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The Future of Using Virtual Reality Training in Hospitality Establishments: Prospects, Context and Challenges

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Abstract

Virtual reality (VR) training in hospitality establishments offers a revolutionary approach to staff training and skill development. It leverages immersive technology to create realistic, interactive simulations that can enhance the training experience in a way that traditional methods cannot. This study aims to explore the prospects, context, benefits, and challenges related to the adoption of virtual reality in training and identify trainees' expectations and perceptions in experiencing the virtual environment in hospitality establishments. To achieve the aim of the study, the study was divided into an exploratory part through which the prospects, context, benefits, and challenges of training using virtual reality technology are explored. Moreover, the simulation-based part through which the expectations and perceptions of the trainees within the virtual environment are known using one of the virtual reality glasses (Oculus Quest2) and a simulation program for how to use a fire extinguisher in a hospitality establishment.

To complete this study, the primary data was collected through an exploratory study and a simulation study. The exploratory study was conducted using the Delphi technique in three rounds with (19) academic experts and hospitality industry experts. As for the simulation study, a pre-test and post-test were conducted via a questionnaire on a convenience sample of front-line staff and supervisors in five-star hotels and fast-food restaurants in the Alexandria and Fayoum governorates, Egypt. Finally, using SPSS version 25, paired samples T-test, bivariate Pearson correlation and simple linear regressions were used to test the hypotheses.

The results showed that most hospitality establishments in Egypt do not use virtual reality technology in training. The results also indicated that one of the prospects for training with virtual reality technology is that it will support multi-user interactions remotely, and technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR). In addition, the departments that will use training with this technology, such as the food and beverage department, front offices, and housekeeping. Furthermore, the benefits of applying this technology in the training process are its lower long-term cost, and it gives hospitality institutions a competitive advantage in marketing. Moreover, one of the challenges that may face the application of this technology in the training process is that hospitality institutions do not have the capabilities of

digital infrastructure. Also, virtual reality scenarios lack direct practical experience and face-to-face interactions.

As a result, the study suggested that future studies expand research into virtual reality applications for hospitality establishments. Additionally, study the long-term effects of virtual reality training on skill retention and transferability. Also, further research needs to analyse the impact of augmented reality and virtual reality on guest satisfaction as well as staff satisfaction in hospitality establishments.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Training, Hospitality Establishments, Prospects, Context, Benefits, Challenges, Skill Development, Immersive Training, User experience, Virtual Environment.