

Educational Initiatives and Industry Collaboration for Promoting Hospitality Careers Among Underprivileged Youth: A SEM Model and Analysis

Mayukhjyoti Bhattacharjee ¹

Research Scholar, School of Commerce and Management, Department of Management,
YBN University, Ranchi.

Prof. Dr. Anil Prasad Yadav ²

HOD, Business Management, Department of Management, YBN University, Ranchi.

ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry has emerged as a significant source of employment and economic growth, particularly for underprivileged youth seeking accessible career opportunities. This study examines the role of educational initiatives and industry collaboration in promoting hospitality careers among disadvantaged youth in Hooghly District, West Bengal. The research explores how vocational training programs, skill development schemes, and short-term certification courses enhance employability by developing technical and soft skills required in the hospitality sector. The study also highlights the importance of industry partnerships in aligning training programs with market requirements, providing practical exposure through internships, apprenticeships, and placement opportunities. Such collaborations help bridge the gap between education and employment, thereby improving job readiness among youth from economically weaker backgrounds. Additionally, the research emphasizes socio-economic benefits such as income generation, social mobility, empowerment, and reduction of unemployment among marginalized groups. Furthermore, the findings suggest that educational initiatives and industry collaboration contribute significantly to regional development by supporting tourism growth, improving infrastructure, and creating sustainable employment opportunities. The study concludes that a collaborative approach involving educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and policy support is essential for fostering inclusive growth and maximizing the employment potential of the hospitality sector in Hooghly District.

Keywords: *Hospitality Industry, Educational Initiatives, Industry Collaboration, Underprivileged Youth, Skill Development, Employment Opportunities*

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in India, offering diverse employment opportunities across hotels, restaurants, tourism, and service-based enterprises. For underprivileged youth, particularly in regions like Hooghly District, West Bengal, this sector presents a viable

pathway toward sustainable livelihoods and socio-economic upliftment. However, limited access to quality education, skill development, and career awareness often restricts their participation in such opportunities. In this context, educational initiatives and industry collaboration play a vital role in bridging the gap between potential and employment. Educational initiatives, including vocational training programs, skill development schemes, and short-term hospitality courses, help equip disadvantaged youth with practical skills and professional competencies [1]. These programs focus not only on technical knowledge but also on soft skills such as communication, grooming, and customer service, which are essential in the hospitality sector. Simultaneously, collaboration with industry stakeholders ensures that training aligns with real-world requirements, providing exposure through internships, apprenticeships, and placement opportunities. Such integrated efforts contribute to enhancing employability, building confidence, and creating career pathways for marginalized youth. Therefore, promoting hospitality careers through structured education and industry partnerships is crucial for inclusive development and workforce empowerment in Hooghly District.

1.1 Overview of the Hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry is a dynamic and rapidly expanding sector that focuses on providing services related to accommodation, food and beverages, travel, tourism, and customer experience. It encompasses a wide range of establishments such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, event management companies, travel agencies, and tourism services. In India, the growth of tourism, globalization, and increasing disposable income have significantly contributed to the expansion of this industry, making it a key driver of economic development and employment generation. One of the defining features of the hospitality sector is its service-oriented nature, where customer satisfaction and experience are the primary objectives. This industry requires a workforce that is not only technically skilled but also proficient in communication, interpersonal relations, and problem-solving. As a result, it offers diverse career opportunities ranging from entry-level roles such as housekeeping and food service staff to managerial positions in hotel administration and operations [2]. Moreover, the hospitality industry plays a crucial role in supporting allied sectors like transportation, retail, and entertainment. It is also known for its inclusivity, as it provides employment opportunities to individuals with varying levels of education and skills, including underprivileged youth. Therefore, the hospitality sector serves as an important platform for skill development, entrepreneurship, and socio-economic upliftment, particularly in regions seeking sustainable employment opportunities.

1.2 Employment Potential for Youth

The hospitality industry offers significant employment potential for youth, making it one of the most accessible and inclusive sectors in the economy. With its labour-intensive nature, the industry continuously generates a wide range of job opportunities across hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, event management firms, and tourism services. For young individuals, especially those from underprivileged backgrounds, it provides entry-level roles that require minimal formal education but emphasize practical skills and a willingness to learn.

One of the key advantages of the hospitality sector is its diversity of career paths. Youth can begin their careers in positions such as housekeeping staff, kitchen assistants, front office executives, and service personnel, and gradually progress to supervisory and managerial roles through experience and training. The industry also encourages skill-based growth, allowing individuals to specialize in areas like culinary arts, hotel management, customer service, and tourism operations. Furthermore, the sector promotes entrepreneurship by enabling young people to start small businesses such as catering services, cafés, travel consultancy, or homestays. With the rise of tourism and digital platforms, new opportunities are emerging in online booking services, food delivery, and hospitality startups. Thus, the hospitality industry not only provides immediate employment but also fosters long-term career development and economic independence for youth [3].

1.3 Underprivileged Youth in Hooghly District

Underprivileged youth in Hooghly District, West Bengal, face multiple socio-economic challenges that limit their access to quality education, skill development, and stable employment opportunities. Many belong to low-income families engaged in agriculture, informal labour, or small-scale occupations, where financial constraints often force early school dropouts. As a result, a significant portion of the youth lacks the formal education and technical skills required to compete in the modern job market.

In addition to economic hardship, there is limited awareness about career opportunities beyond traditional occupations. Social factors such as lack of guidance, inadequate infrastructure, and restricted exposure to professional environments further hinder their growth. Rural areas of Hooghly, in particular, suffer from insufficient access to vocational training centers and career counselling services, which creates a gap between potential talent and employability. Moreover, many young individuals face issues like underemployment, seasonal work, and job insecurity, which perpetuate the cycle of poverty. Gender disparities also play a role, as young women often encounter additional barriers in accessing education and employment opportunities. Despite these challenges, underprivileged youth in Hooghly possess immense potential. With proper educational support, skill training, and industry exposure, they can be empowered to build sustainable careers, particularly in sectors like hospitality that value practical skills and dedication [4].

1.4 Role of Educational Initiatives

Educational initiatives play a transformative role in shaping the careers of underprivileged youth by providing them with accessible, skill-oriented, and employment-focused learning opportunities. In districts like Hooghly, where many young individuals face financial constraints and limited access to higher education, such initiatives serve as a bridge between basic education and professional employment. These programs are designed to reduce educational inequality and create pathways for inclusive growth, particularly in service-oriented sectors like hospitality. One of the most important contributions of educational initiatives is the emphasis on vocational and practical training. Unlike traditional academic systems that focus heavily on theoretical knowledge, hospitality training programs prioritize hands-on learning. Students are trained in real-life scenarios such as managing hotel operations, handling customer interactions, maintaining hygiene standards, and delivering quality service. This practical exposure enhances their confidence and prepares them to meet industry expectations effectively.

In addition to technical skills, these initiatives focus on the development of soft skills, which are crucial in the hospitality industry. Communication skills, especially spoken English, are given significant importance as they enable youth to interact with customers from diverse backgrounds. Programs also include personality development, grooming, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving abilities. These competencies not only improve employability but also help individuals adapt to professional environments with ease. Another significant aspect is inclusivity and accessibility. Many educational initiatives are supported by government schemes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private institutions that offer free or low-cost training to economically weaker sections. Scholarships, stipends, and flexible learning schedules make it easier for disadvantaged youth, including school dropouts and women, to participate. Mobile training units and community-based centers further extend the reach of such programs in rural and semi-urban areas of Hooghly.

Furthermore, educational initiatives often incorporate career guidance and counselling, which is essential for first-generation learners who may lack awareness about career options. These programs guide students in choosing suitable career paths within the hospitality sector and help them set realistic goals. Mentorship from industry professionals also plays a crucial role in motivating and inspiring youth. Importantly, many training programs are linked with placement opportunities, internships, and apprenticeships. This ensures that students not only gain skills but also secure employment after completing their training. Industry-aligned curricula and certification further enhance their credibility in the job market. Educational initiatives act as a catalyst for empowerment by transforming unskilled youth into competent professionals. They not only improve individual livelihoods but also contribute to the broader socio-economic development of the region by reducing unemployment and promoting workforce participation in the hospitality industry [5].

1.5 Importance of Industry Collaboration

Industry collaboration plays a crucial role in strengthening the effectiveness of educational initiatives and enhancing employment opportunities for underprivileged youth in the hospitality sector. It creates a direct link between training institutions and real-world industry requirements, ensuring that the skills imparted to students are relevant, practical, and aligned with current market demands. In regions like Hooghly District, such collaboration is essential to bridge the gap between theoretical learning and professional application. One of the key benefits of industry collaboration is the development of industry-oriented curricula. Hospitality organizations actively contribute to designing training modules based on current trends, technologies, and service standards. This ensures that students are trained according to actual workplace expectations, making them job-ready from the outset. Additionally, experts from the industry often participate as guest lecturers or trainers, providing valuable insights and practical knowledge to learners.

Another significant advantage is the opportunity for hands-on experience through internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training. These experiences allow students to work in real hospitality environments such as hotels and restaurants, where they can apply their skills, understand workplace dynamics, and build professional confidence. Such exposure is particularly beneficial for underprivileged youth who may lack familiarity with formal work settings. Industry collaboration

also facilitates placement opportunities. Many organizations partner with training institutes to recruit skilled candidates directly, reducing unemployment and ensuring a smooth transition from training to employment. Furthermore, collaborations may include mentorship programs, career guidance, and continuous skill upgrading, which support long-term career growth. Industry collaboration enhances the quality, relevance, and impact of educational initiatives. It not only improves employability but also fosters a skilled workforce that meets the evolving needs of the hospitality industry, contributing to sustainable economic and social development [6].

1.6 Socio-Economic Upliftment

Socio-economic upliftment refers to the improvement in the social and economic conditions of individuals and communities, particularly those belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups. In the context of underprivileged youth in Hooghly District, West Bengal, the hospitality sector serves as a powerful medium for achieving such upliftment by providing accessible employment opportunities and avenues for personal growth. One of the primary ways in which hospitality careers contribute to socio-economic development is through income generation. Through securing stable jobs in hotels, restaurants, and tourism-related services, youth from low-income families can support their households, improve their standard of living, and reduce financial dependency. Regular earnings also enable them to invest in better education, healthcare, and housing, thereby enhancing overall quality of life.

In addition to financial benefits, employment in the hospitality sector promotes social mobility. Youth gain exposure to professional environments, interact with people from diverse cultural and social backgrounds, and develop confidence and communication skills. This transformation helps them break free from traditional socio-economic limitations and aspire to higher career goals. Moreover, hospitality training and employment encourage self-reliance and entrepreneurship. Many individuals, after gaining experience, venture into small businesses such as catering services, food stalls, guest houses, or travel-related enterprises. This not only creates additional income sources but also generates employment for others in the community. Importantly, socio-economic upliftment also contributes to reducing poverty, unemployment, and social inequality. It empowers marginalized groups, including women and rural youth, by providing them with equal opportunities to participate in the workforce. The promotion of hospitality careers through education and industry support plays a significant role in uplifting underprivileged youth, fostering inclusive growth, and contributing to the sustainable development of the Hooghly District [7].

1.7 Scope for Regional Development

The hospitality industry holds significant potential for regional development, particularly in areas like Hooghly District, West Bengal, which possess cultural heritage, historical sites, and proximity to major urban centers. By promoting hospitality careers among underprivileged youth, the region can experience both economic growth and social transformation. The development of skilled human resources in hospitality can attract tourism-related investments, leading to the expansion of hotels, restaurants, guest houses, and other service-based enterprises. One of the major contributions to regional development is employment generation. As more trained youth enter the hospitality

workforce, local unemployment rates can decline, and household incomes can improve. This creates a positive economic cycle where increased spending boosts local businesses and encourages further development. Additionally, the growth of hospitality services supports allied sectors such as transportation, handicrafts, retail, and local food industries, thereby strengthening the overall regional economy. Furthermore, Hooghly District has the potential to promote local tourism by highlighting its historical landmarks, religious sites, and cultural traditions. With trained hospitality professionals, the region can offer better services to tourists, enhancing visitor satisfaction and increasing tourist inflow. This, in turn, can lead to infrastructure development, including better roads, communication facilities, and public services. Educational initiatives and industry collaboration can also lead to the establishment of training centers, skill development institutes, and partnerships with hospitality businesses within the region. These developments not only create job opportunities but also position Hooghly as a hub for hospitality training and services. The integration of skill development and industry support in the hospitality sector can act as a catalyst for sustainable regional development, improving economic conditions, enhancing infrastructure, and fostering inclusive growth in Hooghly District [8].

1.8 Significance of the study

This study holds significant importance as it highlights the role of educational initiatives and industry collaboration in promoting hospitality careers among underprivileged youth in Hooghly District, West Bengal. In a region where many young individuals face socio-economic challenges, limited access to higher education, and unemployment, the study provides valuable insights into how structured interventions can create meaningful employment opportunities and improve livelihoods. One of the key significances of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the gap between skill development and industry requirements. By examining the effectiveness of training programs and partnerships with hospitality organizations, the study identifies practical ways to enhance employability and job readiness among disadvantaged youth. It also emphasizes the importance of aligning educational frameworks with real-world industry needs.

Furthermore, the study is socially relevant as it focuses on empowering marginalized groups, including rural youth and women, by providing them with sustainable career options. It highlights how the hospitality sector can serve as a tool for poverty reduction, social inclusion, and economic independence. The findings can help policymakers, educators, NGOs, and industry stakeholders design more effective training programs and collaborative models. Additionally, the study contributes to regional development by exploring how promoting hospitality careers can boost local employment, tourism, and economic growth in Hooghly District. Overall, it provides a comprehensive framework for leveraging education and industry partnerships to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

2. Related Reviews

Ergun Demirel & Bayer (2015) examined the importance of university–industry collaboration and reported that, although education had remained the primary mission of universities, research activities supporting businesses and industries had also been equally significant. The study had

highlighted that education had aimed not only to create future scientists but also to provide qualified manpower to meet industry requirements, which had necessitated strong coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between academic institutions and industries. It had been observed that existing platforms such as techno-parks had faced several deficiencies in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, many countries had established vocational qualification systems to align education with industrial needs. The study had been conducted in three stages, including the evaluation of potential collaboration platforms, assessment of their effectiveness, and the proposal of suitable solutions. The findings had suggested that improving coordination mechanisms and strengthening collaborative platforms were essential for enhancing the effectiveness of university–industry partnerships.

León-Bravo et al. (2017) examined sustainability practices within collaborative frameworks across different stages of the food supply chain and reported that both vertical and horizontal collaborations had played significant roles in implementing sustainability initiatives. The study, based on case analyses of breeding, processing, distribution, and retail stages, had found that each stage had adopted distinct collaboration strategies, with a strong emphasis on upstream partnerships, particularly with growers and breeders, as they had been crucial in ensuring product quality and safety. It had been observed that most collaborative relationships had been transactional in nature, especially in addressing environmental and community-related challenges over the short term. Furthermore, the findings had highlighted those diverse environmental and social sustainability outcomes had been achieved through such collaborations across various stages of the supply chain, reflecting the different sustainability objectives pursued by stakeholders.

Paradis & Whitehead (2018) examined the concept of interprofessional education (IPE) and reported that it had emerged as a popular educational model aimed at improving collaboration among healthcare students by enabling them to learn with, from, and about each other. The study had traced the development of IPE through three historical waves, including shared curriculum for workforce management, health workforce planning for population health, and individual-focused approaches to improving healthcare systems. However, it had been argued that the third wave of IPE had been likely to fall short of its objectives due to several limitations, such as high logistical complexity and cost, developmental inappropriateness, lack of clear linkage to key outcomes, insufficient theoretical grounding, and inadequate attention to power dynamics and conflict. Additionally, the study had highlighted that the healthcare system's inherent rigidity had limited the effectiveness of IPE initiatives. The authors had ultimately suggested the need for a fourth wave of collaborative education that would address workplace systems and structures by integrating academic learning with practice-based interventions for more effective outcomes.

Issah (2018) examined unemployment among catering graduates and reported that it had been largely attributed to inadequate information on collaboration and partnership opportunities with the hospitality industry. The study, conducted using a descriptive cross-sectional survey, had aimed to empower graduates by identifying areas of collaboration. It had been found that 52% of graduates were employed while 48% were unemployed, and among those employed, only a small proportion were self-employed, with the majority working under other organizations. The findings had further

indicated that very few graduates had approached industry professionals for collaboration, despite a significant proportion of hospitality managers expressing willingness to partner. Awareness among managers regarding students' research products had been low, and most had not been invited to exhibitions. Although some level of collaboration between the university and industry had existed, it had not been sufficient to generate employment opportunities. Additionally, most students had selected research topics merely to fulfil academic requirements rather than for entrepreneurial purposes. Major constraints such as lack of capital, limited technical support, and poor awareness of support agencies had also been highlighted. The study had suggested that stronger collaboration strategies, increased industry involvement, and better institutional support could enhance employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for graduates.

Nguyen & Nguyen (2020) examined the factors influencing university–industry collaboration in hospitality education in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, from a company perspective. The study had adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods, utilizing reliability testing through Cronbach's alpha, exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (EFA and CFA), and regression modelling using AMOS with structural equation modelling (SEM). The findings had identified four key factors affecting collaboration, namely organizational, contextual, process, and cooperation perspective factors. It had been revealed that benefit factors had a direct and positive impact on collaboration in education, with process factors showing the strongest influence, followed by contextual factors. The study had further indicated that cooperation perspective and contextual elements were critical in strengthening university–industry partnerships. Additionally, it had been observed that the benefits derived from training linkages were highly dependent on the perspective and involvement of tourism businesses, thereby emphasizing the importance of industry engagement in successful collaboration.

Tseng et al. (2020) examined the growing linkage between academic institutions and private industries in the context of technology-driven and knowledge-based economies and reported that universities had played a vital role in knowledge creation, while industries had increasingly sought collaborations to enhance their competitive advantage. The study had investigated the impact of university–industry collaboration (UIC) funding on technological innovation performance in universities in Taiwan. It had been observed that financial support from both government and industry had been essential for facilitating effective collaboration and resource allocation. The findings had identified key factors within universities, including management mechanisms, innovation climate, and reward systems, as critical determinants influencing UIC funding and innovation outcomes. The study had further revealed that UIC funding had a direct and significant impact on universities' technological innovation performance. Additionally, supportive management structures and a conducive innovation environment had encouraged diverse funding opportunities, while incentive mechanisms had positively influenced researchers' participation and contribution to innovation. Overall, the study had emphasized that strong institutional support and funding frameworks were crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of university–industry collaborations.

Zhong et al. (2021) examined hospitality and tourism students' sense of hope during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of positive education and reported that student engagement had remained positive despite the crisis. The study had investigated the role of academic program

engagement in influencing students' hope, academic satisfaction, and their loyalty intention toward hospitality and tourism as a field of study and career. The findings had revealed that engagement activities, particularly those facilitated by faculty and the overall campus environment, had significantly contributed to instilling hope among students. It had also been observed that hope and academic satisfaction had served as strong predictors of students' commitment to their major and future career in the hospitality sector. Furthermore, the study had provided a comprehensive understanding of student engagement and satisfaction during the pandemic and had proposed a hope-centered framework to enhance academic programs and support student success in the hospitality and tourism field.

Alexandre et al. (2022) examined the role of intermediary organizations in fostering university–industry (U–I) collaboration and reported that such intermediaries had significantly contributed to strengthening joint research and development activities. The study had compared firms interacting with universities through intermediary organizations with those collaborating directly and found that firms engaging via intermediaries had been smaller, possessed lower knowledge capabilities, and were geographically closer to universities. It had been observed that intermediary organizations had facilitated wider diffusion of knowledge by enabling smaller firms to establish effective links with academic institutions. The findings had further indicated that cultural and organizational barriers had been more prominent in direct collaborations, whereas cognitive and cost-related barriers had been more significant in intermediary-based interactions. Additionally, geographic proximity had been identified as a crucial factor in enhancing collaboration, highlighting the important role of mid-tier universities in promoting regional development, particularly in less technologically advanced areas.

Yoo K. I. (2024) examined the importance of academia-industry collaborations (AICs) in hospitality and tourism education and reported that such collaborations had played a significant role in bridging the gap between academic learning and industry requirements. The study, based on a practical project conducted under the Hospitality Management Program at Kansai Gaidai University, had emphasized that experiential learning through AICs had provided valuable practical exposure to students. It had been observed that from an academic perspective, successful collaboration had depended on factors such as dedication, flexibility in curriculum design, and the generation of tangible outputs, while industry partners had been required to ensure accessibility, maintain effective communication, and demonstrate commitment and trust. These elements had collectively contributed to the success and sustainability of collaborative initiatives despite existing challenges. The report had further indicated that such partnerships had helped students gain realistic insights into the industry before entering the workforce. It had also been suggested that further research was needed to understand the perspectives of industry partners in enhancing the effectiveness of such collaborations.

Esangbedo et al. (2024) examined the role of industry–academic collaboration (IAC) in enhancing educational opportunities and outcomes within the context of Industry 4.0 and reported that factors such as research and development, product patenting, curriculum development, and artificial intelligence had served as key drivers of collaboration. The study had utilized primary data collected from 230 respondents through questionnaires and had applied structural equation modelling (SEM) using Stata 13.0 for analysis. The findings had indicated that artificial intelligence had exerted a

significant and positive direct effect on educational opportunities, suggesting its strong influence in modern education systems. It had also been observed that research and development, patenting, and curriculum development had played important indirect roles, with patenting and curriculum development showing positive effects, while research and development had demonstrated a negative indirect influence. Notably, curriculum development had shown the strongest positive indirect impact, highlighting its critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of AI-driven educational initiatives. Overall, the study had concluded that effective industry–academic collaboration, supported by technological advancements, had significantly improved educational outcomes and opportunities in the digital era.

Bhattacharjee & Kumari (2025) examined the employment potential of the hospitality industry in India and observed that it had offered significant opportunities for underprivileged youth, particularly in regions such as Hooghly, West Bengal. The study highlighted those socio-economic barriers, including limited access to education and vocational training, had restricted their participation in the sector. It was further noted that educational initiatives and industry collaboration had played a crucial role in promoting hospitality careers among disadvantaged youth. The researchers reported that public-private partnerships (PPP) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives had contributed significantly to bridging the skill gap by providing vocational training, internships, and employment opportunities. Emphasis had been placed on the development of technical, interpersonal, and language skills, which had enabled youth to access sustainable employment. Overall, the study had concluded that such collaborative efforts had not only enhanced employability but had also contributed to economic upliftment and community development.

3. Key Findings from Reviews Study

Author & Year	Objective of Study	Methodology	Key Findings
Ergun Demirel & Bayer (2015)	To examine university–industry collaboration and its effectiveness	Multi-stage evaluation of collaboration platforms	Strong coordination and improved platforms had been essential; techno-parks had shown inefficiencies
León-Bravo et al. (2017)	To analyze sustainability practices in food supply chains	Case study across supply chain stages	Vertical and horizontal collaborations had influenced sustainability; upstream actors had been critical
Paradis & Whitehead (2018)	To study interprofessional education (IPE) development	Conceptual and historical analysis	IPE had faced limitations; need for a fourth wave integrating practice and education
Issah (2018)	To investigate unemployment among catering graduates	Cross-sectional survey	Lack of collaboration and support had limited employment; stronger industry links had been needed
Nguyen & Nguyen (2020)	To examine factors influencing university–industry collaboration	Mixed methods; SEM (AMOS)	Organizational, contextual, process, and cooperation factors had influenced collaboration

Tseng et al. (2020)	To study UIC funding and innovation performance	Empirical study with SEM	UIC funding had significantly improved technological innovation performance
Zhong et al. (2021)	To analyse student engagement and hope during COVID-19	Survey-based research	Engagement had increased hope, satisfaction, and career commitment
Alexandre et al. (2022)	To examine role of intermediary organizations in U-I collaboration	Comparative analysis	Intermediaries had enhanced collaboration, especially for smaller firms
Yoo K. I. (2024)	To study academia-industry collaboration in hospitality education	Case-based practical study	AICs had improved experiential learning and industry readiness
Esangbedo et al. (2024)	To analyze IAC in Industry 4.0 education	Survey; SEM (Stata)	AI had significantly improved educational opportunities; curriculum development had strong impact
Bhattacharjee & Kumari (2025)	To examine hospitality employment potential for youth in India	Analytical study	PPP and CSR initiatives had improved skills, employability, and economic upliftment

4. SEM Model for or Educational Initiatives and Industry Collaboration

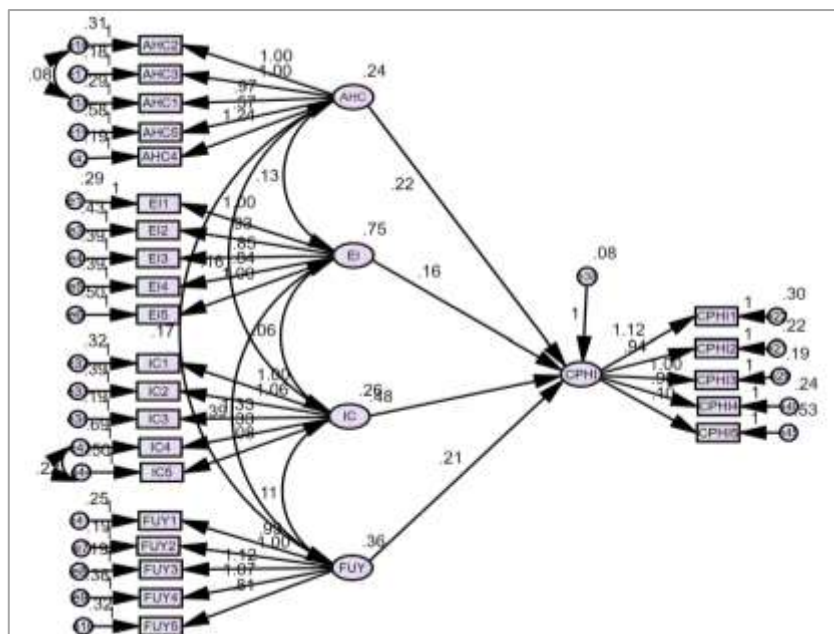


Figure 1: Correlation Among Independent Variables (AHC, EI, IC and FUY) in Structural Equation Model

Figure 1 illustrates the Structural Equation Model (SEM) showing the relationships among AHC, EI, IC, FUY, and CPHI constructs along with their observed indicators. Each latent variable is measured through five observed variables. AHC is represented by AHC1–AHC5, EI by EI1–EI5, IC by IC1–IC5, FUY by FUY1–FUY5, and CPHI by CPHI1–CPHI5.



The factor loadings indicate that all indicators significantly contribute to their respective constructs, confirming measurement validity [9]. The Structural Equation Model results revealed that FUY had the strongest influence on CPHI with a standardized coefficient of 0.36, indicating that future youth motivation significantly promotes hospitality career development. This suggests that when underprivileged youth perceive long-term benefits and opportunities, their interest in hospitality careers increases substantially. The AHC variable showed a moderate influence on CPHI with a coefficient value of 0.22, indicating that awareness of hospitality careers positively contributes to career promotion. This finding suggests that increasing awareness through educational programs and career guidance can enhance youth participation. Similarly, Industry Collaboration (IC) demonstrated a moderate positive influence on CPHI with a coefficient of 0.21. This indicates that internships, mentorship, and industry partnerships play an important role in preparing youth for hospitality careers [10].

Educational Initiatives (EI) recorded the lowest but positive effect with a coefficient of 0.16, suggesting that training programs and educational support contribute positively but require strengthening for greater impact. The squared multiple correlations further indicated that EI explained 75% variance, IC explained 48%, FUY explained 36%, AHC explained 24%, and CPHI explained 8% of the variance. These findings confirm that educational initiatives and industry collaboration collectively influence hospitality career promotion among underprivileged youth in Hooghly district

Correlation Among Independent Variables

S. No.	Relationship	Correlation Value	Interpretation
1	AHC ↔ EI	0.13	Weak correlation
2	EI ↔ IC	0.06	Very weak correlation
3	IC ↔ FUY	0.11	Weak correlation

The correlation analysis among independent variables indicates weak relationships between the constructs, suggesting that each variable contributes independently to the model without significant overlap.

The correlation between AHC and EI was found to be 0.13, indicating a weak positive relationship. This suggests that awareness of hospitality careers and educational initiatives are slightly related, but they function largely as independent factors. Although educational initiatives may increase awareness, the low correlation indicates that awareness also depends on other external factors such as media exposure, community influence, and career counselling [11]. The correlation between EI and IC was 0.06, which represents a very weak relationship. This indicates that educational initiatives and industry collaboration operate mostly independently. While educational institutions may offer training programs, industry collaboration such as internships and placements may not always be fully integrated with educational initiatives. Similarly, the correlation between IC and FUY was 0.11, indicating a weak positive relationship. This suggests that industry collaboration slightly influences future youth motivation, but other factors such as socio-economic conditions, personal interests, and career aspirations also play significant roles.

Key Findings

- 1) FUY showed the highest impact on CPHI ($\beta = 0.36$), indicating it is the most important predictor.
- 2) AHC ($\beta = 0.22$) and IC ($\beta = 0.21$) demonstrated moderate positive influence.
- 3) EI showed the lowest effect on CPHI ($\beta = 0.16$) but remained statistically meaningful.
- 4) The model explains 8% variance in CPHI, suggesting additional factors may influence the outcome.
- 5) Weak correlations among predictors indicate minimal multicollinearity and good model stability.

Overall, the findings confirm that AHC, EI, IC, and FUY significantly influence CPHI, with FUY emerging as the strongest determinant in the proposed structural model.

5. Conclusion

The study highlights that the combined efforts of educational initiatives and industry collaboration play a crucial role in promoting hospitality careers among underprivileged youth in Hooghly District, West Bengal. The hospitality sector, with its diverse employment opportunities and inclusive nature, serves as a strong platform for skill development, job creation, and socio-economic advancement. However, without proper training and exposure, many disadvantaged youth remain unable to access these opportunities. Educational initiatives, particularly vocational training and skill development programs, equip youth with the necessary technical and soft skills required in the hospitality industry. At the same time, collaboration with industry partners ensures that this training remains relevant, practical, and aligned with real-world demands. Internships, apprenticeships, and placement support further strengthen the transition from learning to employment. The study also emphasizes the broader impact of such efforts in terms of poverty reduction, social inclusion, and regional development. Through empowering underprivileged youth with sustainable career opportunities, the hospitality sector contributes to improving living standards and fostering economic growth in the region. Therefore, a well-integrated approach involving education, industry, and policy support is essential for maximizing the potential of hospitality careers and ensuring inclusive development in Hooghly District.

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