning the research, and outlined the methodological approach, including the research paradigm, design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. Collectively, this chapter established the foundation for the study by defining the research problem, justifying its significance, and outlining the approach adopted to address it. The next chapter presents a detailed review of relevant literature and the conceptual framework that informed the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the international and local literature on TVET lecturers' experiences of teaching and managing the practical component of the hospitality programme at a TVET college in South Africa. The chapter focuses on two main sections: the first presents a literature review that highlights critical aspects of the hospitality programme. In this section, a global overview of the understanding of hospitality programme is discussed. The discussion articulates existing and emerging trends in the hospitality industry and in the degree programme. These debates are twofold and emphasise training (practical learning) versus education (theoretical learning). The first, according to Hole, Khedkar, and Pawar (2019), emphasises the practicality of the hospitality industry, affirming that practical training is necessary to provide a holistic understanding and knowledge base for individuals entering the hospitality industry. The second debate focuses on the educational aspect of hospitality programmes, which scholars such as Gupta (2020) and Liu and Cheng (2021) argue should be taught at the theoretical level in educational institutions before exposure to the practical aspect. This debate emphasises that education prepares students in the hospitality programme to understand programme concepts and potential.

While these two debates are important and necessary in the teachings and understanding of the hospitality industry/programme, the current literature aligns itself with Hole, Khedkar, and Pawar, (2020) whose research is inclined towards the direction that the hospitality industry is a practical-oriented discipline and nothing about it is imaginary but rather realistic. Thus, the need to train individuals to understand the industry's practical trends and components cannot be overlooked. However, at the educational level, this study is situated on policy stipulations. As such, the literature has emphasised that the practical component, or training, in the hospitality programme should be the focus and should constitute at least 60%, if not more. On the other hand, less than 40% should focus on the theoretical aspect. Otherwise, there is no point of making policies if they are not going to be adhered to or are difficult to implement. Policy idealism must be closer to the

realities within their context of application. In that way, they would provide useful guidance on how their positions are implemented and regulated in practice.

The second part of this literature review focuses on the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework discussed three aspects, as conceptualised by Gamble (2009) and Rauner (2007), who emphasised theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, and work process knowledge. This framework outlines crucial principles that, for students to advance to a higher level of thinking and understanding, require both theoretical and practical knowledge to function effectively in the hospitality programme.

Although the literature addresses several interrelated dimensions of vocational education, including institutional resources, lecturer competence, policy implementation and industry partnerships, this review examines these dimensions only as contextual influences on the management of the practical component. The discussion therefore remains centred on curriculum management as the principal analytical lens through which the practical component is understood.

Drawing from the preliminary issues outlined above, this chapter will therefore be structured under the following headings (1) Understanding hospitality programme: a global overview that offers us the perspectives and trends in the hospitality industry globally (2) hospitality programme in South African schools which offers the policy ambitions, strengths, and what is happening in practice in South Africa (3) The practical components of assessments ideals, strengths, and weakness in the hospitality programme (4) implementation of the practical component in hospitality programme (5) competence and work process knowledge (6) the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge. Thereafter proceed to discuss the theoretical framework and provide a summary of the chapter.

2.2. Understanding hospitality programme: A global overview

The hospitality industry and its associated educational programmes have expanded significantly in response to the sector's growing contribution to tourism, employment and economic development. As hospitality has become more prominent globally, higher education institutions have increasingly introduced programmes to meet industry demand for skilled graduates. Existing literature consistently identifies employment prospects as a major factor influencing students'

decisions to pursue hospitality studies. Senbeto (2020) argues that job availability and opportunities for international mobility are key attractions, while Saikwah (2020) associates student interest with the continued growth of global tourism. Similarly, Sobaih et al. (2019) contend that hospitality education is often viewed as a pathway to upward social mobility, particularly within emerging economies. Although these studies explain why students are attracted to hospitality programmes, they focus primarily on students' expectations rather than on how educational institutions prepare them for professional practice.

Stone (2020) extends this discussion by arguing that students are motivated not only by employment prospects but also by the perception that hospitality qualifications provide access to international career opportunities. However, Christie et al. (2021) caution that these perceptions are frequently based on idealised views of the industry and may not reflect workplace realities. Dieke (2020) similarly argues that, despite being promoted as a sector with abundant opportunities, hospitality continues to experience challenges relating to job quality, career progression and employment conditions. Lickorish and Jenkins (2020) further contend that governments increasingly invest in hospitality education because of its strategic contribution to tourism competitiveness. Collectively, these studies suggest that while hospitality education is promoted as an avenue for economic and professional advancement, the realities of employment present a more complex picture than students often anticipate.

Research examining students' programme and career preferences reinforces the view that expectations do not always correspond with workplace experience. Christie et al. (2021) report that many students choose hospitality programmes because of anticipated international mobility and diverse career opportunities, despite having limited knowledge of the industry's working conditions. Dieke (2020) similarly observes that expectations of rapid career progression frequently differ from actual employment experiences. Lickorish and Jenkins (2020) argue that national tourism policies contribute to these expectations by portraying hospitality as a strategic economic sector. Kim et al. (2019) add that career preferences are influenced not only by perceptions but also by direct industry exposure, demonstrating that students who gain practical experience make more informed career decisions. These findings indicate that student aspirations are shaped by both expectation and experience, highlighting the importance of educational programmes that expose students to authentic workplace environments.

Since the early 1990s, hospitality education has increasingly incorporated practical learning as a central component of curriculum delivery. Universities and other higher education institutions now recognise that theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient for preparing graduates for professional practice (DiMicelli, 2018). Studies consistently demonstrate that practical training strengthens students' understanding of classroom learning, improves work readiness and develops essential professional competencies (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2020; Stansbie, Nash & Chang, 2019; Spowart, 2018). Practical learning also contributes to the development of leadership, communication and problem-solving skills that are difficult to cultivate through classroom instruction alone (Lin et al., 2017; Gurman, Barrows & Reavley, 2013). Furthermore, positive practical experiences have been associated with stronger commitment to the profession and improved career aspirations (Yan & Cheung, 2012). Although there is broad agreement on the value of practical learning, comparatively less attention has been given to how institutions manage its planning, implementation and assessment. This gap provides the basis for examining the management of the practical component within TVET hospitality programmes.

2.2.1 Evolving of terminology

The terminology used to describe practical learning in hospitality education reflects different educational approaches rather than distinct learning objectives. Dieke (2020) identifies work-integrated learning (WIL), work-integrated education (WIE), work-based learning (WBL), internships, practicums, work placements and sandwich programmes as the most common terms, while Spowart (2018) includes experiential learning, service learning and laboratory-based learning. Although these concepts differ in structure and delivery, they all aim to connect classroom learning with workplace practice. The variation in terminology therefore reflects institutional preferences and curriculum design rather than fundamental differences in educational purpose. Dieke (2020) argues that practical learning becomes educationally meaningful only when workplace activities are deliberately integrated with curriculum outcomes. Simply placing students in industry does not guarantee learning or the development of competence. Rather, practical learning requires structured supervision, clearly defined learning objectives, and continuous interaction among students, lecturers, and industry partners (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2021). This perspective shifts the emphasis from workplace exposure to curriculum integration, suggesting

that the educational value of practical learning depends largely on how institutions organise and manage it rather than on the type of practical component adopted.

2.2.2 Institutional challenges

Institutional approaches to practical training vary because hospitality programmes operate under diverse curricular, resource and industry conditions. Dieke (2020) argues that one of the most persistent challenges is balancing academic learning with occupational preparation without compromising either objective. This challenge has led to multiple delivery models rather than a single standard approach. Spowart (2018) shows that institutions differ in how practical learning is structured, with some integrating credit-bearing practical modules into the curriculum, others relying on workplace placements, and some combining institutional laboratories with industry-based learning. These variations demonstrate that practical learning is shaped by institutional priorities and capacity rather than by a common understanding of best practice. However, differences in programme design have not resolved concerns about graduate preparedness. Spowart (2018) notes that employers continue to report competency gaps even among graduates who have completed substantial practical training. This suggests that expanding the duration or format of practical learning does not automatically improve learning outcomes. Dieke (2020) similarly argues that the value of practical training depends on how effectively workplace experiences are integrated into curriculum objectives rather than on the amount of workplace exposure itself.

2.2.3 Client Satisfaction

Student satisfaction provides an important measure of the effectiveness of practical learning because it reflects whether curriculum intentions translate into meaningful learning experiences. Zopiatz and Constanti (2021) argue that dissatisfaction often arises from the disconnect between theoretical instruction and workplace learning, suggesting that students expect practical training to reinforce, rather than merely complement, classroom teaching. Kim (2019) reaches a similar conclusion but attributes this disconnect to weaknesses in programme implementation, including inadequate supervision, limited institutional support and poor coordination between educational institutions and hospitality organisations. These perspectives indicate that dissatisfaction is less a

reflection of student expectations than of how practical learning is planned, managed and supported.

Stone (2020) broadens the discussion by demonstrating that practical learning is shaped by competing stakeholder expectations. Employers generally favour longer internships that strengthen workplace competence, whereas students often prioritise placements that provide structured learning, meaningful job rotation and clear links to their academic studies. Educational institutions, in turn, must reconcile these competing expectations while operating within curriculum and resource constraints. Kim (2019) further argues that programmes characterised by effective mentoring, sustained industry collaboration and coordinated supervision are more likely to satisfy both students and employers. This suggests that client satisfaction cannot be achieved by responding to the expectations of a single stakeholder, but rather by balancing the educational, professional and organisational objectives of all parties involved.

2.3. Hospitality programme in South Africa

South African hospitality education reflects many of the global debates on graduate employability, but these debates are shaped by the country's labour market conditions. Sun and Luo (2021), Stone and Nyaupane (2019), and Sobaih, Ibrahim and Gabry (2019) argue that higher education is increasingly viewed as a pathway to employment. However, this expectation is difficult to realise in South Africa, where Statistics South Africa (2024) reports an unemployment rate exceeding 30% and youth unemployment above 45%. These conditions intensify concerns about graduate employability, particularly in the hospitality sector, where employment is often characterised by relatively low remuneration, demanding working conditions and limited opportunities for career progression. Despite these challenges, Senbeto (2020) and Santarem et al. (2018) argue that student enrolment remains strong because tourism continues to be regarded as an important contributor to economic growth and employment. Together, these perspectives illustrate the contradiction between students' expectations of employment and the realities of a highly competitive labour market.

The importance of hospitality education extends beyond graduate employment because the sector contributes significantly to South Africa's economy. Statistics South Africa (2014) identifies

accommodation, food services and leisure activities as major contributors to tourism employment, reinforcing the need for a skilled and adaptable workforce. Grobler and Diedericks (2019) argue that maintaining service quality and industry competitiveness depends on the continuous development of competent employees, while Kay and Russette (2000) place this responsibility largely on hospitality education. Moyle (2018), however, questions whether academic qualifications alone are sufficient, arguing that employers place greater value on practical competence and workplace experience than on formal credentials. Rather than presenting opposing views, these perspectives suggest that educational qualifications and workplace learning are complementary components of graduate competence. Consequently, the effectiveness of hospitality education depends on how successfully institutions integrate theoretical learning with authentic workplace experience.

Graduate preparedness remains one of the most debated issues in hospitality education. Pauw, Oosthuizen and Van der Westhuizen (2018) found that employers regarded many graduates as academically qualified but inadequately prepared for workplace responsibilities because they lacked practical competence, problem-solving skills and relevant industry experience. Similar concerns are reflected in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013), which identifies weak integration between institutional learning and workplace training as a persistent challenge affecting graduate employability. While Moyle (2018) argues that vocational competence develops through sustained participation in authentic work environments, these studies collectively indicate that neither educational institutions nor employers can address the problem independently. Graduate preparedness depends on sustained collaboration between colleges and industry to ensure that theoretical knowledge is reinforced through meaningful practical learning. This unresolved relationship provides the basis for examining how TVET lecturers manage the practical component of Hospitality programmes to strengthen the integration of theory and practice.

2.3.1 Hospitality education in TVET colleges

Exposing students to the Hospitality programmes that are provided by the TVET colleges, rather than limiting hospitality education to universities is grounded in the belief that the offer is closer to industry, thus has better labour-market orientation. Universities on the other hand, have a deeper

focus on management theory, strategic planning, and research, thus lack operational competencies that TVET colleges provide. Richardson (2018) posits that the post-school education sector must equip hospitality students with a comprehensive and real-world view of the working conditions in the sector. When students become less interested in pursuing a career in hospitality management (as their first career choice), especially after gaining some work experience working in the sector as interns, this can be disturbing for the hospitality sector (Kim and Park, 2018; Richardson, 2018). The sector requires an experienced cadre of employees who can respond to the pressures that have come with globalisation. Students' exposure to the hospitality sector and their experience during internship programmes, while studying, can project a positive or a negative career outlook. While positive experiences can support a positive outlook, negative experiences (these include difficulty getting employment and low earnings) and unfulfilled expectations can adversely impact students' decision to work in the sector after graduation.

As hospitality education is not always students' first choice (Lu & Adler, 2009), some researchers have reported that hospitality internships provide students with future employment prospects and insight into opportunities in the industry (Senbeto, 2020).

2.3.2 Management of Practical Curriculum in TVET

Managing the practical curriculum in TVET colleges involves more than implementing prescribed activities; it requires deliberate coordination of policy expectations, institutional resources, and pedagogical practices. DHET policy frameworks (DHET, 2013; 2018) position practical training as a core component of vocational programmes and prescribe structured Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs) to ensure applied competence. However, the presence of policy guidelines does not automatically translate into effective practice. The literature suggests that a gap often exists between policy intentions and institutional enactment, particularly when colleges face contextual constraints. This implies that the management of practical curriculum must be understood as an active process of interpretation and organisation rather than mere compliance with policy prescriptions.

Evidence from TVET research indicates that institutional capacity significantly shapes the management of practical components. Wedekind (2014) observes that weak college–industry coordination frequently limits students' access to authentic workplace exposure, which is central

to vocational preparation. Elbaz and Haddoud (2018) similarly argue that systemic issues such as poor coordination, fragmented funding mechanisms, and weak industry linkages undermine the effectiveness of vocational systems. These analyses shift attention away from blaming curriculum design alone and instead highlight management conditions as critical determinants of the quality of practical training. In this sense, challenges in practical training are not only pedagogical but also organisational.

At the level of delivery, lecturers are key actors in managing the practical curriculum. Their role extends beyond teaching to include organising practical sessions, preparing students for workplace norms, and coordinating assessment processes. Spowart (2018) notes that successful practical training depends on clearly defined pedagogical goals and strong coordination between institutions and workplaces, suggesting that practical learning must be actively managed rather than left to chance. Yet studies such as Kim and Park (2019) report persistent dissatisfaction with practical training when coordination and support structures are weak. This points to a tension between expectations placed on lecturers and the institutional conditions within which they operate, raising questions about how much responsibility individual lecturers can reasonably carry (Munna & Kalam, 2021).

The hospitality context intensifies these management demands because the industry values demonstrable competence and work-readiness. Farmaki (2021) emphasises that practical exposure is closely tied to employability outcomes, while Richardson (2018) argues that students' perceptions of the industry are shaped by the quality of their practical experiences. These insights suggest that the management of practical curriculum has implications beyond classroom learning, influencing career readiness and industry confidence in graduates. Consequently, examining how practical components are managed becomes crucial for understanding not only curriculum delivery but also the broader relationship between TVET institutions and the labour market (Munna & Kalam, 2021). This perspective underpins the present study's focus on lecturers' experiences of managing practical components in hospitality programmes.

2.4 Practical components of assessments in TVET colleges in South Africa

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) introduced Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs) as a compulsory component of vocational programmes at Levels 3 and 4 to strengthen the relationship between theoretical instruction and workplace competence (DHET, 2013). PATs are designed to simulate occupational tasks that students are expected to perform in industry while providing cumulative evidence of applied competence across programme outcomes. The policy requires colleges to implement a variety of practical tasks over an extended period to assess progressively more complex competencies. However, subsequent policy reviews acknowledge that implementing PATs as intended depends on the availability of appropriate infrastructure, equipment and teaching resources (DHET, 2018). This suggests that the effectiveness of PATs is influenced not only by assessment policy but also by institutional capacity to support practical learning.

Despite the policy emphasis on practical competence, evidence indicates that implementation remains uneven across the TVET sector. Although vocational programmes require practical learning to constitute a substantial component of curriculum delivery, Kim and Park (2019) found that students frequently perceived practical training as inadequate and insufficiently aligned with industry expectations. Sebetlene (2020) similarly argues that the continued separation of theoretical instruction from practical learning weakens graduates' readiness for employment. Farmaki (2021), however, contends that strengthening practical training requires more than increasing practical activities; it requires curriculum structures that deliberately integrate workplace learning with theoretical knowledge. These perspectives suggest that the challenge lies less in policy design than in how practical assessment is implemented and managed within colleges.

The difficulties associated with practical assessment cannot be separated from broader institutional challenges affecting the TVET sector. Elbaz and Haddoud (2018) identify fragmented governance, weak industry partnerships, funding constraints and limited institutional capacity as factors that undermine the quality of vocational education. Munna and Kalam (2021) argue that these systemic challenges are interconnected and therefore cannot be addressed through isolated interventions. Rather than viewing practical assessment as an independent curricular activity, these studies

position it within a broader institutional environment in which assessment quality depends on effective curriculum coordination, adequate resources, and sustained collaboration with industry. This interpretation reinforces the argument that improving practical learning requires strengthening institutional curriculum management rather than revising assessment policy alone.

The debate surrounding practical assessment therefore extends beyond the design of PATs to the conditions under which they are implemented. While DHET policy provides a structured framework for assessing applied competence, empirical studies continue to report gaps between policy intentions and institutional practice. These gaps raise important questions about how lecturers organise practical learning, utilise available resources, and engage industry to support assessment. Consequently, understanding how the practical component is managed becomes central to explaining why similar assessment policies produce different educational outcomes across TVET colleges. This provides the foundation for the subsequent discussion on assessment as a broader process of evaluating student learning and vocational competence.

2.5 Component of assessment managed in the Hospitality programme

Hospitality education encompasses several interrelated areas, including food and beverage service, accommodation, front office operations, event management, and tourism services, each requiring distinct yet complementary competencies (Riegel & Dallas, 2006). Although these fields differ operationally, they share a common emphasis on service quality, customer satisfaction and the ability to respond effectively to dynamic workplace situations (Riegel, 1991). Consequently, hospitality programmes are expected to develop both occupational competence and professional behaviour. In the South African TVET context, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013) requires assessment to evaluate students' ability to apply knowledge and skills in authentic workplace contexts through Practical Assessment Tasks (PATs). However, DHET (2018) acknowledges that many colleges experience shortages of equipment, specialised facilities, and learning resources, which limit their capacity to assess practical competence consistently. These findings suggest that the quality of practical assessment depends not only on curriculum requirements but also on institutional capacity to support authentic learning experiences.

The competencies assessed within hospitality programmes extend beyond technical proficiency to include communication, teamwork, problem-solving and professional judgement. While technical competencies remain essential in areas such as food production, housekeeping, and front-office operations, Hendrawati (2025) argues that employers increasingly value graduates who can adapt to changing customer needs and work effectively in multidisciplinary teams. Similar findings are reported by Elbaz and Haddoud (2018), who found that employers frequently regard interpersonal competence and workplace adaptability as equally important as technical skills. These studies indicate that hospitality competence is multidimensional, requiring assessment approaches that evaluate not only procedural accuracy but also students' ability to apply knowledge appropriately within complex service environments. Consequently, assessment practices must capture both technical performance and the behavioural competencies expected by industry.

In response to these expectations, hospitality education has increasingly adopted competency-based assessment to strengthen the relationship between learning and workplace performance. Munna and Kalam (2021) argue that competency-based education is effective only when students demonstrate their ability to apply knowledge in authentic occupational contexts rather than merely reproduce theoretical content. Within South African TVET colleges, this principle is reflected in the use of PATs, simulations and workplace-based learning to assess applied competence (DHET, 2013). However, Rauner and Ahrens (2022) caution that competency-based assessment remains vulnerable to inconsistencies when learning environments do not adequately replicate workplace conditions or when assessment criteria are applied unevenly. Similarly, Hendrawati (2025) argues that authentic assessment depends on the availability of appropriate facilities, industry-standard equipment and lecturers with current occupational expertise. These perspectives suggest that competency-based assessment is influenced as much by institutional implementation as by assessment design.

Although considerable research has examined the competencies expected of hospitality graduates, less attention has been given to how these competencies are managed and assessed within TVET colleges. Much of the existing literature focuses on employer expectations and graduate attributes, with comparatively limited analysis of the institutional processes that shape practical assessment (Rauner & Ahrens, 2022; Hendrawati, 2025). In South Africa, where curriculum policy requires the integration of theoretical learning and practical competence (DHET, 2013), understanding how

lecturers organise, implement and monitor practical assessment becomes particularly important. This gap suggests that graduate competence is influenced by curriculum design and by the effectiveness of the practical component's management. It is within this context that the present study examines the management of practical assessment in Hospitality programmes at TVET colleges.

2.5.1 Managing the Practical Component of Assessment in Hospitality Programmes

Debates surrounding hospitality degree programmes have traditionally focused on the role of practical training within qualifications that are often seen as management focused. At the heart of this debate lies the ongoing tension between education and training in professional disciplines. One view has historically argued that higher education should emphasise theoretical and managerial knowledge, with the expectation that practical skills will be learned on the job. The opposing stance contends that hospitality, as a service-intensive and operationally based field, cannot be effectively taught without structured practical experience. From this perspective, separating theory from practice risks producing graduates who understand concepts but lack the ability to apply them in real service settings.

These debates also raised questions about institutional responsibility. Some scholars questioned the legitimacy of offering hospitality programmes at universities rather than at technical colleges, arguing that colleges are better positioned to provide industry-relevant training. This view assumes a division of labour where universities develop abstract managerial thinking while colleges concentrate on practical skills. However, such a binary has increasingly been challenged as the hospitality industry demands graduates capable of combining conceptual understanding with operational proficiency. The “learning by doing” approach therefore gained importance, asserting that professionally oriented programmes must intentionally incorporate practice to stay credible and meet industry needs (DiMicelli, 1998; Ruhanen, 2005).

Over time, the field has shifted from debating whether practice belongs in hospitality education to examining how it should be integrated and assessed. Many universities and business schools now require internships or practicums as graduation requirements. Hospitality education has been particularly influential in normalising this shift, recognising that practical learning is not an optional add-on but a core component of the curriculum (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). Empirical

research shows that structured placements enhance students' understanding of theoretical concepts, strengthen motivation, and improve work readiness (Stansbie et al., 2016; Spowart, 2011). They also contribute to leadership development, managerial judgement, and problem-solving capabilities that classroom instruction alone seldom achieves (Lin et al., 2017; Gurman et al., 2013).

Importantly, studies also suggest that the value of practical learning depends on how it is organised and assessed. When placements are poorly structured or weakly supervised, they may offer exposure without meaningful learning. Conversely, well-managed practical components integrated into assessment systems can support competence development and professional identity formation. Positive practicum experiences have been linked to stronger career commitment and clearer professional trajectories (Yan & Cheung, 2012). These insights highlight that the issue is not simply the inclusion of practical training, but the management and assessment of such training. For TVET hospitality programmes, this means that the credibility of qualifications depends on ensuring that practical components are systematically planned, resourced, and assessed in ways that genuinely support occupational competence rather than merely symbolic compliance.

2.6 Competence and Work Process Knowledge

Competence and understanding of work processes are closely linked in vocational education. Rauner (2007) conceptualises competence as acquiring functional practical knowledge developed through tackling complex tasks that lack predetermined solutions, supported by specialised theoretical knowledge. In this sense, competence goes beyond merely completing tasks to include the ability to mobilise conceptual and practical resources appropriately within the context. Although definitions of competence vary across the literature, it is generally understood as the capacity to perform tasks logically and effectively in accordance with the demands of a specific occupation. Scholars differ in their emphasis on action versus understanding. For instance, Jackson (1993) highlights observable performance as the basis for assessing competence, proposing that behavioural standards can be evaluated through demonstrated work.

However, some scholars contend that competence cannot be defined solely by observable performance. Eraut (2004) proposes that competent action involves both the ability to perform

tasks and a deep understanding of the contextual factors involved. Likewise, Ennis (1976) states that competence includes knowledge of rules and the ability to apply them effectively in various situations. These perspectives emphasise competence as a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical skills, rather than just observable behaviour. This aligns with Rauner’s (2007) concept of work process knowledge, which emphasises learning through active participation in real-world work scenarios in which tasks are structured, coordinated, and adapted to actual conditions. As a result, competence develops through ongoing engagement in meaningful work activities, underscoring the importance of practical training in vocational education.

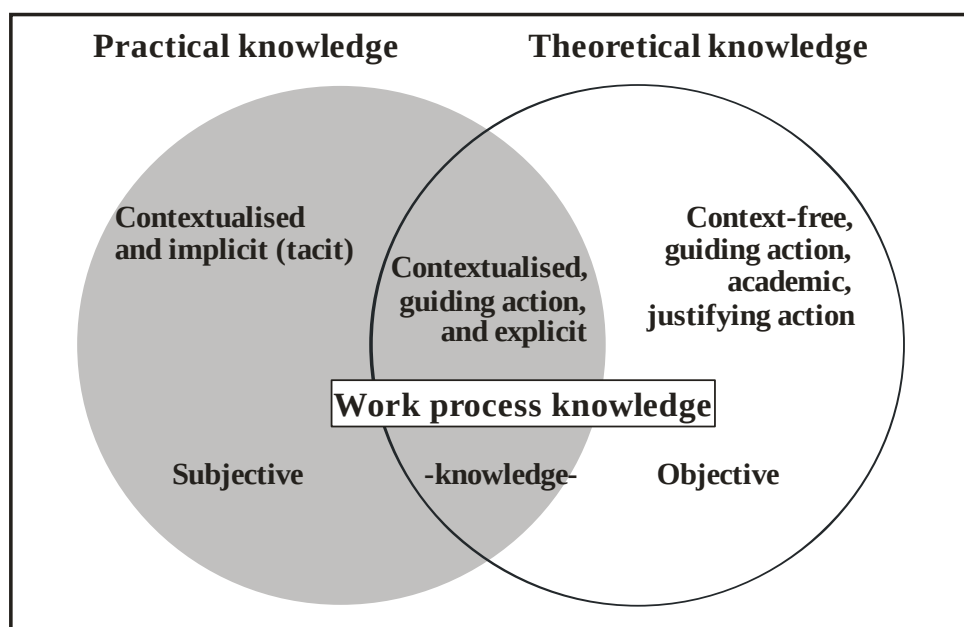


Figure 2.1: Practical Knowledge and Theoretical Knowledge Synergy (Rauner, 2007).

Figure 2.1 illustrates how propositional knowledge and practical knowledge are integrated in vocational learning. In this context, propositional knowledge refers to conceptual or disciplinary understanding, the “knowledge that” that explains principles, rules, and reasons for action, rather than to theory in the sense of a theoretical framework (Gamble, 2009). Practical knowledge refers to the ability to perform tasks in context and to apply understanding in real situations. Rauner (2007) emphasises that these forms of knowledge are not separate but mutually constitutive in occupational practice, as effective performance depends on both conceptual grounding and situated action.

Rauner's (2007) position aligns with Gamble's (2009) argument that vocational competence develops when conceptual understanding and practical performance are deliberately connected within real work processes. Practical action is therefore not merely routine doing, but informed action grounded in conceptual knowledge. At the same time, conceptual knowledge only becomes meaningful when enacted in practice. Work process knowledge thus represents the integration of knowing and doing within authentic occupational tasks, and it is through this integration that learner competence develops (Rauner, 2007; Gamble, 2009).

2.6.1 The intersection between theoretical and practical knowledge

For students to advance to higher levels of thinking and understanding, especially in vocational institutions, theoretical knowledge enables them the application of practical knowledge where they must be able to apply their knowledge to future problems. However, a study by Papier (2012) revealed that TVET students' expectations for realistically oriented programs are not being met by the college's current curricula. This was based on input from TVET students. This is owing to the strong theoretical curriculum provided in the NCV divisions. Kilbrink (2012) study conducted in Sweden, contradicts Winch's (2012) argument, stating that although there is a gap between theory and practice in technical vocational education, the relationship between theoretical and practical knowledge is dualistic. The issue is the interwoven interaction that should develop in a professional setting. Numerous academics have critiqued the dualistic barrier between theoretical and practical knowledge (Allan, 2007). Instead, "a foundational assumption is that practice cannot be considered in the absence of knowledge (theory)" (Gamble, 2009, p. 35). Gamble agrees with Barnett (2006) and Winch (2010) that theoretical and practical knowledge complement each other. According to Gamble (2009), knowledge practice can be combined in four ways: daily contextual knowledge, implicit conceptual coherence, theorised contextual coherence, and contextualised conceptual coherence.

2.7. Challenges of managing the practical component in the hospitality programme

The rapid expansion of the hospitality and tourism sector has heightened expectations for a workforce that is immediately productive in complex, service-driven environments. As the

industry has grown into a significant contributor to national and global economies (World Travel and Tourism, 2017), it has simultaneously raised the threshold of competence for new entrants. Butler (2019) argues that employability in hospitality increasingly depends on demonstrable skills and professional adaptability rather than qualifications alone. This shift places pressure on education systems to produce graduates who can function effectively in unpredictable service contexts. The implication is that hospitality education is judged not only by the transmission of knowledge but also by its ability to cultivate operational competence.

Internships and practical placements have therefore been advanced as mechanisms for aligning education with industry needs. Lu and Adler (2020) present internships as a response to concerns about graduate readiness, while Richardson (2018) notes that workplace exposure enables students to encounter the realities of service work beyond institutional settings. However, the assumption that exposure automatically leads to competence is not consistently supported. Castro (2019) observes that complaints about job mismatch persist despite long-standing academic–industry collaborations. This suggests that practical training, when poorly coordinated or weakly supervised, may reproduce routine task performance without deeper learning, thereby limiting its bridging function.

The quality of internship experiences further complicates this picture. Farmaki (2018) documents that some placements are characterised by low pay, long working hours, limited mentoring, and unsupportive workplace cultures. Such conditions may undermine the developmental intent of practical training and, in some cases, alienate students from the profession. These findings show that practical exposure is not inherently educational; its value depends on structure, guidance, and alignment with learning outcomes (Lu & Adler, 2020). Therefore, where these elements are absent, internships risk becoming labour experiences rather than learning experiences.

Given the hospitality sector's strong preference for practically competent graduates, TVET colleges play a vital role in skills development. Shereni (2019) emphasises that employability in hospitality is closely linked to applied competence, making the practical component a core part of vocational training. However, the presence of practical elements alone does not ensure their effectiveness. Their impact depends on how they are organised, supported, and integrated into the curriculum. The challenge, therefore, is not merely to include practical training but to manage it

in a way that translates curricular goals into meaningful vocational skills (Lu & Adler, 2020). This highlights the need to explore how lecturers handle these demands when implementing practical components in hospitality programmes.

2.8 Strategies for Bridging Theory and Practice in TVET Hospitality

Persistent concerns about the separation of theory and practice in vocational education have led researchers to propose several approaches for strengthening their integration. In hospitality education, the emphasis on applied competence has pushed institutions to adopt strategies that deliberately connect classroom learning with workplace expectations. Rather than assuming that practical exposure alone produces competence, studies show that structured and well-supported interventions are necessary to translate theoretical understanding into effective performance (Spowart, 2018; Richardson, 2018). These interventions commonly include work-integrated learning, simulation-based instruction, industry partnerships, and assessment practices aligned with occupational tasks.

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is frequently positioned as a key mechanism for linking theory and practice. Spowart (2018) argues that placements with clearly defined learning outcomes allow students to apply conceptual knowledge in real service environments. Richardson (2018) similarly notes that workplace exposure helps students develop realistic expectations of the hospitality sector and understand professional norms. However, both authors caution that placements do not automatically lead to learning; their value depends on supervision, feedback, and alignment with curricular goals. Where coordination is weak, students may perform routine tasks without engaging in reflective learning, thereby limiting the bridging function of WIL.

Simulation-based learning within institutional settings provides another means of approximating workplace realities. Farmaki (2021) emphasises that practical laboratories and simulated hospitality environments allow students to practise skills in controlled conditions before entering industry placements. Such environments can support the gradual development of competence and confidence. Yet simulations depend heavily on available resources and up-to-date equipment. When facilities are poorly resourced or disconnected from current industry practices, their capacity to narrow the theory–practice gap is reduced. This highlights the importance of institutional support in sustaining meaningful practical training.

Industry collaboration and assessment design further shape the integration of theory and practice. Wedekind (2014) stresses that sustained partnerships between colleges and employers expand opportunities for authentic learning and help maintain curriculum relevance. Elbaz and Haddoud (2018) similarly identify weak industry linkages as a systemic limitation in vocational systems. In the South African context, Practical Assessment Tasks prescribed by DHET (2013; 2018) are intended to evaluate applied competence through tasks that resemble workplace activities. When such assessments are carefully implemented, they can encourage students to connect knowledge with performance. Lecturer engagement with industry also plays a role, as current industry awareness enables lecturers to contextualise theory and guide students toward realistic applications (Lu & Adler, 2020). By and large, these strategies indicate that bridging theory and practice requires coordinated efforts across curriculum, assessment, and industry engagement. This perspective is central to the present study, which examines how lecturers manage the disconnection between theory and practice in TVET hospitality programmes.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This study adopts an integrated theoretical framework comprising Curriculum Management Theory, Rauner's (2007) concept of work process knowledge and Gamble's (2009) theory of knowledge integration. The framework is based on the premise that vocational competence cannot be fully explained by a single theoretical perspective, as it is shaped by organisational, occupational and epistemological processes. Curriculum Management Theory explains how institutional decisions regarding curriculum planning, implementation, assessment and resource allocation shape opportunities for practical learning. However, institutional organisation alone does not explain how students develop occupational competence. Rauner's (2007) concept of work process knowledge addresses this dimension by demonstrating how competence develops through engagement in authentic work processes, while Gamble's (2009) theory explains how conceptual understanding and practical experience are integrated to produce meaningful vocational learning.

2.9.1 Curriculum Management Theory

Curriculum Management Theory originates in the evolution of curriculum studies and educational management scholarship, which challenged the view of curriculum as a fixed body of content (Munna & Kalam, 2021). Early curriculum work, such as Tyler's (1949) rational model,

foregrounded planning and evaluation, but subsequent developments in curriculum theory shifted attention to how curriculum is interpreted, mediated, and enacted within institutions. This shift recognised that curriculum intentions do not implement themselves; they are realised through organisational processes, professional judgement, and contextual constraints (Null, 2023). Curriculum, therefore, came to be understood as a dynamic and negotiated process shaped by institutional arrangements rather than a neutral technical plan. This reconceptualisation laid the foundation for viewing the curriculum as requiring active management (Hendrawati, 2025).

A central assumption of Curriculum Management Theory is that teaching and learning are structured by organisational conditions. Decisions about resource distribution, timetabling, assessment design, and staff deployment influence what is ultimately taught and learned (Munna & Kalam, 2021). Curriculum is thus not only a pedagogical matter but also an administrative and managerial one. This perspective challenges the notion that curriculum failure can be explained solely in terms of lecturer competence or student ability (Null, 2023). Instead, it highlights how institutional systems enable or constrain the enactment of the curriculum. Therefore, effective curriculum delivery, from this standpoint, depends on coordination, monitoring, and evaluative feedback mechanisms that align intentions with practice (Hendrawati, 2025).

The practical importance of this theory becomes especially clear in vocational education, where learning is closely linked to material conditions and workplace realities (Munna & Kalam, 2021). TVET curricula depend on workshops, equipment, consumables, and industry partnerships, all of which require careful organisation (Null, 2023). Practical training, therefore, cannot be regarded as an afterthought to theoretical instruction; it is a resource-intensive component that requires intentional design. When institutional support is weak or uneven, practical activities may become symbolic rather than developmental (Hendrawati, 2025). Curriculum Management Theory highlights these structural factors and considers them central to understanding the quality of vocational learning.

In hospitality education, this management aspect is emphasised because competence is demonstrated through performance in real or simulated service environments. Practical sessions depend on coordinated scheduling, functional facilities, and industry-informed practices. Without ongoing organisational support, such learning opportunities risk becoming fragmented or merely

compliance-driven (Null, 2023). Thus, viewing it from a curriculum management perspective enables the study to examine how practical learning is organised, who is responsible for its coordination, and how institutional decisions influence students' opportunities to integrate theory and practice. This perspective is therefore crucial for analysing how the management of practical components in TVET hospitality programmes is implemented and how curricular aims are translated into vocational skills (Hendrawati, 2025).

2.9.2 Work Process Knowledge (Rauner, 2007)

Rauner's (2007) concept of work process knowledge emerged from vocational education research that questioned the adequacy of separating theoretical instruction from occupational practice. Rather than viewing competence as the accumulation of discrete skills, Rauner (2007) conceptualises it as knowledge formed within the logic of real work processes. Work process knowledge develops when learners engage in tasks that reflect the full cycle of occupational activity, including planning, execution, evaluation, and adaptation. It therefore incorporates not only technical proficiency but also situational judgement, anticipation, and responsiveness to changing conditions (Rauner & Ahrens, 2022). This view challenges training models that reduce vocational learning to routine task performance, arguing instead that competence is embedded in the structure and flow of actual work.

A key assumption in Rauner's (2007) framework is that vocational knowledge is contextually situated. Knowledge is not simply transferred from classroom to workplace; it is constructed through participation in meaningful work situations. From this perspective, fragmented exercises or simulated tasks that lack connection to real occupational demands may produce procedural familiarity without deeper understanding. Work process knowledge thus foregrounds the importance of coherence between learning activities and the realities of professional practice (Rauner & Ahrens, 2022). It positions vocational competence as relational, emerging from the interaction between the learner, the task, and the work environment.

This perspective has strong implications for hospitality education, where service work is dynamic, time-sensitive, and interactional. Hospitality tasks rarely occur in isolation; they require coordination across functions, responsiveness to customers, and adherence to professional standards. Thus, Rauner's (2007) concept suggests that practical training should reflect these

complexities rather than reducing them to disconnected exercises. When students are exposed only to segmented or idealised tasks, they may struggle to transfer learning to real service contexts. Therefore, work process knowledge, directs attention to the authenticity and organisation of practical learning opportunities (Hendrawati, 2025).

In the present study, Rauner's (2007) framework helps explain why the management of practical components is important. If competence develops through engagement in coherent work processes, then how practical activities are structured becomes crucial. The sequencing of tasks, the realism of learning environments, and the extent to which students encounter whole work processes all influence knowledge formation (Rauner & Ahrens, 2022). Work process knowledge thus complements the curriculum management lens by highlighting which practical experiences are educationally meaningful (Hendrawati, 2025). It provides a conceptual basis for examining whether the practical component in hospitality programmes supports integrated vocational competence or remains fragmented.

2.9.3 Knowledge Integration (Gamble, 2009)

Gamble's (2009) work on vocational knowledge challenges the persistent tendency in education to treat theoretical and practical knowledge as separate domains. She distinguishes between propositional knowledge (knowing that) and practical knowledge (knowing how), arguing that vocational competence depends on their integration rather than their coexistence. Propositional knowledge provides the conceptual frameworks, principles, and explanatory systems that enable learners to understand the rationale for actions, whereas practical knowledge enables performance in context (Gamble, 2020). Gamble's (2009) contribution lies in showing that these forms of knowledge are not hierarchical but interdependent. When one is privileged at the expense of the other, vocational learning becomes either overly abstract or narrowly procedural.

A central assumption in Gamble's argument is that knowledge gains meaning through use. Theoretical understanding that is not put into practice risks remaining inactive, while practice that lacks a conceptual basis risks becoming routine and unreflective (Gamble, 2020). Integration, therefore, enables learners to transfer knowledge across different situations, adapt to unfamiliar problems, and make informed judgments. This viewpoint moves beyond the simplistic idea that more practical experience automatically leads to competence (Gamble, Parker & Moroz, 2020).

Instead, it stresses the importance of the connection between conceptual learning and real-world performance.

The implications of this view are significant for vocational curricula. Knowledge integration does not happen automatically; it depends on how learning experiences are designed and connected. Sequencing, scaffolding, and alignment between theory lessons and practical tasks become essential (Gamble, 2020). When curricula treat theory and practice as separate streams, students may find it hard to see their connection. Gamble's framework, therefore, highlights curriculum design and delivery as areas where integration must be intentionally encouraged. In hospitality education, where work situations are diverse and customer-driven, the ability to apply conceptual knowledge in real time is vital. Students need to understand how to perform tasks and why certain procedures matter for quality, safety, and customer satisfaction (Gamble, Parker & Moroz, 2020). This study uses Gamble's theory to examine whether practical components are organised in ways that support such integration. It emphasises how practical learning is managed and how it influences whether students develop flexible vocational skills or remain limited to procedural tasks.

2.9.4 Integrating the Theoretical Perspectives

Vocational competence in TVET hospitality programmes cannot be adequately explained by a single theoretical perspective, as it develops through the interaction of institutional, pedagogical and occupational processes. Curriculum Management Theory, Rauner's (2007) concept of work process knowledge, and Gamble's (2009) theory of knowledge integration are therefore integrated in this study to explain different yet interdependent dimensions of vocational learning. Curriculum Management Theory explains how curriculum planning, implementation, assessment and resource allocation create the institutional conditions that shape learning opportunities. However, it does not explain how students transform those opportunities into occupational competence. Rauner's (2007) concept of work process knowledge addresses this limitation by situating competence in authentic work activities, enabling students to understand not only what they do but also why they do it. Gamble (2009) extends this explanation by demonstrating that vocational competence is realised only when conceptual knowledge acquired in educational settings is successfully integrated with practical experience. The three perspectives therefore operate across different

levels of analysis, with curriculum management providing the organisational foundation, work process knowledge explaining occupational learning, and knowledge integration describing the cognitive process through which vocational competence is achieved.

The value of integrating these perspectives lies in their ability to frame vocational learning as a coherent process rather than a series of disconnected educational activities. Effective curriculum management determines how practical learning is organised, when students encounter workplace-related tasks, and how assessment is structured to reinforce learning. These institutional decisions shape students' opportunities to participate in authentic work processes, which Rauner (2007) identifies as essential for developing occupational competence. However, participation in workplace activities alone does not guarantee meaningful learning. Gamble (2020) argues that competence develops only when students can connect theoretical principles to practical application, enabling them to transfer knowledge across different occupational contexts. Empirical studies in vocational education similarly show that graduates are better prepared for employment when practical learning is deliberately integrated with theoretical instruction rather than treated as a separate curriculum component (Gamble, Parker & Moroz, 2020). Viewed collectively, the three theories present vocational competence as the outcome of purposeful curriculum organisation, authentic workplace engagement, and the integration of conceptual and practical knowledge.

The integrated framework also offers a more comprehensive explanation of the persistent theory-practice gap in TVET education. Much of the existing literature attributes this gap to factors such as inadequate resources, lecturer competence, or insufficient workplace exposure. While these explanations are valid, they often examine individual challenges in isolation. The integrated framework instead suggests that the theory-practice gap emerges when the relationships among curriculum management, workplace learning, and knowledge integration become fragmented (Gamble, Parker & Moroz, 2020). Weak curriculum coordination may reduce opportunities for authentic practical learning, while limited workplace engagement constrains the development of work-process knowledge. Similarly, if theoretical instruction is poorly connected to practical activities, students may complete assessments without developing transferable vocational competence. The framework therefore shifts attention from isolated institutional shortcomings to the processes through which curriculum management either facilitates or constrains the integration of theory and practice.

The integrated theoretical framework provides the conceptual lens for this study, aligning directly with its focus on managing the practical component of Hospitality programmes. Rather than treating curriculum management, workplace learning and knowledge development as separate phenomena, the framework enables these dimensions to be analysed as interconnected processes that collectively shape graduate preparedness (Gamble, Parker & Moroz, 2020). It provides a basis for examining how lecturers organise practical learning, implement assessment, utilise available resources and facilitate students' engagement with authentic vocational tasks. By integrating organisational, occupational and epistemological perspectives, the framework offers a comprehensive explanation of how practical curriculum management influences the development of vocational competence within South African TVET hospitality programmes.

2.10 Summary of the chapter

This chapter reviewed the literature on the management of the practical component in TVET Hospitality programmes and established the theoretical foundation for the study. The review demonstrated that vocational competence depends on the effective integration of theoretical instruction and practical learning, rather than on either dimension in isolation. Although the literature recognises practical learning as essential for graduate preparedness and employability, it also identified persistent challenges relating to curriculum coordination, practical assessment, institutional resources and industry collaboration. Collectively, these studies indicate that the quality of practical learning is influenced not only by curriculum policy but also by how the practical component is planned, organised, implemented and assessed within institutional contexts.

The chapter further established an integrated theoretical framework comprising Curriculum Management Theory, Rauner's (2007) concept of work process knowledge and Gamble's (2009) theory of knowledge integration to explain how institutional curriculum management, authentic work processes and the integration of theoretical and practical knowledge collectively shape vocational competence. This framework provides the conceptual lens for examining lecturers' experiences of managing the practical component in Hospitality programmes. Having established the empirical and theoretical foundations of the study, the next chapter presents the research methodology, including the research paradigm, design, sampling, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, trustworthiness and ethical considerations adopted in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the literature on this study was reviewed to examine how the practical components of the Hospitality programme are managed and to propose a more effective approach to their management. The theoretical framework for this study was also discussed, along with its application. In this chapter, the study's research design, methodology, and ethical considerations will be discussed. Conducting a study on human experiences related to a particular subject requires that the researcher clarify the philosophical stance, the expected methodology, the data-generation process, and the data-analysis methods. The chapter will begin by discussing the research paradigm, then proceed to the research design, research methods, sampling, data analysis, ethical considerations, and the study's trustworthiness.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Prior to embarking on the study, it is important for the researcher to select the research paradigm within which the study will be conducted. A paradigm, according to Bryman (2020), is the basic model or frame of reference used to organise observation and reasoning. As a result, it will not provide solutions to critical questions, but it may aid in their search. According to Oplatka (2018), paradigms are human constructs that identify where the researcher is coming from. There are numerous paradigms, but the four main ones are positivist, post-positivist, interpretivist, and critical. In this study, I adopt the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretive paradigm is concerned with understanding the world from individual's subjective experiences. Interpretivists use meaning-oriented methodologies, such as interviewing or participant observation, that rely on a subjective relationship between the researcher and subjects. This paradigm, like others, ensures that participants' views and responses are prioritised. Because this study is framed from a social science perspective, it is essential to understand TVET lecturers' experiences in managing the practical component of the hospitality programme. It is vital to note that Shannon-Baker (2019) state that an interpretive paradigm is designed to understand the subjective world of human experience. Therefore, gaining knowledge of the experiences of the TVET lecturers is essential to

attach meaning to the world they function. Since people's focus on interpretation depends on their subjective experiences and how they construct their social world (Coburn et al, 2016), it is essential to understand the experiences of TVET lecturers in managing the practical component of the hospitality programme.

3.3 Research Approach

There is different research approaches used to conduct research in the humanities. These approaches range from qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. This study employs a qualitative research approach. The specific aim of this qualitative study is to examine how TVET lecturers manage the practical component of the hospitality programme in the selected TVET schools. According to Mabovula (2019), qualitative research tries to explore human behaviour, experience, and motivation. The ability to portray participants' thoughts and perspectives, and the emphasis on hearing their voices, make qualitative methods distinguishing (Meyer, 2021). The qualitative research method is appropriate for this study because it aims to examine the experiences of TVET lecturers in managing the practical component of the hospitality programme. Qualitative research, like other research methods, has advantages and limitations.

According to Check and Schutt (2020), one benefit of employing a qualitative research approach is that it can answer issues about leadership roles between people and entities. Qualitative research, scholars argue, produces comprehensive descriptions of processes from the perspectives of participants, making it suited for investigating lived experiences. Qualitative research comprises research methodologies that allow participants' voices to be heard and allow marginalised people to express themselves thus bringing value to the data gathered from their experiences (Check and Schutt, 2020). The advantage of adopting a qualitative approach as a method for interested researchers, according to Check and Schutt (2020), is that it allows them to observe, hear, and interact with the participants and their viewpoints.

This study's shortcomings are that the data findings cannot be generalised to the larger population, and the size of the selected sample is also a limiting factor. Despite the small sample size, the amount of data collected is not substantial, making analysis difficult. For example, the interviews

will be transcribed verbatim, which is time-consuming and exhausting; nonetheless, it will be done meticulously, which proves difficult in and of itself.

3.4. Research design.

The case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of a situation and the meaning for those involved. A “case” may refer to an individual, an event, a social activity, a group, organisation or institution (Coburn and Spillane, 2019). It could be a descriptive, explanatory or exploratory form of research inquiry, etc. Furthermore, direct conversation with selected participants in their environment provides a hands-on, first-hand experience. However, Fritzsche and Just (2018) argue that it was inappropriate to conceptualise a case study as a method, methodology or research design. Researchers, such as Marczyk and Festinger (2017), believe that because results are intrinsically bound, research cannot be conducted successfully using a case study.

In this study, the exploratory research design is adopted. An exploratory research design focuses on collecting either secondary or primary data using an unstructured, formal or informal procedure to interpret them. Among all the classified research designs above, exploratory research designs incorporate the least amount of scientific method and rigour because of their aims and structure. Some examples of exploratory research designs include in-depth interviews, focus groups, and projective techniques. For this study to answer the research questions and address the objectives of the study, the semi-structured interview will be utilised to generate the data. The study intended firstly to explore how TVET lecturers at the selected campuses for this study manage the practical component of the hospitality industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Secondly, to understand from the TVET assessment literature about the effective ways of managing the practical component in the Hospitality programme. Thirdly, to explore how the NCV curriculum has been revised to ensure that learners are prepared to be work-ready. And lastly, to provide recommendations (if any) for managing the practical components in the Hospitality programme. To achieve these objectives, the researcher chose an exploratory approach, as it “is interpretive” (Speziale, Streubert & Carpenter, 2019, p.25) “inductive and descriptive” (Flood, 2020, p.10).

3.5. Sampling

According to Murray and Nash (2017), sampling is the process of selecting a subsection to be included in a study. In qualitative research, sampling is frequently done with a specific goal in mind. According to Naoum (2012), qualitative sampling is used to gain a deeper understanding of people's experiences. Qualitative research employs a variety of sampling techniques, including convenience, purposive, and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling differs from random sampling in that it is utilised when the researcher has certain criteria in mind when selecting participants; it is non-random, and the researcher sets the criteria for defining participation (Petty, Thomson and Stew, 2022).

Purposive sampling, according to Mabovula (2019), is a method used by researchers to pick participants who have the capacity to answer the research questions; it is critical to choose persons who can supply information that answers the research questions. Purposive sampling is used to choose participants for the study. The focus of this study is on one college in Kwa-Zulu Natal, which has four campuses that run a hospitality programme. From each of the participating campuses, four Hospitality lecturers are identified in each of the campuses, 1 senior lecturer and 1 HOD in each campus, which makes the number of participants eight (8).

The data reflects the experiences of the eight participants who availed themselves and shared with the researcher their lived experiences as TVET lecturers.

3.6 Data generation method

Collection of data is an important aspect of a research study because it provides the researcher with the needed field materials for meaning making. Moser and Korstjens (2018) suggest that researchers should always be careful when deciding on data collection methods because the data collection of the qualitative analysis does not have a fixed structure and is, therefore, versatile.

In this study, semi-structured interviews are used to generate qualitative data from research participants. Interviews are used to collect rich data, and the participants have the room to express their ideas and voice their opinions without being directed, and this allows researchers to have new ideas on the phenomena. The semi-structured interview is explained further below.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are one of the most popular methods of generating data in qualitative inquiry (Saunders et al., 2019). According to Bryman (2016), qualitative interviews are used to gain access to participants' viewpoints and experiences, as well as acquire rich data that clarifies their thoughts on the issue under investigation. Qualitative research interviews focus on specific topics and explore participants' experiences (Swanson and Holton, 2005). As a result, this approach of data collection is deemed appropriate since I want to explore TVET lecturers' experiences in managing the practical component of the hospitality programme. Through semi-structured interviews, research participants can freely express their views, and the researchers could do follow-ups for purposes of seeking clarity on issues being discussed (Van Zyl, 2019). The main objective of semi-structured interviews, specifically in this study, is to explore TVET lecturers' experiences in managing the practical component of the hospitality programme.

The advantage of employing semi-structured interviews, according to Shannon-Baker (2016), is that they allow researchers to gather rich data when they are unable to observe participants directly in context. According to Thomson and Pamacek (2018), the researcher oversees steering the interview dialogue towards the topic and research questions. Each participant was given 30-40 minutes per interview session. These interviews were conducted face-to-face to allow the researcher to probe as necessary. The data provided by the participants were recorded on tape. After the interviews were recorded, the researcher listened to them repeatedly to transcribe the data for analysis.

3.7. Process of data analysis

Data analysis is the systematic process of organising, interpreting and making meaning from qualitative data to identify patterns, categories and themes that address the research objectives (Saunders et al., 2019). This study employed Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis, a flexible and rigorous method for identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Reflexive thematic analysis comprises six iterative phases: (1) familiarisation with the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) generating initial themes; (4) reviewing and developing themes; (5) refining, defining and naming themes; and (6) writing up

the findings (Braun & Clarke, 2022). Although these phases are presented sequentially, the analysis was iterative, with the researcher moving back and forth between phases as new insights emerged.

The first phase involved familiarisation with the data. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim to produce textual data for analysis (Meyer, 2021). The transcripts were read repeatedly while listening to the recordings to ensure transcription accuracy and to gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences. During this process, preliminary notes were taken on recurring ideas, significant statements, and potential patterns relevant to the research objectives (Oplatka, 2018; Braun & Clarke, 2022). This immersion in the data provided the foundation for subsequent coding and interpretation.

The second phase involved generating initial codes. An inductive approach to coding was adopted, allowing codes to emerge directly from participants' accounts rather than from predetermined categories. Meaningful segments of text were identified, highlighted and assigned descriptive codes that reflected their underlying meaning. Each interview transcript was coded individually before comparisons were made across the entire dataset to ensure that every participant's experiences were represented. Coding remained iterative throughout the analysis, with codes being refined, merged or renamed as the researcher developed a deeper understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The third and fourth phases focused on generating initial themes and reviewing and developing themes. Related codes were compared and grouped according to conceptual similarities to form preliminary categories and candidate themes. These themes were then reviewed against both the coded extracts and the complete dataset to determine whether they accurately represented participants' experiences and addressed the research questions. Themes lacking sufficient supporting evidence were revised, merged with related themes or discarded, while coherent themes and sub-themes were retained (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This iterative review ensured that each theme reflected a meaningful pattern across the dataset rather than isolated participant responses.

The fifth phase involved refining, defining and naming themes. Each theme was carefully examined to clarify its scope, define its central meaning and distinguish it from the other themes.

Clear and descriptive names were assigned to ensure that each theme accurately represented the issues emerging from the participants' narratives. Throughout this process, themes were continually compared with the original interview transcripts to ensure that the interpretations remained grounded in participants' accounts and accurately reflected their experiences.

The sixth and final phase involved writing up the findings. The refined themes were interpreted in relation to the research objectives, the reviewed literature and the integrated theoretical framework comprising Curriculum Management Theory, Rauner's (2007) concept of work process knowledge and Gamble's (2009) theory of knowledge integration. The findings were supported by verbatim quotations from participants, demonstrating that the interpretations were grounded in the data. To minimise researcher bias and enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis, reflexivity was maintained throughout the analytical process by continually revisiting the original transcripts, documenting coding decisions and discussing the development and interpretation of themes with the research supervisors. These strategies enhanced the credibility, dependability and confirmability of the findings.

3.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Trustworthiness, according to Marczyk and Festinger (2017), is the soundness of research in terms of its appropriateness and the integrity of its results. In a qualitative study, trustworthiness is utilised to bolster the notion that the findings are important. According to Van Zyl (2014), the credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of data in a qualitative study are all factors to consider. The above four issues are discussed in detail in the following paragraphs.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility comprises the truthfulness of the data generated in the study. According to Marczyk and Festinger (2017), credibility refers to the accuracy of the documentation, the reliability of the document's producer, and freedom from errors. Similarly, Shannon-Baker (2016) states that credibility concerns ensuring that the instruments used to measure results are trustworthy. To ensure that the findings are credible, I had to ensure that I did not coerce the participants and that they knew what the study was all about and that they know everything about their rights through an informed consent form that was given to them before the interview.

3.8.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a qualitative study may be applicable to other contexts with similar characteristics (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Van Zyl, 2014). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative studies do not seek statistical generalisation; instead, they provide sufficient contextual detail to enable readers to determine whether the findings are relevant to their own settings (Singh & Masuku, 2014). Accordingly, the findings of this study are intended to provide analytical insights into the management of the practical component in Hospitality programmes rather than to represent all TVET colleges in South Africa. To enhance transferability, the researcher provided a rich, or thick, description of the research context, participant characteristics, sampling strategy, data collection procedures and data analysis process. These detailed descriptions enable readers to evaluate the similarity between the study setting and other TVET contexts and to determine the applicability of the findings to their own environments. Although the study was conducted at a single TVET college with a relatively small sample of lecturers, the detailed documentation of the research process enables other researchers to assess the relevance of the findings to comparable institutional contexts and facilitates replication of the study in similar settings.

3.8.3 Dependability

Lewis (2015) defines dependability as “the stability of findings over time”. It concerns the consistency of the research findings. According to Shannon-Baker (2016), dependability is the extent to which a piece of work can obtain similar results if the work were repeated in the same context with the same methods. Swanson and Holton (2005) suggest that the researcher should use an “overlapping method” to ensure dependability. To ensure dependability in this study, I described all stages of the research that led to its results so that future researchers could replicate it. I used a similar interview schedule for all the participants in the study. The interviews conducted at the TVET campuses use the same questions to ensure consistency and reliability, suggesting that the findings are dependable.

3.8.4 Confirmability

According to Check and Schutt (2012), confirmability is the researcher's concern in a qualitative study regarding the study's objectivity. Further on confirmability, Shannon-Baker (2016) argued

that the results of the study must be based on the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the researcher's predilection. I eliminated any bias in the study by reviewing the generated data, reflecting several times to ensure I was not biased in any way. In addition, when the transcripts were completed, I gave each participant a copy so they could confirm whether what I wrote accurately reflected what transpired during our discussions. Member checking is another technique I used during the research process. Member-checking enables researchers to check that their interpretations are consistent with participants' interpretations and reflect participants' realities rather than researchers' (Lewis, 2015).

3.9. Ethical considerations

There is consensus among scholars that all research conducted must adhere to ethical principles and standards. Ethics is concerned with moral issues (Anderson, 2017). I made sure that I adhere to the highest ethical standards of conducting qualitative research. Daniel (2012) avers that there are different ethics for different professions. Mabovula (2009, p.25) mentions that research ethics refers to “the moral dimensions of researching; our decisions about what is right and wrong while engaged in research”. Qualitative research involves sharing information about the participants with the researcher. The researcher needs to gain trust from the participants throughout the stages involved in the research. Akhtar (2016) maintains that ethical issues involve respect for the participants, informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, protection of the participants against any harm and caring. For purposes of this study, I obtained ethical clearance from the University of South Africa. It is during such an ethical clearance application that I explained how all the principles and processes governing the conduct of research would be upheld. For example, getting permission from gatekeepers to conduct research is one of the processes researchers must undertake. For this study, I applied to the provincial Department of Education seeking permission to conduct the study in the selected campuses. I also visited the schools to discuss with the participants the procedures of the research. Participants were informed about their autonomy and rights. For instance, they were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage during the research process, without any negative consequences. After they agreed to participate, I gave each one of them a declaration of informed consent form to sign. In addition, I assured them that whatever they told me would remain between us and that nobody would know who gave me the

information that I used to write the research report. In other words, their anonymity would be guaranteed, and so was their safety. Anonymity is used to protect the identities of the participants so that they cannot be harmed should it happen that the information they provided was too sensitive and might incriminate others who may not necessarily be participants in the study.

3.10 Chapter summary

The research design and methodology used in the study are presented in this chapter. The chapter also discussed the research paradigm and research approach. A case study was also mentioned as a favoured methodology for this study in the chapter. All the study procedures were discussed in detail, including sampling methodologies, data generation methods, data processing, guaranteeing trustworthiness, and ethical considerations. The next chapter focuses on the data presentation and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Three outlined the research design and methodological framework that guided this study, including the qualitative approach adopted to explore lecturers' experiences of managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector. Building on that foundation, this chapter presents and analyses the empirical data generated from the study. The focus of this chapter is on how lecturers responsible for the Hospitality programme perceive, organise, and manage the practical component prescribed in the curriculum. The analysis draws on data from semi-structured interviews with eight participants, comprising Senior Lecturers and Heads of Divisions from four selected TVET college campuses in KwaZulu-Natal. These participants occupy positions that connect curriculum implementation, assessment oversight, and institutional management, providing insight into both the operational and strategic dimensions of practical training in Hospitality education.

The presentation and analysis of the data are guided by the study's following research questions.

- i. How do TVET lecturers understand and describe effective assessment practices for managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme?
- ii. Has the NCV curriculum been revised to ensure that learners are prepared to be work-ready?
- iii. How do TVET lecturers at the selected campuses for this study manage the practical component of the hospitality industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa?
- iv. What recommendations (if any) of managing the practical components in the Hospitality programme?

In addressing these questions, the chapter foregrounds participants' accounts and experiences, with attention to patterns and variations emerging across the dataset. Thus, only analytically relevant data are presented, with emphasis placed on representative excerpts that illuminate key issues raised by participants.

Data generation took place during the latter part of the 2024 academic year, coinciding with the National Certificate Vocational (NCV) final examination period. This institutional context was relevant for understanding the conditions under which participants' accounts were produced, as this period characterised the heightened academic and administrative responsibilities. Such conditions reflect broader structural realities within the TVET sector, where institutional workloads and organisational rhythms often shape access to academic and management staff and influence the pace of research engagement. The data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Interview transcripts were systematically examined to identify recurring patterns and silent yet salient issues relevant to the research questions. The analysis prioritises analytically significant and representative data segments rather than an exhaustive reproduction of interview material. Verbatim quotations are used selectively to illustrate key themes while preserving the integrity of participants' voices and ensuring analytical focus.

The chapter proceeds as follows. It begins with a profile of the participants to contextualise their professional roles and responsibilities, which is essential for interpreting their perspectives on the management of the practical component. This is followed by a thematic presentation and analysis of the findings, organised around the major themes that emerged from the data. The chapter concludes with a synthesis of the key findings, highlighting their relevance to the study's objectives and providing a transition to the discussion chapter, where these findings are examined in relation to existing literature and theoretical perspectives.

4.2. Profiling the Participants

Demographic details refer to the key characteristics of a group of individuals that are relevant for understanding the context within which data are generated and interpreted (Kumar, 2020). In qualitative research, such information is essential for situating participants' perspectives and for enhancing the credibility and transparency of the findings. Demographic attributes provide insight into the backgrounds, professional positioning, and experiential bases that shape how participants engage with and interpret the phenomenon under investigation.

In this study, the demographic characteristics considered include age groups, gender, highest educational qualifications, race composition, and years of professional experience within the

TVET sector. These attributes are particularly relevant given the role of experience, training background, and institutional positioning in influencing participants' approaches to managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme. A summary of the demographic details of the participants is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Participants' Profile

Name of participants	Gender	Number of years spent in current position	Qualifications obtained	Subject specialisation	Number of teaching hours per week.
Participant 1	Female	7 years	National Diploma in Hospitality Management, Post Graduate Diploma in Education.	Food Preparation, Hospitality Services.	20 hours
Participant 2	Female	4 years	National Diploma in Catering Management.	Food Preparation, Hospitality Generics.	20 hours
Participant 3	Female	6 years	National Diploma in Hospitality Management, National Professional Diploma in Education.	Hospitality Services, Client Services and Human Relations.	15 hours
Participant 4	Female	4 years	National Diploma in Hospitality Management Sciences, Post Graduate Diploma in Education.	Hospitality Services, Catering Theory and Practical.	15 hours
Participant 5	Male	5 years	National Diploma in Marketing.	Mathematical Literacy	10 hours

Participant 6	Female	4 years	National Diploma in Human Resources Management, Post Graduate Diploma in Education.	Computer Practice	10 hours
Participant 7	Female	3 years	Diploma in Teacher Education.	Communication	5 hours
Participant 8	Female	4 years	National Diploma in Hospitality Management, National Professional Diploma in Education, and Advanced Certificate in Education.	Applied Management	5 hours

The data presented in Table 4.1 reveal that participants' views were sampled, characterised by a predominant female composition and comparable levels of professional experience in their current roles. The demographic profile indicates that the Hospitality programme at the selected TVET campuses is predominantly staffed by female lecturers. This pattern reflects wider trends in Hospitality education and service-oriented disciplines, where teaching and supervisory roles are often feminised. In this regard, such gendered staffing patterns are relevant for interpreting participants' accounts, as they may shape expectations around pastoral care, student support, and the intensity of practical supervision, all of which are central to managing practice-based programmes. This contextual factor provides an important lens for understanding how practical management responsibilities are experienced within the TVET Hospitality context (Baum, 2015; Mooney & Baum, 2019; Acker, 2017).

More so, the participants reported between three (3) and seven (7) years of experience in their current roles, indicating sustained engagement with curriculum delivery, assessment processes, and institutional routines. This level of experience suggests that participants' accounts are informed by repeated exposure to practical implementation challenges rather than isolated incidents. Thus, experienced TVET lecturers are generally better positioned to recognise systemic constraints and recurring operational issues, lending credibility and depth to their reflections on the management of the practical component (Gamble, 2014; Moodie, 2016).

The majority of four (4) participants held hospitality-related qualifications complemented by formal teaching credentials, positioning them to meet both the pedagogical and industry-specific demands of the programme. This combination is particularly significant in vocational education, where effective practical teaching depends on the integration of subject expertise and instructional competence. However, variation in disciplinary backgrounds, particularly at the management level, is an important contextual factor in interpreting differences in how practical assessment and oversight are approached across roles. Therefore, such variation has been shown to influence curriculum coherence and assessment consistency in vocational settings (Lucas, Spencer & Claxton, 2012; Wheelahan, 2015; UNESCO, 2016).

Also, participants' subject specialisations ranged from core Hospitality modules to applied management and general academic subjects. This distribution is analytically significant, as

proximity to Hospitality-specific practical delivery shapes the depth and nature of engagement with practical training challenges. The lecturers directly involved in practical modules are more likely to encounter issues related to equipment availability, time allocation, and assessment logistics, whereas those in broader managerial roles may operate at a more strategic level. Thus, research in TVET contexts highlights that such differences in subject proximity influence how practical challenges are perceived and articulated (Grollmann, 2008; Allais, 2020).

Furthermore, teaching loads varied considerably among participants, with Senior Lecturers carrying substantially heavier instructional responsibilities than Heads of Divisions. This workload distribution is particularly relevant for interpreting the findings, as high teaching loads are closely associated with increased involvement in practical supervision, assessment, and student support. In practice-based programmes, intensive workloads can constrain opportunities for moderation, reflection, and innovation, thereby shaping lecturers' experiences of managing the practical component. McGrath et al. (2019) identified workload intensity as a key factor affecting the quality and sustainability of vocational teaching and assessment practices.

4.3 Thematic Data Analysis and Interpretation

In this section, the findings of this study were analysed thematically, resulting in four main themes emerging from the data. Theme 1, Management of the Practical Component in the Hospitality Programme, highlights issues related to the implementation of practical activities, resource availability, time utilisation, and assessment practices. Theme 2, Systemic and Institutional Challenges in Aligning Theory and Practice, focuses on perceived mismatches between theoretical instruction and practical training, the underlying causes of these disconnects, and institutional constraints that affect implementation. Theme 3, Effective Management Strategies for Practical Training, examines lecturers' perspectives on industry alignment, graduate competencies, and departmental performance in delivering the practical component. Theme 4, Practical Assessment and Graduate Work Readiness, explores the relationship between practical assessment practices and the employability of Hospitality graduates.

However, only verbatim excerpts directly relevant to the sub-theme under discussion are presented in the analysis. The themes and sub-themes reflect key factors shaping lecturers' experiences of

managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme within the TVET sector and provide insight into challenges, practices, and perceived outcomes associated with practical training. Table 4.2 outlines the themes and corresponding sub-themes identified during the data analysis.

Table 4.2: Thematic Analysis

Theme	Sub-themes	Indicative Codes
Management of the Practical Component in the Hospitality Programme	Current implementation and pedagogical practices	70/30 policy implementation; theory–practice misalignment; pedagogical strategies; resource constraints; financial management
	Resource adequacy and facility management	Infrastructure deficits; shortages of utensils; late arrival of uniforms; procurement failures; financial constraints; inadequate resource management; practicals not conducted
	Time utilisation and activity design	Timetable misalignment; reduced practical sessions; inconsistent activity design; compensatory strategies; procurement delays; absence of reliable planning systems
	Assessment alignment and quality assurance	Pass rate pressures; competency mapping; inconsistent assessment practices; unequal departmental support; industry placement constraints; system inconsistencies
Systemic and Institutional Challenges in Aligning Theory and Practice	Perceived theory–practice mismatch	Policies not followed; practicals not conducted
	Root causes of the theory–practice disconnect	Lack of Hospitality-qualified lecturers; industry demands; financial scarcity; duty load allocation

	Institution-specific and cross-cutting challenges	Timetabling constraints; infrastructure failures; industry knowledge gaps; staff upskilling deficits; underfunding; procurement inflexibility; weak policy implementation
	Staff dynamics and problem resolution mechanisms	Gendered staffing patterns; informal conflict resolution practices; inconsistent formal support structures
Strategies for Effective Management of Practical Training	Alignment of training with industry requirements	Personal industry networks; institutional support mechanisms
	Graduate competency expectations in Hospitality	Operational skill deficits; industry-aligned vision; reduced training scope; neglect of entrepreneurial skills; fragmented resources; infrastructure decay
	Curriculum delivery and departmental performance	Institutional underperformance; mandated practical components; operational disparities
Practical Assessment and Graduate Work Readiness	Industry perceptions of practical assessment outcomes	Limited industry awareness; lecturer expertise inconsistencies; practical skill gaps; technical muscle memory; problem-solving in operational contexts
	Practical assessment as a predictor of employability	Skill gaps; weak assessment–employment linkage

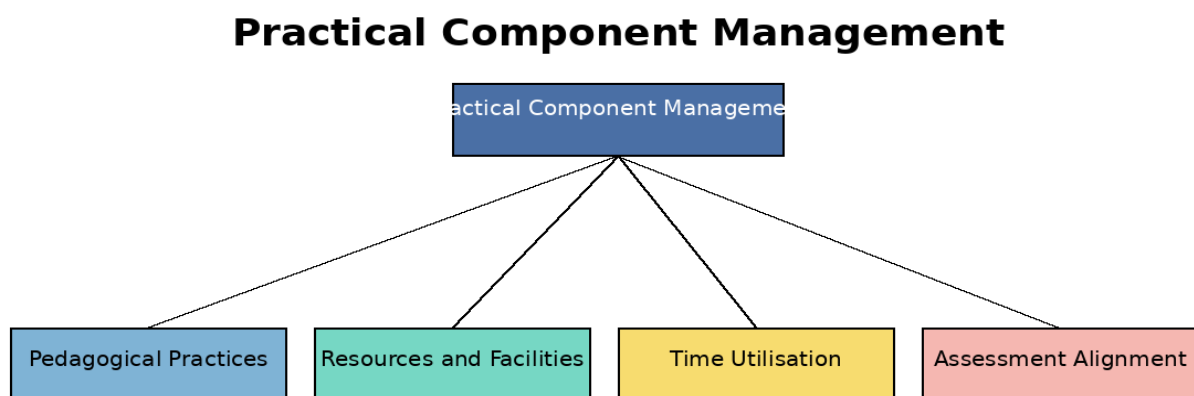
4.3.1 Theme 1: TVET Lecturers' Experiences in Managing the Practical Component of the Hospitality Programme.

This study explored how TVET lecturers at the selected campuses manage the practical component of the Hospitality programme. The findings show that lecturers view the practical component as essential to Hospitality training; however, its implementation is shaped by institutional conditions that affect pedagogical practice, resource availability, time allocation, and assessment processes. Participants described adapting practical teaching strategies in response to limited equipment, procurement delays, and constrained facilities, which in some cases resulted in reduced or irregular practical sessions. Time allocated for practical work was reported to be inconsistently applied, while assessment practices were perceived as unevenly aligned with practical learning outcomes across campuses. Four sub-themes emerged from the data: current implementation and pedagogical practices, resource adequacy and facility management, time utilisation and activity design, and assessment alignment and quality assurance.

Research Question: *How do TVET lecturers at the selected campuses manage the practical component of the Hospitality programme in KwaZulu-Natal?*

The theme TVET Lecturers' Experiences in Managing the Practical Component of the Hospitality Programme is illustrated in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Management of the Practical Component



The figure shows the key sub-themes that emerged from the data, namely pedagogical practices, resource and facility management, time utilisation, and assessment alignment.

4.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Current Implementation and Pedagogical Strategies

The participants reported significant challenges and strategic approaches to implementing practical components within the Hospitality programme. The participants consistently described the practical component of the Hospitality programme as essential to skills development yet unevenly implemented in practice. While lecturers acknowledged the central role of practical training in linking theory to hands-on competence, they reported that institutional and administrative constraints frequently undermine its effective delivery. Across accounts, a clear tension emerged between curriculum prescriptions for practical training and the realities of classroom and kitchen-based implementation.

Participant 1 explained that although the curriculum stipulates a higher proportion of practical work, this requirement is seldom met due to delays in resourcing and administrative processes. She noted that practical activities are carefully planned, including budgeting and student projections, yet implementation is disrupted by the late delivery of uniforms and materials. As a result, practical sessions are often postponed and compressed into assessment periods, limiting opportunities for demonstration and skills development:

“Currently, the document states that we are supposed to be doing 60% practical and 40% theory, but that is not what is happening... the uniform will come in July... when we must do practical, we end up combining everything with ISAT, and that leads to not doing a proper practical. There are no practicals done, not even a demonstration.” (Participant 1, 2024)

This experience was echoed by Participant 2, who identified bureaucratic procurement and approval processes as a major barrier to practical implementation. She indicated that although practical requirements are clearly identified and submitted timeously, delays in supply result in practical sessions being rushed, compromised, or omitted altogether:

“Despite the representation of the 60% and 40% theory and practical, respectively, it is difficult for the college to meet that because of the bureaucracy involved in approval and supply of materials... most times our requests are delayed until the end of the term.”
(Participant 2, 2024)

Participants further reported that scheduled practical time is frequently redirected toward theoretical instruction due to the absence of necessary resources. Participant 7 explained that although timetables formally allocate time for kitchen-based practical sessions, these sessions are often conducted in classrooms instead, undermining the intended structure of the programme:

“According to the timetable, every week we are supposed to go to the kitchen, but we don’t do it... the students are given a timetable written kitchen, but they will be in class doing theory.” (Participant 7, 2024)

Similarly, Participant 8 emphasised that delayed funding and procurement processes disadvantage students and disrupt pedagogical continuity. She explained that lecturers are often compelled to prioritise theory during scheduled practical periods with the intention of compensating later, a practice that rarely materialises in practice:

“The current state of practical implementation disadvantages students... delayed funding prevents the timely purchase of supplies, forcing lecturers to teach theory during practical time.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Against the background, the participants indicate a persistent gap between the intended pedagogical design of the practical component and its implementation. In this perspective, participants consistently attributed reduced practical exposure, rushed assessments, and limited opportunities for demonstration and skill development to institutional delays, resource shortages, and scheduling adjustments. Therefore, the conditions significantly shape how pedagogical strategies are enacted and constrain lecturers’ ability to deliver practical training in line with curriculum expectations.

Although participants consistently identified procurement delays and resource shortages as major barriers, the extent to which these affected practical implementation differed across campuses.

Lecturers from relatively better-resourced campuses described adapting teaching schedules to preserve some practical exposure, whereas others indicated that practical sessions were almost entirely replaced by theory. These differences suggest that the management of the practical component is influenced not only by curriculum requirements but also by institutional capacity and local management practices. This finding informed the proposed framework by highlighting the need for integrated planning, timely procurement systems and campus-level operational flexibility.

4.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Resource Adequacy and Facility Management

The participants shared varied but converging experiences regarding resource adequacy and facility management in relation to the delivery of the practical component of the Hospitality programme. While some participants acknowledged the availability of basic utensils, the overall picture that emerged pointed to persistent shortages, infrastructural inadequacies, and ineffective procurement processes that significantly constrained practical teaching and learning.

Participant 1 indicated that at her campus, certain basic utensils aligned with Level 2 curriculum requirements were available, and that students were issued toolboxes containing essential implements. This suggested that some foundational resources necessary for practical instruction were in place. However, she also emphasised that the availability of utensils did not translate into fully functional practical spaces, as infrastructural challenges continued to limit effective delivery:

“In terms of resource adequacy and facility management, I can say that in this campus, utensil and equipment usage aligns with curricular topics at Level 2... but the kitchen setup itself remains a challenge.” (Participant 1, 2024)

In contrast, Participant 2 described severe, long-standing shortages of infrastructure and equipment that directly undermined practical implementation. She explained that unsuitable kitchen installations and chronic equipment shortages had persisted despite repeated requisitions, resulting in lecturers improvising by bringing items from home or asking students to purchase their own tools:

“...even the kitchen is problematic, with unsuitable stove installations and chronic equipment shortages persisting for years. Despite submitting requisitions annually, no new equipment has been provided.” (Participant 2, 2024)

Similar concerns were raised by Participants 3, 4, 5, and 6, who described persistent shortages that forced students to share equipment or work in large groups during practical sessions. Participant 6, in her capacity as Head of Division, stated unequivocally that resources were insufficient, citing examples such as multiple students sharing a single knife or completing one practical task collectively due to limited equipment availability.

Participants 7 and 8 acknowledged that some utensils and equipment were available, but emphasised that these were inadequate to support consistent and effective practical training. They reported that lecturers frequently relied on personal resources to compensate for institutional shortages, with procurement requests remaining unfulfilled over extended periods:

“Most of the lecturers have resorted to self-help... despite repeated orders for missing equipment, no procurement occurred, severely limiting practical execution.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Therefore, the elicited responses indicate that resource adequacy and facility management remain significant constraints in the delivery of the practical component. While isolated instances of basic utensil availability were reported, systemic infrastructure deficits, chronic equipment shortages, and prolonged procurement failures shaped the conduct of practical activities. As reflected, practical sessions were often adapted to available resources rather than curricular requirements, resulting in uneven practical exposure and compromised learning experiences for students. The variation in participants' experiences suggests that resource challenges were not uniform across campuses. While some campuses had sufficient basic equipment to conduct foundational practical activities, others experienced persistent infrastructural deficiencies that fundamentally altered curriculum delivery. This indicates that institutional resource allocation and procurement efficiency play a critical role in determining how effectively the practical curriculum can be implemented.

4.3.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Time Utilisation and Activity Design

The participants described time utilisation and activity design as critical yet problematic aspects of managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme. While lecturers demonstrated awareness of how practical time should be structured pedagogically, they reported that scheduled practical periods were frequently undermined by institutional constraints, resulting in inconsistent or compromised practical delivery.

Participant 1 outlined an ideal structure for practical sessions, describing a sequenced workflow that includes preparation, execution, hygiene, presentation, and clean-up. This sequence reflects a pedagogically intentional design aimed at integrating technical skills, time management, and professional kitchen discipline:

“An ideal practical workflow involves structured time allocations: initial mise en place of equipment, ingredient preparation, continuous cleaning protocols, dish preparation and presentation, and final kitchen restoration.” (Participant 1, 2024)

However, Participants 2, 3, and 4 reported that scheduled practical time was routinely repurposed for theoretical instruction. Despite timetables allocating specific periods for kitchen-based practical work, these sessions were often conducted in classrooms due to the unavailability of resources required to execute practical activities. Participant 4 explained that, in the absence of equipment and supplies, practical demonstrations were simulated using digital and printed materials:

“I use personal devices to show videos or pictures to simulate practical demonstrations, but this is not adequate because students need hands-on experience.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8 echoed these concerns, noting that even when students were physically relocated to kitchens during scheduled practical periods, meaningful practical activities did not always occur. Participant 8 attributed the absence of structured practical sessions to prolonged procurement delays, explaining that the college’s supplier account remained inactive for extended periods, making it impossible to source ingredients and materials:

“There are times when students are taken to the kitchen, but no practical is done because the supplier account has not been reloaded.” (Participant 8, 2024)

The findings indicate a clear disconnect between the pedagogical design of practical learning and its implementation across the selected campuses. Although participants consistently recognised the importance of structured practical sessions for developing technical competence, professional discipline and workplace readiness, operational constraints frequently undermined these intentions. However, the extent of the disruption varied across campuses. While some lecturers replaced practical sessions with theoretical instruction or digital demonstrations, others moved students to kitchens where limited resources prevented meaningful practical engagement. The variations suggest that time utilisation was influenced less by lecturers' pedagogical competence than by institutional capacity, procurement efficiency and resource availability. Consequently, the effective management of practical time requires coordinated institutional planning to ensure that scheduled practical periods are supported by the timely provision of facilities, equipment and consumables. This consideration informed the proposed management framework.

4.3.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Assessment Alignment and Quality Assurance

The participants described a range of practices used to align practical teaching with assessment requirements and quality assurance processes in the Hospitality programme. Although lecturers demonstrated a clear understanding of curriculum expectations and assessment standards, their experiences revealed that assessment alignment was implemented inconsistently across the selected campuses. Participants indicated that lecturers frequently relied on assessment policies, subject guidelines and practical manuals to identify required competencies and design learning activities that prepared students for formal practical assessments. However, the effectiveness of these practices depended largely on the availability of institutional support, resources and opportunities for authentic practical engagement.

Participant 1 explained that assessment alignment was strengthened through the use of assessment guidelines, collaboration with colleagues from other TVET colleges and industry exposure. She indicated that lecturers designed practical activities such as baking projects to develop students' practical competence while benchmarking their practices against those of other institutions. In

addition, informal partnerships with local hospitality establishments created opportunities for students to apply practical skills in authentic workplace environments.

“The students will do the baking and sell the cakes... we also consult with other colleges and hospitality lecturers to see what extra they are doing... we also have companies where students go for exposure, like catering at weddings or working in restaurants.” (Participant 1, 2024)

The findings further revealed inconsistencies in assessment planning across programme levels. Participants 2, 3 and 4 reported that Levels 3 and 4 benefited from structured practical assessments linked to the Integrated Summative Assessment Tasks (ISAT), whereas Level 2 lacked equivalent formal practical assessment opportunities. Consequently, lecturers independently designed supplementary practical activities to prepare students for future assessment requirements. These findings suggest that although lecturers attempted to maintain continuity in students' practical development, assessment alignment depended heavily on individual initiative rather than a consistently implemented institutional assessment strategy.

Participants also highlighted differences in institutional support for quality assurance processes. Participant 7 explained that lecturers had limited involvement in assessment-related logistical arrangements because the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other essential resources was centrally managed. As a result, procurement delays affected students' preparedness for practical assessments and limited lecturers' ability to implement planned assessment activities.

“We submit the sizes to central office supply chain management, and they arrange the supplier. That is the only thing we do. Everything else depends on central office.” (Participant 7, 2024)

Similarly, Participant 8 described how lecturers compensated for institutional limitations by relying on their professional experience, industry networks and informal partnerships to create practical learning opportunities when formal assessment processes could not be implemented as planned.

“We use our industry knowledge and partnerships to give students exposure when formal practicals cannot be done as planned.” (Participant 8, 2024)

The findings indicate that lecturers demonstrated considerable commitment to maintaining assessment quality despite institutional constraints. However, participants' experiences also revealed significant differences in how assessment was supported across campuses. While some lecturers strengthened assessment through collaboration, benchmarking and industry partnerships, others relied primarily on personal initiative because institutional systems and logistical support were insufficient. These differences suggest that the consistency and quality of practical assessment were influenced not only by lecturers' pedagogical competence but also by the effectiveness of institutional planning, procurement processes and quality assurance mechanisms. Consequently, practical assessment was often sustained through individual innovation rather than coordinated institutional support. This finding informed the proposed management framework by highlighting the need for standardised assessment planning, strengthened quality assurance systems and integrated institutional support to ensure equitable and consistent practical assessment across all campuses.

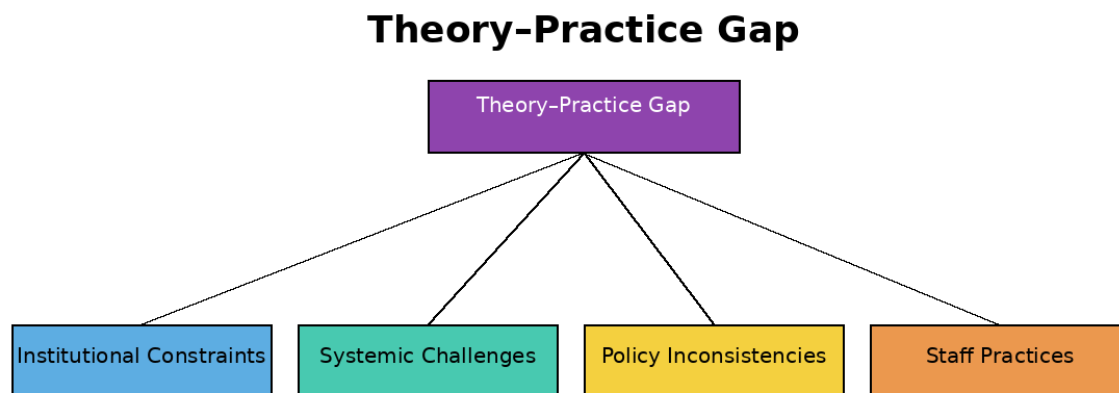
4.3.2 Theme 2: Challenges that lead to the Disconnection of Theory and Practice

This theme explores the challenges that contribute to the disconnect between theory and practice in managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme at selected TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal. The findings indicate that lecturers experience persistent difficulties in aligning theoretical instruction with practical training due to a range of institutional, systemic, and operational constraints. Participants described how curriculum intentions are often undermined by inconsistent policy implementation, resource limitations, uneven institutional support, and staff-related dynamics, resulting in fragmented learning experiences for students. The four sub-themes emerged from the data: perceived theory–practice misalignment, root causes of the disconnect, institution-specific and cross-cutting challenges, and staff dynamics and problem-resolution practices.

Research Question: *What challenges contribute to the disconnection between theory and practice in the management of the practical component of the Hospitality programme at the selected TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal?*

The theme Challenges that Contribute to the Disconnection of Theory and Practice is illustrated in Figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2: Theory–Practice Disconnection



The figure presents the sub-themes that emerged from participants' accounts, including institutional constraints, systemic challenges, policy inconsistency, and staff-related factors.

4.3.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Perceptions on Theory and Practice

The participants consistently described a perceived misalignment between theoretical instruction and practical application in the Hospitality programme. This misalignment was attributed to structural and operational conditions within the institutions, particularly inadequate infrastructure, rigid timetabling arrangements, and insufficient resources, which collectively limited opportunities for sustained practical engagement.

Participant 1 emphasised that the institution's physical infrastructure was not conducive to extended practical training, particularly for large student groups. She explained that the design of the kitchen facilities constrained the duration and depth of practical activities, making it difficult to integrate theory and practice effectively:

“You see, we face a lot of challenges to bridge theory and practice in this school. Despite that, it still proves difficult because of the lack of adequate infrastructure that enables practicals to take place. In fact, the one we have here was not designed to accommodate extended practical sessions for large cohorts.” (Participant 1, 2024)

She further noted that the existing timetable structure did not allow flexibility for longer practical sessions, indicating that meaningful practical engagement would require extended time blocks or alternative scheduling arrangements, neither of which was formally supported.

Participants 2, 3, and 4 described the relationship between theory and practice as fundamentally disconnected. They attributed this disconnect primarily to persistent financial constraints that limited the procurement of practical materials and equipment. Participant 2 stated:

“There is no alignment at all between theory and practice because we don’t have the resources. Without funding, practicals cannot take place, and theory becomes the only option.” (Participant 2, 2024)

Participant 3 reinforced this view, explaining that practical activities are often planned but not implemented due to the unavailability of required materials, resulting in assessments being conducted without prior practical engagement:

“We plan for practicals, but most of the time they don’t happen. Students end up being assessed on things they have not practised.” (Participant 3, 2024)

Participants 6, 7, and 8 also confirmed a significant imbalance between theory and practice. Participant 6 characterised the situation as overwhelmingly theory-driven, noting that practical activities are minimal and often symbolic rather than substantive:

“In reality, what we do is mostly theory. Practical work is very limited, and sometimes it is only done to meet assessment requirements.” (Participant 6, 2024)

Participant 7 highlighted that the intended sequence of teaching theory, followed by practical application and assessment, is rarely achieved in practice:

“Ideally, you teach the topic, then you go to the kitchen and do it, and then you assess. But here, we assess without having done the practical.” (Participant 7, 2024)

Similarly, Participant 8 indicated that certain curriculum topics are omitted entirely when practical implementation is not feasible due to time and resource constraints:

“There are topics we don’t do practically at all because there is no time and no resources, but they are still part of the assessment.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Against the background, the participants indicate a pervasive disconnection between theoretical instruction and practical application within the Hospitality programme. Thus, the inadequate infrastructure, inflexible scheduling, and chronic resource shortages were consistently reported as factors that disrupt the intended integration of theory and practice. As evidenced by participants' responses, these conditions result in reduced practical exposure, compromised sequencing of teaching and assessment, and challenges in ensuring that students acquire the practical competencies envisaged by the curriculum.

4.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Institutional and Systemic Challenges

The participants identified a range of institutional and systemic challenges that contributed to the disconnection between theory and practice in the Hospitality programme. The challenges were consistently located beyond individual lecturers' control and were associated with institutional decision-making structures, system-level funding arrangements, centralised procurement processes, and staff allocation practices. Participants described these conditions as collectively undermining the effective delivery of the practical component.

Participant 1 highlighted challenges related to institutional decision-making and system-level workload allocation. She explained that those responsible for programme implementation often lacked a clear understanding of the practical demands of the Hospitality curriculum, resulting in recommendations not being acted upon. She further noted that duty-load allocation prioritised institutional compliance with teaching hour requirements rather than aligning lecturers' subject expertise with practical modules:

“The people who are responsible for implementation do not always understand what the programme needs, so even when recommendations are made, they are not followed. Lecturers are allocated based on hours, not on whether they are passionate or knowledgeable about Hospitality, and that affects how practical work is handled.”
(Participant 1, 2024)

Participants 2, 3, and 4 consistently identified systemic funding constraints as a major institutional challenge affecting the integration of theory and practice. They explained that limited funding restricted the procurement of equipment and consumables required for practical activities, resulting in theory being prioritised over practice. Participant 4 described how these institutional funding limitations affected student progression:

“When there is no money for practicals, students struggle to understand the theory. Without practical exposure, many of them cannot progress because they don’t see how things work.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 5 and 6 reiterated concerns regarding institutional funding and procurement systems, noting that resources allocated to practical activities were insufficient and often depleted early in the academic year. They reported that once available funds were exhausted, practical activities were postponed or cancelled due to the inability to purchase required materials:

“Once the money is finished, we cannot buy anything else, and practicals stop. There is no follow-up or replenishment, so we end up just teaching theory.” (Participant 6, 2024)

Participants 7 and 8 emphasised that system-level procurement processes further compounded these challenges. They explained that centralised procurement systems limited flexibility and delayed access to required materials, sometimes forcing lecturers to substitute ingredients or omit practical activities altogether. Participant 8 described how these systemic constraints reshaped practical training into procedural compliance rather than meaningful learning:

“Even when we try to plan practicals, the procurement system delays everything. Sometimes the supplier does not have what we need, and we are forced to change or cancel activities.” (Participant 8, 2024)

In this regard, the participants clearly situate the theory–practice disconnect within institutional and systemic conditions rather than individual pedagogical shortcomings. As reflected, the administrative decision-making structures, funding mechanisms, procurement systems, and staff deployment practices were reported to constrain practical implementation across campuses. Therefore, the institutional and systemic challenges weaken the integration of theory and practice and limit students’ opportunities to engage meaningfully with the practical component of the Hospitality programme.

4.3.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Inconsistent Policy Implementation

The participants affirmed that inconsistencies in the implementation of national and institutional policies contributed to uneven integration of theory and practice across the selected TVET campuses. While policy documents prescribe clear expectations regarding the balance between theoretical instruction and practical training, participants reported that these guidelines were implemented inconsistently, leading to considerable variation in students' practical learning experiences. The findings suggest that the challenge was not the absence of policy, but rather differences in how policies were operationalised within diverse institutional and campus contexts.

Participant 2 highlighted that irregular implementation of practical requirements had implications for both teaching quality and professional competence. She explained that prolonged periods without structured practical engagement limited lecturers' opportunities to maintain and update their culinary skills, which ultimately affected the quality of practical instruction.

“Because practicals are not implemented consistently, many lecturers end up losing their culinary expertise. When you stay away from industry practice for too long, it affects how you teach.” (Participant 2, 2024)

Participants 2, 3 and 4 further described how policy expectations regarding hygiene standards and practical delivery were undermined by campus-specific infrastructural conditions. These included recurring water shortages, drainage failures and pest infestations that forced lecturers to modify, postpone or suspend practical activities despite hygiene principles being thoroughly taught in theory. Participant 3 explained:

“There are times when there is no water at all, and lecturers have to bring water from home. We also experience drainage problems and pest issues, which make it difficult to apply what we teach in theory.” (Participant 3, 2024)

Participant 4 further indicated that although funding constraints affected all campuses, the implementation of mitigation measures differed across institutional contexts. While some campuses had gradually addressed certain infrastructural deficiencies, broader contextual challenges, particularly regional water shortages, continued to disrupt practical implementation regardless of institutional planning.

“Funding problems are not unique to one college. Even where some infrastructure issues were fixed, the water shortages in the area still affect whether practicals can happen.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 5, 6 and 7 also identified inconsistencies in implementing policies relating to lecturer development and procurement. Although policy requires vocational lecturers to remain current with industry practice, participants reported limited opportunities for professional upskilling. They further explained that centralised procurement systems reduced institutional flexibility, resulting in substitutions or cancellations that compromised planned practical activities. Participant 6 remarked:

“Sometimes the policy allows for practicals, but in reality, the system limits us. We are restricted to certain suppliers, and when they don’t have what we need, we are forced to change how the practical is done.” (Participant 6, 2024)

Despite these challenges, Participant 6 observed that lecturers frequently compensated for institutional shortcomings through personal commitment and voluntary support beyond their formal responsibilities.

“Lecturers are willing to come in on weekends to help students, even without pay, but the policy does not support that effort properly.” (Participant 6, 2024)

The findings demonstrate that inconsistencies in policy implementation went beyond procedural compliance, reflecting differences in institutional capacity, infrastructure and operational conditions across campuses. Although participants generally agreed that existing policies provided appropriate guidance for practical training, implementation was constrained by contextual factors, including inadequate infrastructure, regional service delivery challenges, limited opportunities for lecturer development, and inflexible procurement systems. Consequently, campuses varied in their success in translating policy intentions into effective practical learning. These findings indicate that policy alone cannot ensure consistent integration of theory and practice unless accompanied by context-responsive implementation strategies, institutional support and sufficient operational resources. This insight informed the proposed management framework, emphasising the need for flexible policy implementation, strengthened institutional coordination and improved support mechanisms to ensure more equitable practical learning experiences across campuses.

4.3.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Staff Dynamics Challenges

The participants identified staff-related dynamics as a contributing challenge to the disconnection between theory and practice in the management of the practical component. These challenges were described as interpersonal conflict and limited authority at the lecturer level, reliance on informal coordination, and delays arising from hierarchical decision-making processes. Participant 1 explained that lecturers lacked sufficient autonomy to resolve practical challenges independently. The issues affecting the organisation of practical sessions, including scheduling and access to resources, were routinely escalated to the supervisory level, which sometimes delayed timely implementation:

“Whenever we have unresolved issues, especially those affecting how practicals are run, we elevate them to the supervisor for guidance. Without a working structure, there will be misalignment in how practical issues are handled.” (Participant 1, 2024)

Participants 2, 3, and 4 indicated that while lecturers attempted to manage practical challenges collaboratively, these informal arrangements were often insufficient to address persistent constraints. They reported that the absence of clearly defined roles and formalised procedures for

managing practical delivery led to ad hoc decision-making, thereby weakening the consistency of practical implementation. Participant 3 stated:

“We try to work together to manage practical challenges, but without clear systems, the solutions are temporary.” (Participant 3, 2024)

Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8 further noted that sustained reliance on informal teamwork placed additional pressure on lecturers and did not resolve underlying structural issues. Although collaboration enabled limited practical exposure, it did not adequately support the systematic integration of theory and practice. Participant 6 explained:

“Teamwork helps us cope, but it does not solve the bigger problems. Practical work still ends up being inconsistent.” (Participant 6, 2024)

Therefore, the participants’ accounts indicate that staff dynamics contribute to the theory–practice disconnect through limited decision-making authority, dependence on informal coordination, and the absence of clearly institutionalised mechanisms for managing practical delivery. The stated conditions constrain lecturers’ ability to translate theoretical requirements into consistent and well-structured practical learning experiences.

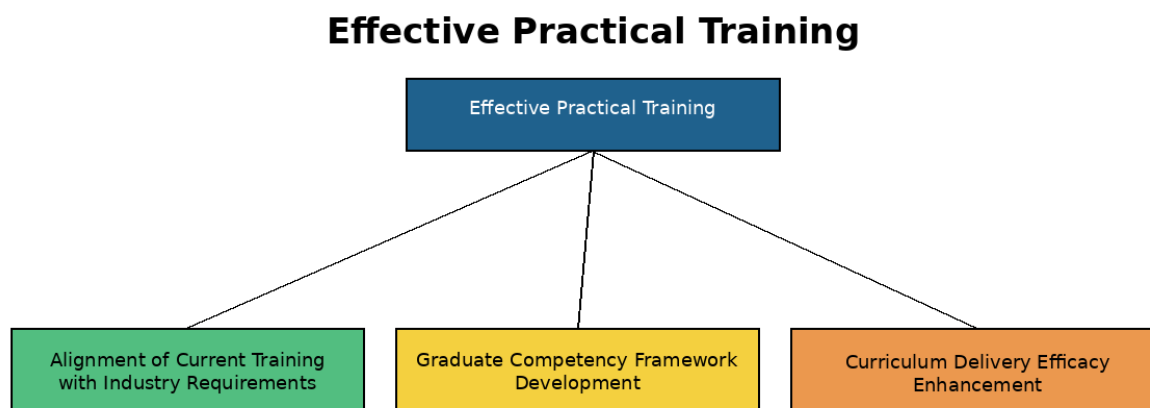
4.3.3 Theme 3: Strategies for Effective Management of Practical Training

This theme explored the strategies employed by TVET lecturers to manage the disconnection between theory and practice in the delivery of the Hospitality programme at the selected campuses. The findings indicate that lecturers adopt adaptive and compensatory approaches to sustain practical training within constrained institutional environments, with particular emphasis on aligning training with industry requirements, strengthening students’ practical competencies, and evaluating curriculum delivery against departmental mandates and student expectations. The participants described drawing on professional experience, industry exposure, and collaborative practices to enhance the relevance of practical learning and to support student preparedness for the workplace, particularly in contexts where formal systems and resources were limited. The three sub-themes emerged from the data: alignment of current training with industry requirements, the

development of essential graduate competencies for hospitality professions, and the efficacy of curriculum delivery in relation to departmental mandates and student expectations.

Research Question: *What strategies do TVET lecturers employ to manage the disconnection between theory and practice in the Hospitality programme at the selected campuses in KwaZulu-Natal?*

Figure 4.3: Strategies for Practical Training under Constrained Conditions



The figure shows emerging sub-themes related to alignment with industry requirements, the development of graduate competencies, and curriculum delivery practices.

4.3.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Alignment of Current Training with Industry Requirements

The participants identified alignment between current training and industry requirements as a key strategy for managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme. The elicited responses emphasised that effective alignment depends on the availability of adequate practical resources, up-to-date industry practices, and opportunities for lecturers and students to engage meaningfully with real-world hospitality environments. Participant 1 stressed that practical exposure is central to ensuring that graduates are relevant to industry needs. She explained that without consistent access to practical facilities and resources, students struggle to translate theoretical knowledge into usable skills:

“For TVET students to be useful after graduation, all things must be on the ground at every point in time that enable practical experience. This is the only way that graduates will be able to align their training with industry needs.” (Participant 1, 2024)

Participants 2, 3, and 4 echoed this view, highlighting that misalignment arises when institutions are unable to provide the material conditions required for effective practical training. Participant 4 specifically emphasised the role of infrastructure and equipment in supporting industry-aligned training:

“What happens in this TVET college is that there are always insufficient resources, like equipment and other facilities, that allow lecturers to teach practical sessions properly. Management and other stakeholders must ensure that the infrastructure needed to align training with industry requirements is provided.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 5, 6, and 8 corroborated these concerns, noting that limitations in equipment and facilities restrict the scope and authenticity of practical activities. In addition to material resources, Participant 8 highlighted the importance of the lecturer's industry currency in achieving alignment with industry requirements. She explained that changes in technology and industry practices require lecturers to continuously update their skills:

“We as lecturers also need to be updated. We studied a long time ago, and now technology has changed. There are things in the textbooks that you are not familiar with. I feel we need to go back to industry and do work-based exposure for a week or two so that what we teach students is what is actually happening in industry.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Therefore, the findings indicate that alignment between training and industry requirements depends not only on curriculum expectations but also on the institutional capacity to support authentic practical learning. Although participants demonstrated a shared understanding of current industry expectations, they consistently identified inadequate resources, limited industry exposure, and insufficient institutional support as barriers to achieving meaningful alignment. Consequently, effective industry responsiveness requires coordinated institutional planning, sustained investment in practical resources, and regular opportunities for lecturers to maintain industry currency. These findings informed the proposed management framework by emphasising stronger institutional–

industry collaboration, continuous lecturer professional development, and improved resource management to ensure that practical training remains relevant to contemporary hospitality practice.

4.3.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Graduate Competency Framework Development

The participants emphasised the development of a structured graduate competency framework as a key strategy for strengthening the programme's practical component. They explained that such a framework should integrate theoretical learning with practical training and reflect the competencies required in contemporary hospitality workplaces. Participants consistently indicated that the absence of a clearly articulated competency framework contributes to gaps in graduates' practical preparedness. In this perspective, Participant 1 highlighted the importance of a competency framework that deliberately combines institutional training with industry involvement. She explained that practical training would be strengthened if industry professionals were formally integrated into teaching and learning activities alongside lecturers:

“There must be a graduate competency framework that brings together a blend of schoolwork and industry training. Practical lessons can incorporate two facilitators: the lecturer and an industry professional with work experience. This helps to bridge that gap for graduates.” (Participant 1, 2024)

Participants 2, 3, and 4 supported this position, emphasising that intentional collaboration between lecturers and industry professionals would enhance the relevance of practical training. Participant 4 further noted that such collaboration should be embedded within a formal framework rather than occurring on an ad hoc basis:

“The practical component of the Hospitality programme can succeed if there is an intentional effort to create a framework that includes lecturer and industry professional collaboration. This helps to identify gaps and build confidence and knowledge in students.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 5, 6, 7, and 8 also underscored the need for a clearly defined graduate competency framework to guide practical assessment and skills development. Participant 8 reflected on the

decline in previously available practical training facilities, indicating that the absence of structured opportunities limited students' exposure to key hospitality skills:

“When I first came here in 2013, students were taught housekeeping skills using beds, and we also had a bar that was used for training. Those facilities are no longer utilised, so students now have to rely on in-service training to acquire those skills.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Against this background, the findings indicate that the development of a graduate competency framework is fundamental to strengthening the management of the practical component of the Hospitality programme. Participants consistently emphasised that graduate competence cannot be achieved through theoretical instruction or workplace exposure in isolation but requires the deliberate integration of institutional learning and authentic industry engagement throughout the programme. The findings further suggest that a structured competency framework would provide a coherent basis for aligning practical training, industry collaboration and competency assessment, thereby reducing the disconnect between theory and practice. Consequently, the proposed management framework incorporates these elements to ensure that graduates progressively acquire the practical knowledge, technical skills and professional competencies required by the hospitality industry before completing the programme.

4.3.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Curriculum delivery enhancement

In this sub-theme, participants reflected on the extent to which the Hospitality curriculum is delivered effectively in preparing students with the skills required upon graduation. The participants indicated that the competencies expected of graduates are already outlined in the curriculum. However, they emphasised that the effectiveness of curriculum delivery depends on the extent to which these skills are taught in practice and meaningfully implemented within the college environment. Participant 1 highlighted the importance of exposing students to different operational areas within the hospitality industry. She explained that effective curriculum delivery should enable students to gain hands-on experience across multiple departments, allowing them to develop a broad skill set before specialising:

“Usually, they do in-service training, which requires them to go through all the departments, such as housekeeping, front office, and food and beverages. I think for them to graduate, they need to have worked in each department so that they can decide where they are best suited.” (Participant 1, 2024)

Participants 2, 3, and 4 supported this view but raised concerns about the institution’s capacity to deliver such comprehensive exposure at the campus level. When probed further, Participant 4 explained that practical training was largely limited to kitchen-based activities, with other key areas of hospitality training no longer being offered due to the absence of facilities:

“No, the only thing they do is the kitchen. They do not do housekeeping. When I first came here in 2013, there were beds for teaching housekeeping, and we also had a bar upstairs, but it is no longer being used. That means students now have to rely on in-service training to get those skills.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 5, 6, and 8 corroborated this position, indicating that several departments were unable to meet curriculum expectations due to inadequate facilities and equipment. They reported that this limited students’ practical exposure and affected their readiness for the workplace. Participant 8 expressed concern about the limited expectations students hold regarding their training:

“The students do not know much. They just accept whatever is given to them. They don’t really come with expectations because they don’t know what they are supposed to be getting.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Against this background, participants’ accounts indicate that while the curriculum outlines a comprehensive set of graduate skills, limitations in infrastructure, facilities, and equipment constrain effective delivery. As reflected in the responses, the constraints lead to reliance on external in-service training to compensate for gaps in campus-based practical exposure, thereby undermining the efficacy of curriculum delivery in equipping students with the full range of hospitality competencies before graduation.

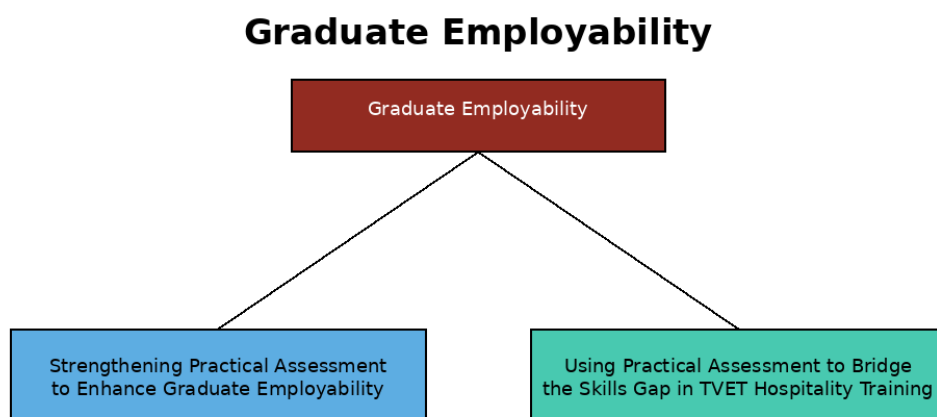
4.3.4 Theme 4: Practical Assessment and Graduate Work Readiness

This theme explored lecturers' perspectives on how practical assessments in TVET Hospitality programmes contribute to the development of students' competencies and graduates' employability. The findings indicate that participants view practical assessment as a critical mechanism for evaluating applied skills, reinforcing workplace readiness, and supporting students' transition into the hospitality industry. However, lecturers also noted that the effectiveness of practical assessments in achieving these outcomes is influenced by the quality, consistency, and authenticity of assessment practices across campuses. Participants described variations in how practical assessments are implemented and the extent to which they reflect real workplace demands, which in turn shape graduates' preparedness for employment. Two sub-themes emerged from the data: industry perceptions of how practical assessments shape graduate employability, and the role of practical assessments in bridging the skills gap and predicting employability outcomes.

Research Question: How do practical assessments in TVET Hospitality programmes contribute to competency development and the employability of graduates?

The theme Practical Assessments Contribute to Competency Development and Graduate Employability is illustrated in Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4: Practical Assessment and Graduate Employability



The figure illustrates how strengthening practical assessment and using practical assessment to bridge skills gaps in TVET hospitality training contribute to graduate employability.

4.3.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Strengthening Practical Assessment to Enhance Graduate Employability

In this sub-theme, participants reflected on the extent to which current practical assessment practices prepare TVET Hospitality graduates for employment, and how these practices could be strengthened to enhance graduate employability. Participants consistently indicated that, in their current form, practical assessments do not adequately develop the breadth and depth of skills expected in hospitality workplaces, particularly across multiple operational departments. Participant 1 expressed concern that employers should not assume graduates possess sufficient practical competence upon completion of the programme. She explained that graduates often require substantial retraining, as practical exposure during training is limited and unevenly distributed across departments:

“If employers take our students, they need to know that they will have to start from scratch in teaching them the skills. They must not expect that the students will have some skills. Maybe in the kitchen, they might have some knowledge, but for other departments like the front office and housekeeping, they will not know. Even in the kitchen, I would say they might have about 50% knowledge.” (Participant 1, 2024)

Participants 2, 3, and 4 supported this view, indicating that the outcomes of practical assessments do not consistently translate into workplace readiness. When probed on how assessment outcomes relate to graduate completion and employability, Participant 4 explained that limited practical exposure across hospitality departments affects students’ ability to meet graduation requirements:

“We hardly have any graduates for N6. Some students come back because the in-service letter they received does not cover all departments. To graduate, they must have gone through all departments, and some do not complete that.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 6, 7, and 8 further highlighted that limited and inconsistent industry partnerships constrain opportunities for in-service training, which in turn weakens the contribution of practical assessment to employability. They explained that such partnerships are largely coordinated at central institutional levels, with limited reach at the campus level. Participant 8 stated:

“That is done at a central level. They are the ones who used to have partnerships with industry. At the campus level, very few students get in-service training. We once had a partnership with a casino, but I don’t think it still exists.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Against this background, the findings indicate that practical assessment plays an important role in preparing graduates for employment, but its contribution is constrained by institutional and operational limitations. Although participants regarded practical assessment as essential for developing workplace competence, limited exposure across hospitality departments, inconsistent access to in-service training and uneven industry partnerships reduced its capacity to produce work-ready graduates. The findings further suggest that graduate employability depends not only on assessing practical competence but also on providing authentic and comprehensive practical learning experiences throughout the programme. Consequently, strengthening practical assessment requires closer integration between institutional training, industry engagement and workplace-based learning. The findings informed the proposed management framework by emphasising standardised practical assessment, expanded industry collaboration and improved opportunities for authentic workplace exposure to enhance graduate employability.

4.3.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Using Practical Assessment to Bridge the Skills Gap in TVET Hospitality Training

In this sub-theme, participants reflected on how practical assessment can be used more effectively to bridge the skills gap experienced by TVET Hospitality students. Participants consistently indicated that increased emphasis on practical assessment, supported by adequate resources and consistent implementation, is central to enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge in real work contexts. Participant 1 emphasised that improving the balance between theory and practice would positively influence student performance and competence. She explained that students struggle academically and practically because they are unable to translate theory into practice due to limited practical exposure:

“A lot can be done. If we can follow the 60:40 ratio properly, even the pass rate will improve. Currently, students are not doing well because they fail to put theory into

practice. With proper equipment and consumables, students can do practicals and become competent.” (Participant 1, 2024)

Participants 2, 3, and 4 supported this position, highlighting inconsistencies in how practical assessments are implemented across campuses. Participant 4 pointed out that variations in practice create challenges when requesting resources and undermine standardisation of skills development:

“The fact that we are doing different things across campuses creates problems. When you request resources, they ask why another campus is not doing the same. This is because we are not uniform in how practicals are done.” (Participant 4, 2024)

Participants 6, 7, and 8 further stressed that repeated and structured practical assessments at the college level are essential for building confidence and competence. Participant 8 explained that students perform better in the workplace when they have repeatedly practised tasks during their training:

“When students go to industry, they do what they have already done at college. The more they practise, the better they become. If practicals are done more at the college level, students will perform better when they are employed.” (Participant 8, 2024)

When probed further, Participant 8 acknowledged that although some exposure is gained through short-term placements during weekends or holidays, this exposure is limited and insufficient to fully bridge the skills gap:

“They do get some exposure during weekends and holidays, but it is very little. When they are employed, employers still need to add on to the little knowledge they have.” (Participant 8, 2024)

Overall, the findings demonstrate that practical assessment is an important mechanism for bridging the skills gap when it is implemented consistently and supported by adequate institutional resources. Participants agreed that repeated hands-on practice, standardised assessment approaches and meaningful practical engagement enable students to develop confidence and competence before entering the workplace. However, variations in assessment practices across

campuses and limited opportunities for sustained workplace exposure reduced the effectiveness of practical assessment in preparing graduates for employment. These findings suggest that bridging the skills gap requires a coordinated approach that integrates consistent assessment practices, adequate resources and stronger industry partnerships. Accordingly, the proposed management framework incorporates these elements to strengthen competency development and improve graduates' readiness for employment in the hospitality industry.

4.4 Discussion and Interpretation of Findings.

This section interprets and discusses the findings in relation to the research question, the theoretical framework and the emerging themes. Although the findings highlight institutional resources, lecturer competencies, policy implementation and industry partnerships as important influences, these dimensions are not interpreted as independent phenomena. Rather, they are examined as interconnected contextual conditions that enable or constrain the management of the practical component within the Hospitality programme. Accordingly, the discussion remains centred on curriculum management and explains how these contextual conditions collectively shape the planning, implementation and assessment of practical training.

4.4.1 TVET Lecturers' Experiences in Managing the Practical Component of the Hospitality Programme

The evidence indicates that TVET lecturers experience significant difficulty in managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme due to a persistent gap between curriculum intentions and institutional realities. Participants affirmed that although the curriculum prescribes a strong practical orientation, practical sessions are frequently postponed, compressed into assessment periods or replaced with theory lessons. Lecturers described situations in which scheduled practical time was redirected to classroom-based teaching because essential resources, including uniforms, consumables and equipment, were unavailable or delivered late. These findings support the views of Kim and Park (2019) and Sebetlene (2020), who argue that the enacted curriculum often departs substantially from the intended curriculum because policy aspirations are weakened during implementation. From an interpretive perspective, the findings suggest that the theory–practice disconnect is not the result of lecturers' reluctance to deliver

practical training but rather reflects institutional conditions that constrain effective curriculum management and practical implementation.

The analysis further revealed that lecturers routinely relied on improvisation and personal initiative to sustain some level of practical exposure for students, including adapting lesson plans, combining practical activities with assessments and substituting demonstrations with theoretical explanations. Although these strategies demonstrate professional commitment and resilience, they cannot substitute for sustained, structured hands-on learning. This finding supports Dieke's (2020) experiential learning perspective, which argues that vocational competence develops through repeated and guided practical experience rather than episodic or simulated exposure. Similarly, the diversion of practical time to theoretical instruction contradicts the curriculum expectation that practical learning should dominate Hospitality programmes (Hole, Khedkar & Pawar, 2019). Interpreted through Glatthorn's (1987) curriculum management framework, the findings demonstrate that responsibility for implementing the practical curriculum has shifted from institutional systems to individual lecturers, resulting in inconsistent curriculum enactment across campuses. Consequently, graduates complete the programme with uneven practical experience, providing empirical support for Pauw, Oosthuizen and Van der Westhuizen's (2018) argument that successful programme completion does not necessarily guarantee occupational competence.

4.4.2 Challenges Contributing to the Disconnection Between Theory and Practice

The evidence demonstrates that the disconnection between theory and practice in the Hospitality programme is driven primarily by institutional and systemic challenges rather than by shortcomings in lecturer competence or curriculum design. Participants consistently identified inadequate infrastructure, persistent funding shortages, centralised procurement systems and inconsistent policy implementation as factors that undermine the effective management of the practical component. They further explained that practical sessions were frequently cancelled, replaced by theoretical instruction or assessed without prior hands-on preparation because of water shortages, malfunctioning kitchens, insufficient equipment and delays in procuring consumables. These findings support the argument advanced by Sebetlene (2020) and Elbaz and Haddoud (2018) that vocational education systems experience implementation failure when institutional capacity is insufficient to support policy expectations. From an interpretive perspective, the findings

suggest that effective curriculum management depends not only on well-designed policies but also on institutional governance and operational systems capable of supporting practical teaching and learning.

The analysis further revealed that inconsistent policy implementation across campuses exacerbated inequities in students' practical learning experiences and contributed to fragmented skills development. Although national policy provides uniform guidelines for practical training and assessment, participants reported considerable variation in implementation, with some campuses better able to mitigate operational challenges than others. Consequently, the intended pedagogical sequence of theory, practice and assessment was frequently disrupted, resulting in students being assessed on competencies that they had not adequately practised. Interpreted through Gamble's (2009) vocational learning perspective, these findings weaken the reciprocal relationship between theoretical knowledge and practical application, where each is expected to reinforce the other. Furthermore, the reliance on informal staff coordination and lecturer improvisation reflects institutional fragility rather than pedagogical failure, indicating that responsibility for maintaining practical training has shifted from formal organisational systems to individual lecturers. Consistent with Wheelahan (2015) and UNESCO (2016), the findings demonstrate that sustained theory–practice disconnection cannot be resolved through individual commitment alone but requires stronger institutional governance, coordinated curriculum management and adequate operational support to ensure consistent implementation across campuses.

4.4.3 Strategies for Effective Management of Practical Training

The evidence indicates that TVET lecturers employ a range of adaptive strategies to manage the practical component of the Hospitality programme despite persistent institutional constraints. Participants explained that they sought to align training with industry requirements by drawing on their professional experience, informal industry networks and limited opportunities for workplace exposure. They also emphasised the importance of developing structured graduate competency frameworks that integrate classroom learning with industry-relevant skills and expose students to multiple hospitality departments. These findings support the perspectives of Dieke (2020) and Spowart (2018), who argue that competency-based education depends on the integration of applied skills, workplace relevance and experiential learning. However, the analysis suggests that these

strategies function primarily as compensatory responses to institutional shortcomings rather than as components of formally coordinated curriculum management systems.

The analysis further revealed that the effectiveness of curriculum delivery is constrained by inadequate infrastructure, inactive training facilities and limited opportunities for repeated practical engagement. Participants reported that key areas of hospitality training, including housekeeping and front-office operations, were either minimally covered or excluded altogether, requiring students to rely on in-service training to complete their practical learning. From an interpretive perspective, this represents a partial enactment of the curriculum, in which only those competencies supported by available resources are delivered in practice. This interpretation is consistent with Glatthorn's (1987) curriculum enactment theory, which maintains that curriculum implementation is shaped by contextual conditions rather than curriculum design alone. Although lecturers demonstrated considerable professional commitment and agency in responding to these constraints, the findings indicate that adaptive strategies alone cannot ensure consistent graduate competency across campuses. Effective management of the practical component requires institutionalised industry partnerships, continuous lecturer professional development and functional training infrastructure to support authentic practical learning. Consequently, strengthening practical training depends on coordinated institutional systems rather than individual lecturer initiative, a principle that informed the proposed management framework and aligns with the recommendations of Sebetlene (2020) and Castro (2019).

4.4.4 Contribution of Practical Assessment to Competency Development and Graduate Employability

The evidence indicates that practical assessment, as currently implemented in the TVET Hospitality programme, makes a limited and uneven contribution to the development of graduate competence and employability. Participants consistently reported that employers often perceive graduates as requiring substantial retraining upon entering the workplace, particularly in operational areas such as front office and housekeeping. They further explained that practical assessments are frequently conducted without sufficient prior hands-on preparation, resulting in assessments that emphasise theoretical recall rather than the demonstration of applied competence. From an interpretive perspective, these findings suggest that practical assessment has increasingly

become a compliance-oriented activity instead of a developmental process that systematically strengthens vocational competence. This interpretation supports the concerns raised by Papier (2012) and Pauw, Oosthuizen and Van der Westhuizen (2018), who argue that practical assessment loses its value within competency-based education when it is disconnected from sustained and authentic practical learning.

The analysis further revealed that limited industry partnerships and inconsistent workplace exposure significantly weaken the contribution of practical assessment to graduate employability. Participants explained that opportunities for in-service training were limited, unevenly distributed across campuses and largely controlled through central institutional processes, restricting students' ability to complete essential departmental rotations and delaying programme completion. Interpreted through employability and vocational learning theory, these conditions constrain the development of occupational identity, professional confidence and work readiness, which are cultivated through repeated participation in authentic workplace environments (Gamble, 2009; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). Although lecturers recognised the potential of practical assessment to bridge the skills gap, the evidence suggests that this potential remains unrealised under prevailing institutional conditions. Consequently, practical assessment cannot consistently signal graduate competence to employers because its effectiveness depends on the quality of curriculum implementation, authentic workplace engagement and sustained practical learning opportunities. These findings informed the proposed management framework by highlighting the need for authentic practical assessment, strengthened industry partnerships and integrated curriculum management to enhance graduate competence and employability, consistent with the recommendations of Kilbrink (2012) and UNESCO (2016).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed and interpreted the findings on how TVET lecturers manage the practical component of the Hospitality programme at selected TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal. The findings revealed a persistent disconnection between curriculum intentions and enacted practice, largely shaped by institutional and systemic constraints rather than pedagogical shortcomings. Although the Hospitality curriculum formally prioritises practical training, its delivery is consistently undermined by inadequate infrastructure, delayed procurement, limited resources, and

inconsistent policy implementation. As a result, practical sessions are frequently reduced, postponed, or replaced with theoretical instruction, weakening the integration of theory and practice that is central to vocational education.

The chapter further demonstrated that while lecturers employ adaptive strategies to sustain practical training and assessment, these efforts remain largely compensatory and cannot offset structural deficiencies. Practical assessment, though conceptually positioned as a mechanism for competency development and graduate employability, has had limited impact under current conditions due to insufficient hands-on exposure and weak industry integration. Overall, the findings highlight the need for systemic, coordinated interventions to strengthen practical delivery, assessment, and industry alignment. The chapter provides a foundation for Chapter Five, which synthesises the study's key insights and presents its conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study is grounded in the view that vocational education carries a social and economic responsibility to prepare students for meaningful participation in the world of work. In occupational fields such as Hospitality, practical competence is not an added advantage but a core requirement for employability. When practical training is weakly implemented or treated as secondary, students may graduate with qualifications that do not translate into real capability. The loss is not only personal for graduates who struggle to meet workplace expectations but also systemic, as it undermines confidence in TVET institutions as pathways for skills development, youth employment, and social mobility. In this sense, the quality of practical training is directly linked to the credibility and developmental role of the TVET sector.

While vocational education theory consistently affirms that competence arises from integrating theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and an understanding of work processes (Rauner, 2007; Gamble, 2009; Billett, 2011), this study reveals that the real challenge lies in how practical components are managed and supported within institutional settings. The marginalisation of practical training in TVET Hospitality programmes is therefore not merely a teaching issue but a structural one driven by resource availability, institutional priorities, and assessment methods. If these conditions remain unaddressed, students risk entering the labour market inadequately prepared, and employers may doubt the value of TVET qualifications, which may in turn make the broader objective of using TVET as a means for economic participation to be undermined. The conclusions and recommendations that follow are guided by this wider societal perspective.

5.2 Summary of relevant theories, literature and methodology

Guided by Curriculum Management Theory, Rauner's (2007) conception of occupational competence, and Gamble's (2009) analysis of vocational knowledge integration, this chapter synthesises the study's findings to interrogate how practical training is managed within TVET Hospitality education. Curriculum Management Theory focuses on how curriculum intentions are translated into practice through planning, resource allocation, and institutional coordination. Rauner (2007) emphasises that vocational competence develops through sustained engagement in

authentic work processes, while Gamble (2009) highlights the need for deliberate integration of conceptual and practical knowledge. Taken together, these perspectives frame practical training not merely as a pedagogical activity but as a managed curriculum process shaped by institutional conditions.

Prior empirical work in TVET has consistently shown that integrating theory and practice is difficult to realise in institutional contexts, often citing resource shortages, weak industry links, and assessment-driven pressures (Gamble, 2009; Allais, 2014; Wedekind & Mutereko, 2016). While these studies have established the persistence of a theory–practice gap, they have paid less attention to how this gap is reproduced through routine curriculum management practices. This study extends the discussion by demonstrating how everyday institutional arrangements can quietly but systematically marginalise practical training, thereby sustaining the very gap vocational policy seeks to address.

Methodologically, the study employed a qualitative design to access lecturers' lived experiences of managing the practical component. Data was generated through in-depth interviews with lecturers directly responsible for practical training, guided by questions on how practical sessions are planned, sequenced, resourced and assessed. The analysis employed a thematic approach, seeking recurring patterns across accounts rather than isolated incidents. This made it possible to identify institutional tendencies that extend beyond individual classrooms. By placing lecturers' accounts in dialogue with vocational theory and prior empirical work, the chapter develops conclusions that are theoretically grounded and empirically informed. In doing so, the study contributes to the field by shifting attention from whether a theory–practice gap exists to how institutional processes actively produce and sustain it.

5.3 Summary of the Findings

This study drew on qualitative interviews with lecturers responsible for managing the practical component of the TVET Hospitality programme to examine how practical training is organised and how institutional conditions shape students' preparation for occupational practice. Thematic analysis revealed consistent patterns related to resource availability, time allocation, assessment practices, and institutional support. Together, these patterns show how practical training is experienced in everyday institutional contexts rather than as envisioned in curriculum policy.

Through interviews, lecturers expressed a strong and shared conviction that practical training forms the backbone of Hospitality education. It was described as indispensable for developing technical competence, professional discipline, and workplace confidence, thereby reinforcing long-standing claims in vocational education about the centrality of experiential learning. Yet the findings simultaneously reveal that what is pedagogically recognised as essential is not always institutionally secured. Lecturers repeatedly described working under conditions in which equipment shortages, limited consumables, and nonfunctional training facilities constrained their ability to provide sustained practical engagement. These were not presented as occasional disruptions but as recurring features of programme delivery, meaning that practical training is often shaped by availability rather than by pedagogical planning. In effect, lecturers must frequently negotiate for the conditions required to deliver what the curriculum already prescribes.

The data further indicates that assessment practices continue even when opportunities for practice are restricted. Lecturers reported assessing students on competencies for which practical exposure had been limited, creating a misalignment between what assessment signals and what students have had the opportunity to develop. This raises important concerns about how competence is represented within the programme. At the same time, although timetables formally allocate practical periods, these are often redirected to theory when resources are unavailable. Practical learning, therefore, becomes concentrated around assessment periods rather than integrated throughout the learning cycle, reducing opportunities for repetition and gradual skill formation. In a vocational programme in which competence depends on sustained engagement in practice, this pattern has implications for how students develop proficiency and confidence.

Lecturers' responses to these conditions reveal a high degree of professional commitment. Participants described improvising with limited resources, drawing on professional networks, and collaborating informally to create practical learning opportunities. While these efforts provide some exposure for students, they also indicate that the continuity of practical training often depends on individual initiative rather than institutional guarantees. When programme delivery relies heavily on personal resilience, consistency across campuses and cohorts becomes difficult to ensure. The findings, therefore, indicate that lecturers remain committed to practical training, but their capacity to implement it consistently is shaped by structural conditions beyond their direct

control. By bringing these realities into view, the study highlights how institutional arrangements shape the extent to which vocational intentions are realised in practice.

5.4 Conclusions

This study concludes that the management of the practical component within the TVET Hospitality programme is structurally misaligned with the conditions required for developing occupational competence. Although lecturers demonstrate a clear understanding of the pedagogical importance of practical training, institutional arrangements routinely undermine the sustained engagement in authentic work processes that Rauner (2007) identifies as central to vocational competence. Practical training is formally prioritised yet operationally insecure. When it is displaced, compressed, or subordinated to theoretical coverage, the cumulative development of work-process knowledge is weakened. The problem, therefore, does not lie in the lecturer's commitment but in the institutional environment within which vocational intentions must be enacted. In this regard, the study affirms that occupational competence cannot arise from fragmented exposure to practice (Billett, 2011; Wheelahan, 2015), and it shows more concretely how such fragmentation is produced through routine programme management decisions rather than isolated failures.

The ongoing separation of theory and practice further restricts students' chances to internalise professional routines, standards, and problem-solving methods. Practical involvement is often shaped by assessment timetables and resource availability rather than by pedagogical sequencing. When theory is emphasised because it is easier to timetable and assess administratively, vocational pedagogy becomes driven by convenience rather than by the development of capability. This highlights concerns in vocational scholarship that assessment and cost pressures can distort vocational delivery (Allais, 2014; Gamble, 2016), but the present study shows how these pressures are embedded in everyday institutional processes. Under such circumstances, practical assessment is difficult to use as a credible indicator of occupational competence. When students are assessed without consistent opportunities to practice, outcomes risk overstating their applied ability and undermining the trustworthiness of competence claims. The concern is less about misconduct than about systemic misalignment between learning conditions and evaluative requirements.

While often celebrated in educational discourse, the lecturer's agency here appears as a response to institutional shortcomings rather than as an indicator of system robustness. Improvisation,

informal collaboration, and reliance on personal industry networks help sustain some practical training, but they also mask the lack of stable structural support. A vocational system that relies on individual resilience to maintain core curriculum components cannot ensure consistency or fairness across campuses. As Biesta, Priestley, and Robinson (2015) note, agency can sustain practice temporarily but cannot replace coherent systems. Thus, a structural gap becomes apparent between vocational policy ambitions and institutional capacity. Practical training is expected to shoulder the burden of vocational preparation, yet it is not consistently supported as the resource-intensive process it. Consequently, improving the practical component requires deliberate system-level alignment that prioritises occupational competency in planning, resourcing, and curriculum management. Without this alignment, the vocational promise of TVET is weakened precisely where it is meant to be most impactful.

The study does not argue that institutional resources, lecturer competencies, policy implementation or industry partnerships should be treated as separate management challenges. Rather, these factors operate collectively as contextual conditions that enable or constrain the effective management of the practical component. Accordingly, the study concludes that strengthening curriculum management offers the most appropriate institutional entry point for improving practical training within the Hospitality programme.

5.5 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have important implications for theory, practice, and policy within the TVET sector, particularly for the management of the practical component of the Hospitality programme.

5.5.1 Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study extend theoretical understandings of vocational education by demonstrating that occupational competence in Hospitality cannot be achieved through curriculum design alone but rather emerges from the sustained interaction among theoretical knowledge, practical engagement, and institutional enabling conditions. The study underscores the importance of continuity, sequencing and repetition in practical learning, revealing that fragmented or assessment-driven exposure undermines the development of great, transferable skills. This implies

that vocational education theory must more explicitly account for the role of institutional structures, resources and organisational processes in shaping learning outcomes, rather than assuming ideal conditions of implementation. As such, competence development should be understood as a contextually situated process influenced and shaped by both pedagogical intent and structural capacity.

5.5.2 Implications for Teaching and Learning Practice

The study highlights the need for a pedagogical reorientation in TVET Hospitality programmes towards practice-centred teaching and learning. Practical activities should be systematically embedded within curriculum delivery to enable students to apply theoretical concepts, refine technical skills and develop professional confidence through repeated engagement. Teaching practices must therefore move beyond episodic or assessment-focused practical sessions and prioritise structured, progressive skill development. This implies greater intentionality in lesson planning, the sequencing of learning activities, and the utilisation of practical time to support mastery and workplace readiness.

5.5.3 Implications for Institutional Management

At the institutional level, the findings indicate that effective management of the practical component requires strategic leadership, coordinated planning and deliberate prioritisation of practical training within organisational systems. Institutional management must recognise the operational demands of Hospitality programmes and ensure alignment between curriculum requirements, resource allocation and support structures. The study suggests that reliance on individual lecturer initiative to compensate for systemic shortcomings is neither sustainable nor equitable. Instead, consistent practical training outcomes depend on integrated institutional systems that support timely procurement, infrastructure maintenance and quality assurance across campuses.

5.5.4 Implications for Policy and Curriculum Implementation

The findings imply that policy and curriculum expectations for practical training must be grounded in realistic assessments of institutional capacity and implementation contexts. Without corresponding operational support, curriculum directives risk remaining aspirational rather than actionable. This highlights the need for stronger alignment among policy intentions, funding mechanisms, and monitoring frameworks to ensure the consistent delivery of practical training. Improved oversight of curriculum implementation would enable early identification of gaps between policy and practice, thereby supporting more responsive and effective vocational education provision.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted in selected TVET colleges within a single province, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised to the entire TVET sector in South Africa. Institutional contexts within the TVET system vary considerably in terms of resources, infrastructure and management practices, and the experiences reported in this study may not fully reflect conditions in other provinces or colleges. In addition, the study focused solely on lecturers responsible for managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme. While this focus was appropriate for addressing the research objectives, it excluded the perspectives of students, institutional managers and industry partners, whose views may have provided additional insights into the effectiveness of practical training and graduate work readiness.

Furthermore, the qualitative design of the study prioritised depth of understanding over breadth of coverage. Although this approach enabled a rich exploration of lecturers lived experiences, it also means that the findings are interpretive and context-specific rather than statistically generalisable. The reliance on self-reported data may also have introduced subjective bias, as perceptions. Nevertheless, these limitations do not diminish the value of the study; rather, they underscore the need for further research that incorporates multiple stakeholder perspectives and employs complementary research designs to deepen understanding of practical training within the TVET Hospitality context.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and reflective conclusions, the recommendations are synthesised into two interrelated systemic priorities that must be addressed for the practical component of the Hospitality programme to function as intended within the TVET sector. Rather than responding to individual research questions, these recommendations target the institutional conditions that most significantly shape the enactment of practical training and graduate work readiness.

The study recommends that TVET colleges reposition the practical component from a peripheral curriculum requirement to a central institutional priority. Consistent with Curriculum Management Theory, institutional leadership should ensure alignment among curriculum intent, resource allocation, timetabling, and assessment practices, so that practical learning is managed as an integral part of curriculum implementation rather than as an isolated activity. College management, in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), should prioritise dedicated budget allocations for practical facilities, equipment, and consumables, while streamlining procurement systems to minimise disruptions to practical teaching. Practical sessions should be protected within institutional timetables and deliberately integrated with assessment activities to ensure continuity between learning and competency development. These interventions create the organisational conditions for students to engage meaningfully in practical learning, thereby supporting the development of work process knowledge and vocational competence envisaged by Rauner (2007) and Gamble (2009). Implementation should be supported through annual operational planning, regular monitoring of practical resources and timetables, and collaboration between colleges and the DHET to ensure that practical training remains a strategic institutional priority. Although budget constraints and procurement delays may limit implementation, phased resource allocation and improved planning can mitigate these challenges.

The study further recommends establishing coherent institutional support systems to strengthen lecturers' capacity to deliver and assess practical learning. In line with the theoretical framework, lecturers should receive continuous professional development to enhance their practical expertise, assessment competence, and industry engagement, enabling them to facilitate the integration of theoretical knowledge with authentic workplace practice. Standardised assessment and moderation frameworks should be implemented across campuses to ensure consistent evaluation of practical

competence, while formal institutional partnerships with the Hospitality industry should provide structured opportunities for students to participate in authentic work processes rather than relying solely on simulated learning environments. Implementation should focus on regular lecturer development programmes, formal industry partnership agreements and continuous monitoring of practical assessment practices across campuses. Potential barriers, including limited funding, varying institutional capacity, and inconsistent industry participation, can be addressed through phased implementation and collaborative partnerships among colleges, industry, and the DHET.

5.8 Areas for Future Research

While this study provides insight into TVET lecturers' experiences of managing the practical component of the Hospitality programme, it also highlights the need for further research to deepen understanding of practical training within the TVET sector. Future studies could build on the findings of this research by extending the scope, perspectives and methodological approaches used to investigate vocational education practice.

Future research may consider the following areas:

- Exploring students' experiences of practical training on the Hospitality programme, with particular attention to perceived skill development, assessment practices and work readiness.
- Investigating the perspectives of industry stakeholders on the competence and preparedness of TVET Hospitality graduates entering the workplace.
- Conducting comparative studies across different provinces or TVET colleges to identify systemic patterns, variations and best practices in practical training delivery.
- Examining the effectiveness of formalised industry partnerships in enhancing practical training and graduate employability outcomes.
- Undertaking longitudinal studies that track Hospitality graduates' transition into employment to assess the long-term impact of practical training on workplace performance and career progression.
- Exploring the role of institutional leadership and governance in shaping prioritisation and resourcing of practical training within TVET colleges.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission Letter

 higher education & training Department: Higher Education and Training REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA		 <i>Let the future be known</i>
TO: NAME OF COLLEGE	DATE: 15/10/2024	
University of South Africa Department of Research Preller Street Muckleneuk Pretoria 0002		
Dear Sir/Madam		
RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT UMFOLOZI TVET COLLEGE FOR SIPHESIHLE NGCOBO		
1. Following your application to conduct research on the <i>"Exploring the Management of the practical component in the Hospitality National Certificate Vocational programme at a TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal"</i>, I am pleased to inform you that you have been granted permission to conduct research at uMfolozi TVET College as proposed. 2. In undertaking this research, you agree to respect and abide by all rules and regulations for conducting research at uMfolozi TVET College. 3. Upon completion of your study, you are requested to submit a copy of your thesis to uMfolozi TVET College.		
Signature of Head of College		Date: _____
Signature of Dean		Date: _____
Private Bag X5023, Richards Bay 3900, Tel: +27 (35) 902 9501, Fax: +27 (35) 788 2585, www.umfolozicollege.co.za SERVING COMMUNITIES IN ILEMBE, UTHUNGULU & UMKHANYAKUDE DISTRICTS		
 higher education & training Department: Higher Education and Training REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA		 <i>Let the future be known</i>

Appendix B: Informed Consent

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, SIHEMBILE NTULI (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print). SIHEMBILE NTULI

[Signature]
Participant Signature

26-11-2024
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print). Giphesihle Ngcobo

[Signature]
Researcher's signature

26-11-2024
Date

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, Zekhethele Siphele Mhlango (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print).

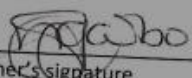
ZS Mhlango


Participant Signature

26/11/2024
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print).

Siphelele Ngcobo


Researcher's signature

26/11/2024
Date

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, N Myeza (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

NOKULWANA MYEZA

[Signature]
Participant Signature

26/11/2024
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

Siphesihle Ngobo

[Signature]
Researcher's signature

26/11/24
Date

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, N. A. Hlongwane (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

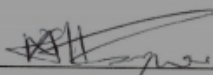
I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

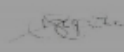
Nonkululeko Akhona Hlongwane


Participant Signature

26 / 11 / 24
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

Siphesihle Ngobo


Researcher's signature

26 Nov 2024
Date

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, ANDILE MVUSI (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

ANDILE MVUSI

Participant Signature



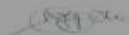
14-01-2025

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

Siphesihle Ngcobo

Researcher's signature



14-01-25

Date

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, Thenjiwe Mbatha (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

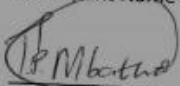
I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print).

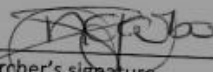
Thenjiwe Precious MBATHA


Participant Signature

14.01.2025
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print).

Siphesihle Ngcobo


Researcher's signature

14-01-25
Date

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, L. Dlamini (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

Lungile Dlamini


Participant Signature

10 / 01 / 2025
Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

Siphesihle Ngobo


Researcher's signature

10 / 01 / 25
Date

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

I, Nokulunga Thusi (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the semi-structured interview/focus group interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

Nokulunga Thusi

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

Siphesihle Ngcobo

Researcher's signature

Date

Appendix C: Ethical Clearance



UNISA
university
of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 12 September 2024

Ref: **2024/09/12/000000140/04/RB**
Name: **Ms Siphesihle Ngcobo**
Student No.: **45001642**

Decision: Ethics Approval form

Dear **Ms Siphesihle Ngcobo**

Researcher(s): Name: **Ms Siphesihle Ngcobo**
E-mail address: 45001642@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: **0836056120**

Supervisor: Name: **Dr VG Luxomo**
E-mail address: luxomvg@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: **012 481 1272**

Title of research: Exploring the Management of the practical component in the Hospitality National Certificate Vocational programme at a TVET college in KwaZulu-Natal.

Qualification: Master of Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period **2024/09/12 to 2027/09/12**.

*The **write risk level** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on **12 September 2024** in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.



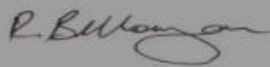
University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392, UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
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2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2027/09/12**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2024/09/12/00000140/04/RB** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof RB Monyai
Acting Head: CEDU Research
monyarb@unisa.ac.za



Prof Mpine Makoe
Executive Dean: CEDU
gakisme@unisa.ac.za



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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Appendix D: Turnitin Report

Similarity Report	
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Appendix E: Certificate of Language Editing

Ipat Educational Consultancy and Editing Services

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CERTIFICATE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING

DECLARATION

This is to certify that I have language edited the dissertation:

**Exploring the management of the practical component in the Hospitality
National Certificate Vocational programme at a TVET college in KwaZulu-
Natal**

Candidate: S Ngcobo

23-02-2026

DISCLAIMER

To the best of my knowledge, all amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

DIRECTOR: **Dr Tertsea J Ikoye**, BA (BSU), MA (Ibadan), MSS (UKZN), PhD (UKZN), TITC Business English.

Appendix F: Proof of Registration



1758

HSOCBO S MS
17 PEARLBROOK PLACE
BROOKDALE
4068

STUDENT NUMBER : 45001642

ENQUIRIES TEL : 0800 001 870

EMAIL : mandd@unisa.ac.za

2026-03-31

Dear Student

I hereby confirm that you have been registered for the current academic year as follows:

Proposed Qualification: MED (EDUC MANAGEMENT) (98405)

CODE	PAPER	S NAME OF STUDY UNIT	NOF crdts	LANG.	PROVISIONAL EXAMINATION EXAM DATE CENTRE (PLACE)
DFEDU95	MED - Education Management		**	E	
DFEDU95	MED - Education Management		**	E	

Study units registered without formal exams:

- * DFEDU95 MED - Education Management
- * DFEDU95 MED - Education Management
- * Exam transferred from previous academic year

You are referred to the "MyRegistration" brochure regarding fees that are forfeited on cancellation of any study units.

- Your study material is available on www.my.unisa.ac.za, as no printed matter will be made available for the research proposal module.
Study material can be accessed on the Unisa website. You must register on MyUnisa (<https://my.unisa.ac.za/portal/>) for this purpose. You are also reminded to activate your myLife email address since all electronic correspondence will be sent to this email address.
- Your attention is drawn to University rules and regulations (www.unisa.ac.za/register).
Please note the new requirements for reregistration and the number of credits per year which state that students registered for the first time from 2013, must complete 36 NOF credits in the first year of study, and thereafter must complete 48 NOF credits per year.
Students registered for the MBA, MBL and DBL degrees must visit the SBL's ESOOnline for study material and other important information.
Readmission rules for Honours: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy academic activity must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the University during each year of study. If you fail to meet this requirement in the first year of study, you will be admitted to another year of study. After a second year of not demonstrating academic activity to the satisfaction of the University, you will not be re-admitted, except with the express approval of the Executive Dean of the College in which you are registered. Note too, that this study programme must be completed within three years. Non-compliance will result in your academic exclusion, and you will therefore not be allowed to re-register for a qualification at the same level on the National Qualifications Framework in the same College for a period of five years after such exclusion, after which you will have to re-apply for admission to any such qualification.
Readmission rules for MAd: Note that in terms of the Unisa Admission Policy, a candidate must complete a Master's qualification within three years. Under exceptional circumstances and on recommendation of the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (fourth) year to complete the qualification. For a Doctoral degree, a candidate must complete the study programme within six years. Under exceptional circumstances, and on recommendation by the Executive Dean, a candidate may be allowed an extra (seventh) year to complete the qualification.

BALANCE ON STUDY ACCOUNT: 14090.00

Payable on or before:

Immediately: 630.00

2026/03/31: 0.00

2026/11/15: 0.00

2026/05/15: 6730.00

2027/03/15: 0.00

2026/09/15: 6730.00

Yours faithfully,

Prof M M Sepota
Registrar



6521 0 00 0

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