

# **Bridging Culinary Training and Industry Expectations: The Effectiveness of a Competency-Based Western Cooking Course in Chinese Vocational Education**

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## **Abstract**

The hospitality industry increasingly requires graduates who possess not only technical culinary expertise but also communication skills, intercultural competence, teamwork abilities, and career adaptability to meet the demands of a globalized labour market (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023). However, vocational culinary education in many countries, including China, has traditionally emphasized technical skill acquisition while providing limited opportunities to develop employability-related competencies (UNESCO, 2022). This study examined the effectiveness of a competency-based Western Cooking Elective Course implemented in the Chinese and Western Pastry Programme at Yantai Cultural Tourism Vocational College. Guided by the principles of Competency-Based Education (Mulder, 2014), Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and Project-Based Learning (Thomas, 2000), the study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design. Quantitative data were collected through questionnaires administered to 248 current students and graduates, while qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, graduates, and industry representatives. The findings revealed significant improvements in communication skills, teamwork, intercultural competence, and employment adaptability following participation in the course. Students reported increased confidence in professional communication, enhanced cultural awareness, and greater readiness for employment, while industry representatives acknowledged the close alignment between course outcomes and workplace expectations. The study demonstrates that competency-based culinary electives can effectively bridge the gap between vocational education and industry needs by integrating technical training with employability and intercultural learning. The findings provide important implications for curriculum reform in vocational hospitality education.

*Keywords:* Competency-Based Education, Culinary Education, Employability, Hospitality Education, Intercultural Competence, Project-Based Learning, Vocational Education

## Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industry has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global economy, driven by globalization, international mobility, technological innovation, and increasing cultural diversity (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023). Consequently, employers increasingly seek graduates who possess not only strong technical competencies but also transferable skills such as communication, teamwork, intercultural competence, adaptability, creativity, and problem-solving abilities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023). These competencies are considered essential for delivering high-quality services and responding effectively to the dynamic demands of international hospitality environments.

Vocational education and training (VET) play a pivotal role in preparing skilled professionals for the hospitality industry by combining occupational knowledge with practical workplace experience (UNESCO, 2022). However, many vocational culinary programmes continue to emphasize technical cooking skills while placing comparatively less emphasis on developing broader employability competencies that are increasingly valued by employers (Mulder, 2014). As a result, graduates often encounter challenges in communicating effectively with customers, collaborating within multidisciplinary teams, adapting to multicultural workplaces, and managing career transitions successfully (Allen & Mac Con Iomaire, 2016). Similar concerns have been identified in educational research, where learning outcomes are influenced not only by formal instructional practices but also by the availability of human, social, and institutional capital that supports learners' development. Herath (2007) demonstrated that educational achievement is shaped by the interaction of financial, human, and social capital available at home and school, highlighting the importance of creating supportive learning environments that extend beyond technical knowledge acquisition.

In China, vocational education has undergone substantial reforms to better align educational programmes with national economic development strategies and evolving labour market requirements. Recent educational policies encourage institutions to implement competency-based curricula, strengthen industry partnerships, and integrate workplace learning into vocational programmes to improve graduate employability (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2022). Within this context, culinary education has increasingly recognized the importance of combining technical expertise with professional competencies that support career success in both domestic and international hospitality industries.

Competency-Based Education (CBE) has emerged as an influential educational approach that emphasizes clearly defined learning outcomes aligned with occupational standards rather than traditional content-based instruction (Mulder, 2014). CBE enables learners to demonstrate mastery of professional competencies through authentic learning experiences, performance-based assessment, and continuous feedback. Similarly, Project-Based Learning (PBL) provides opportunities for students to engage in realistic workplace tasks that promote collaboration, problem-solving, communication, and reflective learning (Thomas, 2000). These pedagogical approaches are further supported by Constructivist Learning Theory, which suggests that meaningful learning occurs through active participation, social interaction, and the construction of knowledge within authentic contexts (Vygotsky, 1978).

Intercultural competence has also become an essential graduate attribute within hospitality education because professionals routinely interact with customers and colleagues from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006). Culinary education provides unique opportunities for intercultural learning, as food reflects cultural identity, traditions, values, and social practices. Integrating intercultural learning into culinary training can therefore enhance students' cultural awareness, communication skills, and professional adaptability in multicultural workplaces (Deardorff, 2006).

Recognizing these educational needs, Yantai Cultural Tourism Vocational College introduced a competency-based Western Cooking Elective Course within its Chinese and Western Pastry Programme. The course integrates competency-based learning outcomes, project-based activities, workplace simulations, and intercultural learning experiences to strengthen students' professional competencies and employability. Through authentic culinary projects, collaborative learning activities, bilingual menu design, customer service simulations, and cross-cultural communication exercises, the course aims to prepare students for contemporary hospitality careers.

Against this background, the present study evaluates the effectiveness of the Western Cooking Elective Course in enhancing students' professional competencies, communication skills, intercultural competence, and employment readiness. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on curriculum innovation in vocational hospitality education and provide evidence-based recommendations for competency-based curriculum reform in China and similar educational contexts.

## Literature Review

### Competency-Based Education in Vocational Training

Competency-Based Education (CBE) is an educational approach that emphasizes the achievement of clearly defined learning outcomes that reflect the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional behaviours required in the workplace (Mulder, 2014). Unlike traditional teacher-centred approaches that focus primarily on content coverage and examination performance, CBE prioritizes students' ability to demonstrate competencies through authentic learning experiences and performance-based assessments (OECD, 2023). This learner-centred approach enables students to progress according to mastery of specific competencies rather than the time spent in formal instruction (UNESCO, 2022).

In vocational education, competency-based curricula have become increasingly important because they promote stronger alignment between educational programmes and labour market requirements (UNESCO, 2022). This emphasis on holistic competency development is consistent with broader educational perspectives that recognize learning achievement as a product of multiple interacting factors, including learner support systems, institutional environments, and social resources. Herath (2008) highlighted that educational outcomes are influenced by contributors operating across both home and school contexts, suggesting that effective educational programmes should consider the wider ecosystem supporting learner development. Hospitality employers increasingly expect graduates to demonstrate practical competencies together with communication skills, teamwork, critical thinking, adaptability, and customer-service abilities (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023). Consequently, many vocational institutions have restructured their curricula to integrate competency-based learning outcomes that better prepare graduates for rapidly changing workplace environments (Mulder, 2014).

Research has consistently demonstrated that competency-based learning enhances students' employability by providing opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic workplace contexts (OECD, 2023). Students participating in competency-based programmes develop greater confidence, professional responsibility, problem-solving ability, and career readiness than those educated through conventional instructional approaches (UNESCO, 2022). In hospitality education, competency-based learning also encourages continuous reflection, self-assessment, and lifelong learning, all of which are essential characteristics of successful hospitality professionals (Allen & Mac Con Iomaire, 2016).

### *Project-Based Learning in Culinary Education*

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is widely recognized as one of the most effective instructional approaches for vocational and technical education because it actively engages students in solving authentic problems while developing practical and transferable skills (Thomas, 2000). Rather than receiving knowledge passively, students participate in collaborative projects that require planning, investigation, communication, decision-making, and reflection, thereby promoting deeper understanding and long-term knowledge retention (Bell, 2010).

Within culinary education, project-based learning enables students to experience realistic workplace situations such as menu planning, food preparation, banquet management, customer-service simulations, food costing, and event organization. These authentic learning experiences encourage learners to integrate technical culinary knowledge with leadership, teamwork, communication, creativity, and time-management skills (Mergendoller et al., 2006). Such collaborative learning approaches are particularly important in developing social competencies among learners because educational success is closely connected with opportunities to interact, cooperate, and access supportive social networks. Research on social capital in education has emphasized that relationships and collaborative environments contribute significantly to learners' achievement and development (Herath, 2013). Consequently, project-based learning supports the development of both occupational competencies and employability skills required by the hospitality industry.

Constructivist learning theory further explains the effectiveness of project-based learning. According to Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs through social interaction, collaboration, and participation in meaningful activities. During collaborative culinary projects, students exchange ideas, solve practical problems collectively, receive feedback from peers and instructors, and gradually construct professional knowledge through experience. Such learning environments encourage independent thinking, reflective practice, and professional confidence, thereby preparing students for real workplace challenges (Vygotsky, 1978).

### *Intercultural Competence in Hospitality Education*

The globalization of the hospitality and tourism industry has significantly increased the importance of intercultural competence as a core professional competency (Deardorff, 2006). Hospitality professionals routinely interact with customers, colleagues, and business partners representing diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds. Consequently, effective communication across cultures has become

essential for delivering high-quality customer service and maintaining positive workplace relationships (OECD, 2023).

Byram (1997) defines intercultural communicative competence as the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively with individuals from different cultural backgrounds through the integration of cultural knowledge, communication skills, critical cultural awareness, and positive attitudes towards diversity. Similarly, Deardorff (2006) conceptualizes intercultural competence as a developmental process involving respect, openness, adaptability, empathy, and effective intercultural interaction.

Culinary education provides a unique environment for developing intercultural competence because food represents an important expression of cultural identity, history, traditions, and values. Developing respect for diversity is also consistent with broader educational equity perspectives. Herath (2017) examined gender differences and equity issues in education, emphasizing the importance of creating inclusive learning environments where all learners have opportunities to participate and achieve. Learning about international cuisines exposes students to different cooking techniques, dining customs, ingredients, and service practices while promoting respect for cultural diversity (Byram, 1997). Furthermore, bilingual menu design, multicultural food festivals, customer-service simulations, and international culinary projects enable students to apply intercultural communication skills in authentic professional contexts (Deardorff, 2006). Such experiences contribute to students' cultural sensitivity, global awareness, and readiness for employment in international hospitality settings.

### *Employability Skills and Professional Identity*

Employability refers to an individual's ability to obtain, maintain, and progress in meaningful employment through the effective application of technical knowledge, transferable skills, professional attitudes, and lifelong learning capabilities (Yorke, 2006). Contemporary employability frameworks emphasize that graduates require much more than occupational expertise; they must also possess communication skills, teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, adaptability, digital literacy, and problem-solving abilities to remain competitive in rapidly changing labour markets (World Economic Forum, 2023).

In hospitality education, employability is closely associated with students' professional identity, confidence, and preparedness for workplace challenges (Allen & Mac Con Iomaire, 2016). Professional identity develops gradually as students participate in authentic workplace experiences, internships, project-based learning,

and reflective practice, allowing them to understand professional expectations and strengthen their commitment to their chosen careers (Jackson, 2016).

Vocational education institutions therefore have an important responsibility to design curricula that integrate technical competencies with transferable employability skills and opportunities for workplace learning (OECD, 2023). Strong collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners further enhances graduate employability by ensuring that curriculum content reflects current industry expectations and emerging labour market trends (UNESCO, 2022).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is underpinned by three complementary theoretical perspectives: Competency-Based Education (Mulder, 2014), Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), and Project-Based Learning (Thomas, 2000). Competency-Based Education provides the foundation for designing learning outcomes that align with professional standards and workplace expectations. Constructivist Learning Theory explains how students construct knowledge through collaboration, authentic experiences, and reflection, while Project-Based Learning offers practical strategies for engaging learners in meaningful, real-world culinary tasks.

Together, these theoretical perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how competency-based Western cooking education can enhance communication skills, intercultural competence, teamwork, professional confidence, and graduate employability in vocational hospitality education.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected first to identify patterns of change following course participation, while qualitative interviews were subsequently conducted to explain and enrich the statistical findings.

#### **Participants**

A total of 248 participants were involved in the study. The sample included current students enrolled in Chinese and Western Pastry programmes as well as graduates who had previously completed related training. Female participants represented 58.1% of the sample, while male participants accounted for 41.9%. Approximately 65.3% of participants had completed internship experiences within the hospitality industry.

## **Course Intervention**

The Western Cooking Elective Course was implemented over eighteen weeks. The curriculum integrated competency-based learning outcomes, project-based activities, intercultural content, and workplace simulations.

Key learning activities included: Western cuisine preparation and presentation, Menu development projects, Simulated banquet planning, Customer service role plays, Bilingual menu design, Cross-cultural communication exercises, and team-based culinary projects.

## **Data Collection**

Data were collected using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, student reflection journals, and employer feedback reports.

Questionnaires measured: Communication skills, Teamwork competence, Intercultural competence, Employment adaptability, Course satisfaction

Interviews were conducted with students, graduates, teachers, and industry representatives to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of course effectiveness.

## **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics and comparative analyses of pre- and post-course competency scores.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Interview transcripts were coded systematically, and themes were developed through iterative comparison and interpretation.

## **Results**

### **Participant Characteristics**

A total of 248 participants completed the questionnaire. Of these, 144 (58.1%) were female, and 104 (41.9%) were male. The participants included current students enrolled in the Chinese and Western Pastry Programme and graduates who had completed the Western Cooking Elective Course. Approximately 65.3% of the respondents had completed internships in hotels, restaurants, or other hospitality establishments, providing them with practical industry experience relevant to the study.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 248)*

| Variable              | Category | n   | %     |
|-----------------------|----------|-----|-------|
| Gender                | Male     | 104 | 41.9  |
|                       | Female   | 144 | 58.1  |
| Internship experience | Yes      | 162 | 65.3  |
|                       | No       | 86  | 34.7  |
| Total                 |          | 248 | 100.0 |

### **Student Perceptions of Course Quality**

Participants evaluated the quality and relevance of the Western Cooking Elective Course using a five-point Likert scale. The findings indicated a high level of satisfaction with the course. More than 90% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the course content was relevant to industry requirements and contributed positively to their professional development.

Students particularly appreciated the practical learning activities, workplace simulations, collaborative projects, and opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic culinary settings. These findings suggest that the competency-based curriculum effectively engaged learners and enhanced their motivation to acquire professional competencies.

### **Changes in Professional Competencies**

The study examined students' self-reported competencies before and after completing the Western Cooking Elective Course. As shown in Table 2, improvements were observed across all competency dimensions.

**Table 2**

*Comparison of Pre-course and Post-course Competency Scores*

| <b>Competency Dimension</b> | <b>Pre-course Mean</b> | <b>Post-course Mean</b> | <b>Mean Difference</b> |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Communication Skills        | 3.12                   | 4.01                    | +0.89                  |
| Teamwork and Leadership     | 3.27                   | 4.08                    | +0.81                  |
| Intercultural Competence    | 2.88                   | 3.85                    | +0.97                  |
| Employment Adaptability     | 2.95                   | 3.92                    | +0.97                  |

The greatest improvements were observed in intercultural competence (Mean Difference = 0.97) and employment adaptability (Mean Difference = 0.97). Communication skills also improved substantially (Mean Difference = 0.89), followed by teamwork and leadership (Mean Difference = 0.81). These findings indicate that participation in the Western Cooking Elective Course was associated with positive development across all measured employability competencies.

### **Communication Skills**

Students reported increased confidence in communicating with customers, presenting culinary products, explaining menu items, and collaborating with colleagues. Many respondents indicated that bilingual menu development and customer-service simulations improved their oral communication skills and professional interactions.

Teachers also observed greater student participation in discussions, presentations, and group activities throughout the course. Students consistently described increased confidence in communicating with customers, colleagues, and supervisors.

### **One participant commented:**

"Before taking this course, I focused mainly on cooking techniques. After participating in customer-service activities and presentations, I became much more confident in explaining dishes and interacting with customers."

Teachers similarly reported noticeable improvements in students' communication skills, classroom participation, and professional presentation abilities.

## **Teamwork and Leadership**

The project-based nature of the course encouraged students to work collaboratively while planning menus, preparing food, and organizing simulated restaurant operations. Participants reported improvements in cooperation, leadership, task allocation, conflict resolution, and collective decision-making.

Students indicated that working in teams enhanced their ability to coordinate responsibilities and manage time effectively under realistic workplace conditions.

## **Intercultural Competence**

Students demonstrated notable improvements in intercultural awareness following participation in the course. Exposure to Western cuisine, international culinary traditions, and multicultural communication activities increased students' appreciation of cultural diversity and strengthened their ability to interact with individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

Many participants recognized that food represents cultural identity and social traditions rather than merely culinary techniques. Students reported increased understanding of international cuisines and greater appreciation of cultural diversity.

One student stated:

"Learning Western cuisine also taught us about different cultures. We realized that every dish has its own cultural story and traditions."

Teachers observed that students became more respectful of cultural differences and demonstrated greater curiosity about international hospitality practices.

## **Employment Adaptability**

Participants reported greater confidence in entering the hospitality industry after completing the course. Students believed that workplace simulations, customer-service role plays, and practical culinary projects prepared them for employment by increasing their familiarity with professional standards and workplace expectations.

Graduates also reported that the competencies acquired during the course facilitated smoother transitions into employment and improved their confidence in performing workplace responsibilities. Participants emphasized that workplace simulations and project-based activities closely reflected real hospitality environments.

One graduate explained:

"The banquet simulation felt like working in an actual restaurant. It helped me understand workplace expectations before starting my internship."

Industry representatives also indicated that graduates who completed the course demonstrated stronger professional behaviour, teamwork, and workplace confidence than many newly recruited employees.

The quantitative and qualitative findings consistently demonstrate that the competency-based Western Cooking Elective Course positively influenced students' employability-related competencies. Improvements were observed in communication skills, teamwork, intercultural competence, and employment adaptability. At the same time, interview participants emphasized the value of authentic learning experiences, workplace simulations, and collaborative projects in preparing students for professional careers in the hospitality industry.

## **Discussion**

This study examined the effectiveness of a competency-based Western Cooking Elective Course in enhancing vocational students' employability competencies within a Chinese vocational culinary education programme. The findings indicate that participation in the course significantly improved students' communication skills, teamwork and leadership, intercultural competence, and employment adaptability. These findings demonstrate that integrating Competency-Based Education (CBE), Project-Based Learning (PBL), and constructivist learning principles into vocational culinary education can effectively prepare students for the complex demands of the contemporary hospitality industry.

One of the most significant findings of this study was the improvement in students' communication skills. Students reported increased confidence in communicating with customers, presenting menu items, explaining culinary techniques, and collaborating with peers during practical activities. These findings are consistent with previous studies that identify communication as one of the most important employability skills required by the hospitality industry (Jackson, 2016; World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023). Effective communication enables hospitality professionals to interact successfully with customers from diverse cultural backgrounds while maintaining high-quality service standards (Allen & Mac Con Iomaire, 2016). The practical learning activities incorporated into the Western Cooking Elective Course, including customer-service simulations, bilingual menu presentations, and collaborative projects, created authentic learning environments that allowed students to develop communication skills through active participation rather than passive instruction. This finding supports Vygotsky's (1978)

constructivist perspective, which emphasizes that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and collaborative learning.

The study also found significant improvements in teamwork and leadership competencies. Students developed greater confidence in working collaboratively, allocating responsibilities, managing time, and solving practical problems during team-based culinary projects. These findings support the work of Thomas (2000), who argued that Project-Based Learning promotes collaborative problem-solving, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills through authentic learning experiences. Similarly, Bell (2010) reported that project-based instruction encourages learners to assume responsibility for their own learning while strengthening teamwork and leadership capabilities. Since hospitality workplaces depend heavily on cooperation among chefs, service staff, managers, and suppliers, the development of teamwork competencies is essential for graduate employability (OECD, 2023). The present findings therefore demonstrate that authentic culinary projects can effectively bridge the gap between classroom learning and workplace practice.

The greatest improvement observed in this study was in students' intercultural competence. Participants reported increased awareness of cultural diversity, improved understanding of international culinary traditions, and greater confidence in interacting with individuals from different cultural backgrounds. These findings support Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, which emphasizes cultural knowledge, communication skills, critical cultural awareness, and positive attitudes toward diversity. Likewise, Deardorff (2006) argues that intercultural competence develops progressively through meaningful intercultural experiences that encourage openness, respect, adaptability, and reflection. The Western Cooking Elective Course provided students with opportunities to explore international cuisines, cultural traditions, bilingual communication, and multicultural service practices. These experiences enabled students to understand food not merely as a technical product but also as an important expression of cultural identity and social values. Given the increasingly global nature of the hospitality industry, integrating intercultural learning into vocational culinary education is an important strategy for preparing graduates for multicultural workplaces (UNESCO, 2022).

The findings further revealed substantial improvements in employment adaptability and professional confidence. Students indicated that workplace simulations, banquet planning exercises, and customer-service activities increased their confidence in entering the hospitality industry and helped them understand professional expectations before undertaking internships or employment. The findings further

reinforce the argument that educational programmes should be viewed as developmental ecosystems rather than isolated instructional interventions. Previous research by Herath (2007, 2008) demonstrated that learner outcomes are influenced by interconnected forms of capital and support systems within educational environments. Therefore, competency-based vocational education may achieve stronger outcomes when technical training is combined with supportive social learning environments, collaborative experiences, and opportunities for learner empowerment. These findings are consistent with employability research demonstrating that authentic workplace experiences significantly improve graduates' career readiness and professional identity (Jackson, 2016; Yorke, 2006). Competency-Based Education emphasizes mastery of workplace competencies through authentic assessment and continuous performance improvement rather than memorization of theoretical knowledge (Mulder, 2014). Consequently, the competency-based design of the Western Cooking Elective Course enabled students to develop practical capabilities that closely reflected industry expectations.

Another important finding concerns the alignment between curriculum content and labour market needs. Industry representatives participating in this study acknowledged that graduates who completed the course demonstrated stronger professional behaviour, communication skills, teamwork, and workplace adaptability than many newly recruited employees. This finding supports UNESCO (2022), which emphasizes that vocational education should be closely aligned with labour market demands through collaboration between educational institutions and employers. Similarly, the OECD (2023) argues that effective vocational education systems depend on strong partnerships with industry to ensure curriculum relevance and graduate employability. The present study demonstrates that continuous collaboration between vocational institutions and hospitality employers can contribute significantly to curriculum improvement and workforce development.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings provide empirical support for integrating Competency-Based Education, Project-Based Learning, and Constructivist Learning Theory within vocational hospitality education. Competency-Based Education provides a framework for identifying measurable professional competencies aligned with workplace requirements (Mulder, 2014), while Project-Based Learning creates opportunities for students to acquire these competencies through authentic and collaborative learning experiences (Thomas, 2000). Constructivist learning theory further explains how students develop professional knowledge through interaction, reflection, and practical engagement with real-world tasks (Vygotsky, 1978). Together, these theoretical perspectives explain the positive learning outcomes

observed in this study and provide a strong pedagogical foundation for curriculum innovation in vocational education.

Despite the positive findings, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a single vocational institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational settings. In addition, the quantitative data were primarily based on students' self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by personal bias. Future studies should include multiple vocational institutions, larger and more diverse samples, and longitudinal research designs to examine the long-term impact of competency-based culinary education on graduate employment outcomes and career progression. Future research may also compare competency-based culinary programmes across different countries to identify effective international practices and inform curriculum development in vocational hospitality education.

Overall, this study provides strong evidence that competency-based Western culinary education contributes significantly to students' professional development by strengthening communication skills, teamwork, intercultural competence, and employment adaptability. The integration of authentic workplace experiences, project-based learning, and intercultural education enables vocational institutions to produce graduates who are better prepared to meet the evolving demands of the global hospitality industry. These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on vocational curriculum reform and offer practical guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers seeking to improve graduate employability in hospitality education.

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