AFFECTIVE LEARNING LEVELS AND PERCEIVED SOFT SKILLS ACQUISITION IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY TRAINING IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

BY

NELLY MARETE

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Tourism, and Tour Operations Management, School of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy in Tourism Management

Moi University

2025

DECLARATION

Declaration by the student

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any University or any other award.

Signature: _____ Date _08|10|2025_____

Nelly N. Marete

STHE/DPHIL/06/15

Declaration by the Supervisors

This thesis has been submitted with our approval as University Supervisors.

Signature : _____ Date : _____

DR. Beatrice Imbaya

Department of Tourism and Tour Operations Management

Moi University

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PROF. Jacqueline Korir

School of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management

Moi University

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Thesis to my loving husband Stanley, who has been a strong pillar in my professional journey, providing me with both financial and moral support during my studies. I also dedicate the work to my beloved children, my precious jewels, Kanario, Kinya and Kendi for their unfailing love, support and great encouragement. You have been my inspiration to always do my best. Last but not least, to my late Dad, my greatest fan, for believing in me and challenging me to pursue my studies to the highest level.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

While the tourism and hospitality industry requires a highly skilled and adaptable workforce, many graduates lack the necessary soft skills for workplace success. Existing research has primarily focused on technical competencies, leaving a gap in understanding how affective learning encompassing emotions, attitudes, and values contributes to soft skills acquisition. Additionally, limited studies have explored this relationship within the context of selected tourism and hospitality training institutions in Nairobi County, Kenya. This study assessed the levels of affective learning and acquisition of soft skills in tourism and hospitality training of diploma programs offered in institutions in Nairobi County. Specifically, the study assessed receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterizing levels of affective domain of the Blooms Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, and their effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills. The study, anchored on the humanistic theory of learning and the social constructivism learning theory, adopted an exploratory sequential mixed method design and pragmatism philosophy. The study targeted 822 male and female diploma trainees in their 2nd and 3rd years of study, and 41 trainers all drawn from 5 institutions in Nairobi County. Purposive sampling was used to select 12 trainers for the qualitative phase and a combination of stratified and simple random sampling technique was used to identify 262 trainees for the quantitative phase. Qualitative data were collected using an interview guide while quantitative data used a questionnaire. Qualitative data were analyzed using Taguette, a user-friendly tool for qualitative data analysis, while quantitative data were analyzed using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The qualitative results from trainers revealed that receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterizing levels, each amplifying several elements are emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs. The PLS-SEM results revealed that responding level ($\beta=0.819$, $p<0.001$), receiving level ($\beta=0.224$, $p<0.001$) and valuing level ($\beta=0.106$, $p<0.001$) were positive and significant predictors of trainees' perceived acquisition of soft skills. The characterizing level ($\beta=-0.105$, $p<0.001$) had a negative though significant effect, while the organizing level ($\beta=0.002$, $p>0.05$) had a positive but non-significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills. The contribution of affective learning was 99.2% for receiving, 98.6% responding and 50.1% valuing, while organizing and characterizing contributed 46.7% and 54.3% respectively. The study concludes that receiving, responding, and valuing significantly contribute to soft skills acquisition, characterizing had a negative effect while organizing had no significant impact. This study therefore, provides empirical evidence on the significance of effective learning levels in developing soft skills within tourism and hospitality education. These insights contribute to the enhancement of training methodologies and the shaping of policies that promote more affective learning strategies, ultimately improving graduate preparedness for the demands of the tourism and hospitality industry. Policy makers, educational stakeholders, and hospitality stakeholders should take cognizance of attributes inherent in these levels, including openness to experience, active participation, accepting the worth of, value integration and value prioritization among others, to develop enabling policy guidelines for affective learning in tourism and hospitality training. The study further recommends that industry practitioners need to collaborate with training institutions to offer opportunities for trainees to get exposure to industry work environment through work-based learning activities. These real-life experiences foster an engaging learning environment that reinforce application of organizing and characterizing, which are higher order levels of affective learning thus significantly contributing to the development of soft skills.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Acquisition of skills – The process of developing, attaining and learning abilities through education, practice and refinement that enables an individual to improve their performance and expertise in various areas.

Affective Learning Domain – Learning that focuses on developing interests, attitudes and motivations and behaviours rather than on the intellectual abilities (Cahoy and Schroeder, 2012), Krawthwohl, (1964). It is organized in six hierarchical levels of receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterizing.

Blooms Taxonomy - A framework for classifying statements of what students are expected or intended to learn as a result of instruction and classifies learning into three domains, namely; cognitive domain, psychomotor domain and affective domain (Krathwohl, 2002).

Communication skills - Skills that give individuals the ability to exchange information, ideas, thoughts, feelings and messages effectively with others, either verbally or non-verbally. They enable people to listen actively and interact with others in order to judge when to talk or listen and pay attention without interrupting the speaker.

Competency – a set of demonstratable characteristics and skills that enable and contribute to efficiency and performance in a job. They are inherent qualities and abilities that an individual possesses.

Customer Orientation – a business strategy that focuses on understanding the needs of the customer and puts them over that of the business.

Perceived acquisition – Perception refers to the way an individual recognizes and interprets the environment or a concept in their opinion or ability to make sense about something. Perceived acquisition therefore refers to the individuals' opinion of the attainment of the desired skills.

Soft Skills – A set of abilities, attributes and competences that are intangible, non-technical and transferable, that enhance work performance, productivity, relationships and employability (Lyu and Liu (2021), Dell'Aquila et al. (2017), Matteson, Anderson, and Boyden, (2016) and Fantozzi et al. (2023)).

Teamwork and collaboration – the ability of a group of individuals to work together to achieve a common goal and provide quality services (Sanyal and Hisam (2018),

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIPA –	Asymmetric Impact Performance Analysis
AVE –	Average Variance Extracted
BSHM –	Bachelor of Science and Hospitality Management
CAQ-DAS –	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
CB –	Covariance Based
CHAR -	Characterizing
EQ –	Emotional Quotient
HACCP –	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HSM –	Hospitality Service Mindset
IM –	Internal Marketing
IPA -	Interpretive Phenological Analysis
KICD –	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KIE –	Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC –	Kenya National Examinations Council
KUC –	Kenya Utalii College
MAR –	Missing at Random
MNAR –	Missing at Random but not Ignorable
NACOSTI –	National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
ORG -	Organizing
PAS –	Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills
PLS -	Partial Least Squares
PRQ –	Primary Research Question
QUAL –	Qualitative
QUAN –	Quantitative

REC –   Receiving

RES -   Responding

SEM –   Structural Equation Modeling

SRQ –   Secondary Research Question

THT -   Tourism and Hospitality Trainer

TTI -   Technical Training Institute

TVETA –   Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority

VAL –   Valuing

VIF –   Variance Inflation Factors

WTO –   World Trade Organization

WTTC –   World Travel and Tourism Council

WWD –   Worker with Disabilities

ZPDs –   Zones of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter gives the background to the study, problem statement, objectives, research questions, hypothesis, scope, justification, significance and the limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

Tourism and hospitality management is considered a key driver of socio-economic development in the world and is recognized by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) as an important contributor to trade and development (WTO, 2024). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, travel and tourism contributed US$ 10.9 trillion translating to 10% of global economy. In the same period, the sector generated a total of 357 million jobs globally making it a major generator of employment (WTTC, 2024). Further, the World Travel and Tourism Council Economic Impact Research (EIR), revealed that Kenya's Tourism and Travel sector injected KES. 1 trillion representing 10.4% of total GDP to the national economy in 2023 (WTTC, 2024). In addition, jobs in the sector grew by 6% accounting for one out of every thirteen jobs across the country.

Tourism and hospitality contribute significantly to a country's socio-economic growth by providing foreign exchange, offering direct and indirect job opportunities, (Dogru et al., 2020). The economic potential of the tourism and hospitality sector is such that small economies are in recent years seizing the initiative to take advantage of the sector. According to WTO Development Division Counsellor Hans-Peter Werner, tourism remains of great importance to many developing countries, particularly those with small economies (WTO, 2016). Given the important role that tourism and hospitality play in international trade, trade-related technical assistance and the mechanisms that govern

its design and implementation are important. The training given to students with the prospect of being tourism and hospitality professionals is therefore a significant move in this context.

Availability of competent personnel is needed to operate and manage the tourism and hospitality product, enhance quality service, ensure customer satisfaction as well as gain competitive advantage (Kasa et al., 2020; Shyaa, 2019; Temizkan & Yabancı, 2020; Thapa & Panta, 2019). Like all service industries, the tourism and hospitality industry is largely driven by the human resource competency and innovativeness (Marneros et al., 2021; Rios et al., 2020). Therefore, over the years a lot of investment has been made to train a workforce that is compatible with the industry's needs. Numerous training programs have been developed both at the education institutional level as well as within the industry. Training programs in tourism and hospitality range from artisan, certificate diploma, degree, and postgraduate levels, leading to a variety of qualifications in education and training within the sector.

In Kenya formal tourism and hospitality education programs were first introduced in 1969 at the present Technical University of Kenya (TUK), previously, Kenya Polytechnic (Sindiga, 1994). The main focus of the program at that time was to provide practical skills and competencies in hotel operations management. Later in 1975, Kenya Utalii College (KUC) was established as a joint project between the Swiss and Kenya Government (Sindiga, 2020), a response to the need for a more specialized and practical oriented tourism and hospitality training. Public and private sectors have since recognized that a professional and well-trained workforce is essential for provision of quality service and enhancing overall customer satisfaction in the tourism and hospitality industry.

KUC could not sufficiently satisfy the industry leading to the rise of other training colleges both private and public as well as universities (Sindiga, 2020). In 1990 Diploma and certificate programs were developed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) formerly, Kenya Institute of Education (KIE). These courses were offered in other middle level colleges commonly referred to as Technical Training Institutes (TTIs), and examined by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC). Later more advanced programs designed to prepare students for managerial positions, were developed and introduced at graduate and post graduate levels, starting with Moi University in 1991.

Providing relevant quality education and training is therefore an integral aspect of ensuring that hospitality employees have the right knowledge, skills, and attitudes to provide quality service and ultimately ensure customer satisfaction (Alexakis & Jiang, 2019; Raras et al., 2024). Consequently, it is expected that graduates of the training should possess appropriate soft skills, including managerial skills and competencies required to remain competitive (Nhuta et al., 2015). However, there has been a growing concern about the adequacy of graduate competency in relation to industry requirements (Rios et al., 2020). Stakeholders continue to debate on the relevance, level, and focus of education and training among other concerns, citing discrepancies between competencies taught in education institutions and those perceived as necessary by the tourism and hospitality industry (Chimutingiza et al., 2012; Donina & Luka, 2014; Nhuta et al., 2015; Temizkan & Yabancı, 2020).

Globally the hospitality and tourism industry landscape has become more dynamic and competitive. This has often called for educational institutions to re-think best strategies to adequately prepare graduates to thrive in the industry of the 21st century. Tourism

and hospitality education and training providers should not only focus on the curriculum content, but equally, attention need to shift to how it is delivered to ensure acquisition of critical competences and emotional intelligence that employers seek. Research has indicated that emotional intelligence, which relates to the ability to recognize, use and control own and others' emotions matters in hospitality and tourism education (Nusrat & Sultana, 2019; Singh & Jaykumar, 2019; Stoyanova-Bozhkova, 2022; Wesley et al., 2017).

Stress management, determination, motivation, persistence, and fruitful engagements with peers and instructors, besides being associated with enhanced academic performance, also reflect the requisite emotional intelligence (Goh & Kim, 2021). Moreover, the competency requirement and priority of the graduate of the past has completely changed over the years. The focus has shifted to intangible, non-technical personality specific skills that are critical for productive performance in today's workplace. Employers are progressively looking for people with soft people-management skills to hire (Marneros et al., 2020).

Luckily, the affective learning domain provides opportunities for embracing a pedagogy of hospitableness in tourism and hospitality training. Research shows that affective learning allows hospitality professionals to tailor emotionally resonant and authentic guest experiences (Manfreda et al., 2024). The argument advanced among these scholars is that through affective learning, tourism and hospitality professionals acquire social and emotional intelligence to distinguish themselves, while taking cognizance of the individuality of each guest. According to Giannotti (2021), this requires a variety of soft skills, the correct application of which is a competence-oriented learning process.

Although scholars have endeavored to define soft skills and identify those that are specific for the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as the discrepancy between graduate competencies and the expectations of industry (Cukier et al., 2015), a gap remains on how the affective learning domain advanced by Benjamin Bloom impacts acquisition of soft skills in hospitality training. Specifically, it remains unclear which levels of affective learning domain are most critical in the tourism and hospitality diploma program, and how the elements emphasized in these levels directly influence trainees perceived acquisition of soft skills. It is on this premise therefore, that this current study sought to investigate the application of the affective learning domain and its effect on the perceived acquisition of soft skills in tourism and hospitality training.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Among the key competencies cited as necessary for employees in the tourism and hospitality industry, soft skills have been ranked most important for effective performance (Nusrat & Sultana, 2019; Singh & Jaykumar, 2019; Wesley et al., 2017; Wetsanarat, 2021). However, from an employers' perspective, studies show that most graduates do not possess adequate soft skills to perform optimally in the workplace (Majid et al., 2019; Succi & Canovi, 2020). With so much pressure on educational institutions to meet industry expectations, the challenge is how best to impart these important skills to students within their course of study.

Previous studies have observed that affective learning is effective in the development of the much-desired soft skills. Proponents of this approach suggest that it influences the acquisition of values, beliefs and attitudes of learners, thereby motivating them to listen, respond, participate in the learning process, internalize concepts and acquire the right skills and competences to deal with challenges of the work environment (Mais-

Thompson et al., 2025; Wu et al., 2019) Markle & Banion, 2014; Olatunji, 2014). However, studies indicate that most training methods in higher education mainly focus on cognitive learning outcomes and acquisition of psychomotor competencies, with little emphasis on the affective outcomes of values, attitudes and behaviour, which is mostly industry specific (Lovren & Jablanovic, 2023; Mais-Thompson et al., 2025). In addition, methods of evaluation are biased to the measurable learning outcomes of the cognitive and psychomotor domains. On the other hand, soft skills achieved through the affective learning domain have often been described as difficult to define, teach, quantify and assess, in comparison to hard skills that are specific, teachable and measurable.

In Kenya the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) conducted a survey to investigate the mismatch between the demand by employers and the supply from the higher institutions of learning (FKE, 2018). The compelling finding that came out is that there is a lack of soft skills among graduates. Significantly enough, the tourism and hospitality industry featured strongly among sectors whose graduates were not able to match industry skills requirements. Yet no study is known to have probed how incorporation of the affective learning domain can help nurture industry specific soft skills. Therefore, this study sought to address this gap by identifying the respective affective learning domain levels and their effects on trainees' perceptions of soft skills acquisition in the context of diploma tourism and hospitality training programme in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.3 General Objective

The overall goal of the study was to determine the affective learning domain levels applied in tourism and hospitality diploma program and their effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

1.3.1.1 Qualitative Objectives

1) To assess the levels of the affective domain employed in tourism and hospitality diploma programmes in Nairobi County

2) To identify the elements amplified in each level of the affective domain in tourism and hospitality diploma programmes

1.3.1.2 Research questions

1) PRQ: What levels of the affective learning domain are emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma training program offered in educational institutions in Nairobi County?

2) SRQ1: What elements are amplified for each level in the program?

3) SRQ2: Which soft skills does the tourism and hospitality program emphasize among trainees?

1.3.1.3 Quantitative Objectives

Following the qualitative analysis five objectives were stated for the quantitative phase:

1) To establish the effect of the receiving level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs

2) To examine the effect of the responding level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs

3) To establish the effect of the valuing level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs

4) To determine the effect of the organizing level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs

5) To examine the effect of the characterizing level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs

1.3.2 Research Hypothesis

From the quantitative objectives the following five null hypothesis were stated

1) **H_{01}** Receiving level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs.

2) **H_{02}** Responding level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs.

3) **H_{03}** Valuing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs.

4) **H04** Organizing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality programs.

5) **H05** Characterizing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among diploma trainees undertaking diploma in tourism and hospitality programs.

1.4 Justification of the Study

The justification of this research project is contingent on the service-oriented nature of the hospitality industry in Nairobi County, which also serves as an economic hub in the East African region. Possession of soft skills such as teamwork, communication and customer service among others, is likely to complement technical acumen to oversee success in the industry. Local scholars consistently highlight the skills gap in the industry in Kenya, with graduates often displaying a lack of soft skills required for the work place (Kabii et al., 2019). Therefore, by examining how training programmes in diploma institutions address such skills, this study was focused on informing improvement in industry-relevant training.

Meanwhile, by utilizing the affective domain of Bloom's Taxonomy, the study justifiably addressed the question of how the domain is integrated in tourism and hospitality training at the diploma level, by qualitatively establishing the emphasis put on the various affective levels. Moreover, by quantitatively testing the effect of each level on perceived acquisition of soft skills, the study empirically showed the strength of each level in diploma in tourism and hospitality training. The use of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design offers a robust approach that first used the qualitative phase to provide a fitting context and specificity, grounding the research on practices

that are actually employed in the institutions, focusing on the diploma in tourism and hospitality training. Subsequently, the quantitative phase established causal relationships that informs curriculum reform and instructional design.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study through the qualitative and quantitative findings is significant to several educational and industry stakeholders. For training institutions and hospitality stakeholders, the study acts as a tool to illuminate curriculum effectiveness at diploma level training. The findings identify the specific levels of the affective domain that are likely to impact more on the acquisition of soft skills. This identification allows institutions to prioritize training activities and instructional methods that are likely to maximize the exploitation of these levels, including re-thinking resource allocation towards facilities and training materials. Moreover, the elements amplified in each level are likely to spur educators to change their teaching, assessment, and student engagement strategies.

For the tourism and hospitality industry, the study anchors the resolution of the soft skills gap. Implementation of the study recommendations stand to benefit the industry through improved employee quality. Graduates have an opportunity to hone their skills by complementing their technical competence with soft skills relevant for the workplace. Further, through the study's findings, internship programs can be restructured to accommodate relevant affective competencies needed for the interns' job success.

To the government and regulatory bodies, the study is a lynchpin for policy formulation and quality assurance related to diploma in tourism and hospitality training. The findings provide an avenue through which competency standards that require

mandatory affective and soft skills training can be effected. The findings on the effect of affective levels and soft skills allow the creation of a robust inspection tool that can ensure the program offers quality training.

Trainees remain the primary beneficiaries of the study, which stands to see them graduate with a complementary set of technical and soft skills that enhance their chances of being employed. Besides, the study findings can spur proactivity and self-direction among trainees who become aware of the importance of specific attitudes on skill acquisition. Meanwhile, the study is of significance to researchers and scholars. The findings provide the empirical evidence that links the Affective Domain through its five levels to real-world learning outcomes in vocational training, allowing researchers and scholars to explore other disciplines. Additionally, the study's methodology and findings serve as a foundation baseline for future research in the tourism and hospitality industry in regions other than Kenya.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study was conducted in educational and training institutions offering diploma in tourism and hospitality management as of 2021/2022 (TVETA, 2019) in Nairobi County, Kenya. The County was viewed to be suitable for a study that leverages the affective domain in tourism and hospitality training since it offers diverse training experiences. The County has a fair representation of public and private tertiary institutions offering numerous programmes in tourism and hospitality education. The graduates of these colleges are easily absorbed into the robust tourism and hospitality industry both locally and within the region. In addition, Nairobi County is a host to many local and international conferences in its numerous high-end hotels as well as tour and travel agencies.

The exploratory sequential study utilized an interview guide with open-ended questions in the qualitative phase to identify affective learning levels applied in training that represented the independent variable. On the other hand, the quantitative phase of the study employed questionnaires to establish the relationship between application of the affective learning levels and perceived acquisition of soft skills (dependent variables) among diploma trainees in tourism and hospitality, in Nairobi County. The study was conducted in the period between 2020-2022.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study was limited by the fact that it examined a selection of diploma programs in tourism and hospitality in Kenya. Currently tourism and hospitality programs are offered at all levels including university. This means that the results can only be generalized to tourism and hospitality education with caution because the setup and design of other training programs may be different, a fact that may influence their offerings. The study also failed to address the fact that different institutions have different resources directed towards training and this is a prevalent situation in Kenya. Some institutions are easily able to start income generating programmes thereby boosting their resources. Such resources can eventually moderate the relationship between affective learning and perceptions of acquisition of soft skills.

Further, this study focused on trainee perceptions instead of the actual acquisition of soft skills. In this case the findings may not solidly show whether use of affective learning in diploma tourism and hospitality programmes can actually improve acquisition of soft skills among trainees. Moreover, this study was cross-sectional in nature. This meant that data were collected from the study area only once in time meaning that the trainees were not observed over time and that it may not have been

possible to get the actual picture of perceptions in higher affective learning levels which normally requires time to develop and would mostly entail a cyclical way of training in which concepts are repeated for higher level affect development.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This research study made three pertinent assumptions. First, the study assumed that the affective domain levels as identified through the qualitative phase were discrete and measurable, allowing for their effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills to be statistically quantifiable. Secondly, the study assumed that perceived acquisition of soft skills was an ideal and suitable proxy for measuring actual skill development among trainees. The third assumption was that the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County was consistent both in its design and delivery, allowing for a meaningful examination of the levels of affective domain on acquisition of soft skills.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents results of the general literature review targeting the concepts of soft skills and the affective learning domain. The chapter closely examines the soft skills expected for the tourism and hospitality industry and affective learning in tourism and hospitality training. The chapter also identifies levels of affective learning domain and how they affect acquisition of soft skills as reported in existing empirical studies.

2.1 The Concept of Soft Skills

2.1.1 Origin and Conceptual Evolution of Soft Skills

The concept of 'soft skills' owes its genesis to the US Military between 1968 and 1972. It is postulated that despite excelling at training troops on how to use machines, the military noted that groups of soldiers relied mainly on leadership to become victorious (Shawkat, 2024). According to Phillips et al. (2020), the term 'soft skills' was first articulated in a US Army document dubbed "Regulation No. 350-100-1. Systems Engineering of Training (Course Design) in 1972. Shawkat (2024) adds that in that same year, Dr. Paul Whitmore speaking at the CONARC conference on soft skills defined soft skills as job related skills requiring minimal machine interaction and general application on the job. The concept of "soft skills" has since gained traction beyond the realm of the military, with many scholars giving varied definitions.

Soft skills as conceptualized by the military was the pinnacle for competencies that are human-oriented, and which needed no machine guidance. The framing of soft skills by Dr. Whitmore as different from hard skills (commonly referenced as technical) opened room for extended discourse on soft skills. According to Dr. Whitmore, soft skills such as leadership and communication encourages teamwork, allowing for successful

manipulation of today's dynamic environments (Shawkat, 2024). The notion of human-centric competencies for dynamic contexts has further been reinforced by scholars seeking to show their usefulness in moments of indecision and emotional intelligence (Muindi & Thinguri, 2022).

The scope of soft skills has since expanded subsequently, bringing on board more valuable affects, including resilience, critical thinking, and cultural sensitivity across several sectors (Mwita et al., 2024). Advocating for a holistic framework through which to channel the development of the workforce, Lamri and Lubart (2023) called for the reconciliation of hard and soft skills, arguing that the workforce can only develop in a holistic way if humanistic abilities complement technical acumen. Therefore, despite having roots in the military, soft skills have become the order of the day in today's academic and professional contexts.

2.1.2 Defining and Measuring Soft Skills

Quite often, soft skills appear to be intangible, making it hard to measure in quantitative terms. However, they have permeated several disciplines and sectors showing their immense potential to differentiate the capabilities of individual's who may compare equally in technical skills. They show individuals acumen in adapting, collaborating with others, and leadership, in addition to their technical skills. Industry players alongside scholars have taken cognizance of the increasing importance of soft skills, and have endeavored to offer definitions and mechanisms through which to quantify them. The variety of definitions offered have since been crucial among other functions, recruitment, training program development, and evaluations of performance.

For instance, Dell'Aquila et al. (2017) define soft skills as non-technical behaviours that influence workplace performance. Cimatti (2016) views soft skills as skills that

lead to a successful career in the workplace. (Lyu & Liu, 2021) define soft skills as positive attributes and competences able to enhance work performance, productivity, relationships, and employability. Meanwhile, Fantozzi et al. (2023) perceive soft skills as transferable skills that combine personality traits, social attitudes and behaviours that enable collaboration, effective communication and conflict management. Ideally, soft skills are individual-centric and permeate various job titles and disciplines.

Matteson et al. (2016) explain that soft skills are the interpersonal, human, behavioral skills necessary for the application of the technical skills and knowledge at the workplace. In comparison to hard skills, soft skills are difficult to acquire, quantify or visibly improve business bottom line. However, once acquired, they significantly facilitate the application of the hard skills in practice (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Soft skills have over the years been identified by both employers and young employees as an important component for work but particularly lacking (Randrianasolo & Rwigamba, 2018). They have a potential to give graduates a niche that helps them stand out from others with similar qualifications and experience.

2.1.3 Key Components of Soft Skills

Research identifies several skills that reflect qualities, attributes, personalities and personal behaviour. Communication-skill is identified as an important element in the soft skills continuum (Chaudhari, 2022). Marin-Zapata et al. (2022) posits that effective communication subsumes verbal and non-verbal, written and visual communication, and allows adjustment of tone and style relative to different settings or situations. Moreover, such communication holds and enlarges interpersonal relationships.

The effect of communication skills transcends individual interaction to nurturing supportive environments for cooperation and partnerships in professional contexts.

Ansari (2021) contends that through interpersonal communication skills, organizations can manage workplace dynamics, making them healthy, devoid of conflicts, and aligning teams with desired goals. In Ansari's (2021) words, interpersonal communication that involves active listening, empathy, and being articulate eliminates potential for misinformation that would be detrimental to productivity. Supporting this line of argument, Kumar et al. (2022) identify communication as a key soft skill through which organizations not only improve their performance, but also sustain their culture since it guarantees trust and transparency.

Moreover, proficiency in communication is a critical and strong anchor to effective leadership and facilitates career advancement among the workforce. Leaders who are proficient in communication have the capability to pass on the organizational vision, stimulate groups, and manage trouble, promoting loyalty and nurturing innovativeness. Amukugo et al. (2020) asserts that poor communication may lead to issues which if left unresolved may escalate into organizational crises. Good interpersonal communication however, can help in prompt resolution of issues be it performance-wise or team conflicts. Essentially, communication cannot be just seen as a good organizational affect, but it is an essential cog to oversee and sustain professionalism and organizational success.

Teamwork, which relates to collaborative efforts directed towards completion of tasks and achievement of common goals efficiently emerges as another critical soft skill (Chaudhari, 2022). Through teamwork, people's individual strengths and perspectives are therefore tapped to oversee efficient dispensation of projects and tasks. Evidence shows that teamwork has been of critical importance in diverse settings, including

promoting safety in organizations (Salas et al., 2020), enabling safe and high-quality health care (Rosen et al., 2018) and in communication during emergency (Owen, 2017).

Team-work provides the platform for creativity and problem solving particularly in settings where innovation drives projects. That team work as a critical soft skill, is vindicated by Okatta et al. (2024), who through a meta-analysis seeking to enhance performance across organizations by employing diversity and inclusive initiatives identified them as avenues for organizational competitiveness, noting that organizations that embrace collaborative teams tended to perform better than those which did not. Effective teamwork has been associated with the blending of diverse attributes, including perspectives and different levels of expertise, allowing for increased organization innovativeness and management of risks (Paredes-Saavedra et al., 2024). Driskell et al. (2018) contend that in the absence of teamwork, technical competency may count to zero, leaving individuals struggling to change ideas into reality.

At the individual level, teamwork also plays a distinctive role, shaping a sense of organizational belonging while strengthening personal growth trajectory. Ritter et al. (2018) avers that teamwork as a collaborative move is responsible for averting turnover and enhancing morale due to its capacity to entrench accountability ethos and mutual respect. Teamwork in the education set up has also been attributed to equipping students and trainees with sector-specific skills for the 21st century workplace. In a study probing promotion of the 21st century skills relevant for future education and work, Miller et al. (2023) implicitly underscored the importance of teamwork in preparing students for industry professionalism and adaptability in today's competitive job world.

Another crucial set of soft skills delineated by Chaudhari (2022) is the interpersonal skills set. Under this skill set, individuals are enabled to communicate, relate and

interact well with others. Research has documented the vital role of effective interpersonal skills in professional contexts, including in Human Resource Management, and educational contexts (Ansari, 2021; Zhang, 2018). Evidence demonstrates that interpersonal skills among them conflict resolution, active listening, and empathy are key to molding trust and collaboration within organizations through which employee retention, productivity, and morale can be maximized (Washington State University, 2024). Contributing to the same discourse, O'Neill (2018) posited that interpersonal skills offer organizations mechanisms through which they can develop employees to achieve high performance teams. Meanwhile, Ansari (2021) identifies effective interpersonal communication as the lynchpin to human resource functions such as bonding, recruitment and performance appraisals.

From the educational perspective, stakeholders and curriculum developers have taken note of the indispensable need to prepare students to transcend past their immediate academic needs to being able to navigate the delicate real-world terrain. Zamiri and Esmaeili (2024) points out that graduate students ought to be exposed to interpersonal competencies which will see them nurtured to be well rounded in order to handle the dynamism in social and professional spaces. Moreover, Fullmore et al. (2022) agrees that educational programs in leadership have undergone a paradigm shift, choosing to focus on the alignment of market-driven needs with relevant interpersonal competencies. The argument posited among educators is that interpersonal skills enhance chances of employment, provide room for career progression, and elevate leadership potential alongside increased peer learning and engagement in class.

Problem solving also features in existing discourse on soft skills as a key skill. Besides fostering critical and creative thinking, research shows that problem-solving

encourages curiosity and a willingness to explore, culminating in diverse perspectives and innovative solutions (Murtazoevna, 2024). Problem-solving as a foundational soft skill features prominently in today's contemporary work station, being associated with the individual's quality and innovative resilience within the organization. For instance, Rusmin et al. (2024) associates problem-solving with the development of higher-order thinking skills that employees need to remain creative, circumvent ambiguity, and manage challenging environments. And now with the attention turning towards experiential and project learning approaches (Muweesi et al., 2024), problem-solving offers a framework that aligns education and training with real-world experiences. Consequently, students and trainees are able to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate situations to provide effective solutions that decision-making under duress may be required.

Meanwhile, problem-solving has demonstrated its value in multiple disciplines and workplaces, offering a medium for integration of functions and team bonding. According to Miller et al. (2023), employability in the 21st century is now being pegged to possession of collaborative problem-solving in which, interpersonal communication is fused together with analytical reasoning. The integration of the two soft skills in the educational context equips students with the required tools to navigate complex career trajectories, while also enhancing chances of academic performance. Miller et al. (2023) contend that problem-solving subsumes the 4Cs of modern education, including communication, creativity, collaboration, and creative thinking that drive innovation in today's digital world.

Other notable soft skills featured in existing literature include conflict resolution, professional ethics, leadership and time management. Defined as the promotion of

mutual understanding through suppression of simmering tension among individuals, conflict resolution in addition to cooling workplace disruptions, also bonds teams (Jeremy, 2024). To effectively resolve conflicts, individuals are expected to possess other skills like negotiation, objectivity at all times, and emotional intelligence (Monteiro, 2025). Research demonstrates that supervisors in the frontline who have mastered these other skills are able to nurture workplace environments full of harmony and efficiency since they can defuse tensions before they escalate (Wertheim, 2020). Essentially, the skill of conflict resolution becomes very crucial in workplace environments laden with diversity and which are potential for misunderstanding.

Professional ethics as soft skills relate to work-place guidelines and principles designed to ensure moral conduct and professionalism at the place of work. Among these set of ethics are fairness, honesty, confidentiality, and accountability. Ritter et al. (2018) contend that a strong organizational culture is borne out of a show of unwavering ethical values that inspires trustworthiness among stakeholders. Therefore, having such strong ethics in training and professional programs is sure to nurture leaders capable of handling complicated moral challenges with the required integrity. Ritter et al. (2018) add that organizational legitimacy is a function of ethical conduct.

The soft skill of leadership goes beyond formal authority to focus on affects such as adaptability, strategic thinking, and emotional intelligence which influence how individuals in leadership positions inspire subordinates towards a common organizational goal and vision. Verawati and Hartono (2020) point out that leadership should be perceived as a skill loaded with behaviuor that ought to be learned instead of being treated as an in born trait. They argue that organizations are today very versatile and depend more on innovation, requiring that leaders be in a position to not only

nurture cooperation, but also lead from the front and by being inspirational in terms of trust, addressing uncertainty, decision-making, and motivating teams.

Time management is another soft skill that is given much attention in the soft skills discourse. Perceived as the capability to remain within set time frames when dispensing tasks, time management eases pressure on individuals, giving them room for remaining professional and clear in communication. Research demonstrates that effective management of time boosts productivity and realization of goals even when individuals are under so much pressure (Evinex, 2025). The argument posed by Evinex (2025) is that when individuals learn to manage their time wisely, they can accomplish more tasks in a shorter amount of time without feeling rushed. Andrews (2025) points out that time management is a soft skill valued in the workplace, and whose effective management is critical to success in the work life.

2.1.4 Soft skills for Tourism and Hospitality Industry

2.1.4.1 Criticality and Industry Demand for Soft Skills in Tourism

The tourism and hospitality industry remains an industry that besides being intercultural, is labour and communication intensive. Research shows that the industry which mostly deals with services leaning towards experience, requires personnel in possession of soft skills (Tankovic et al., 2021). Sitompul et al. (2018) argue that such soft skills enable the ease of dealing with others while also enabling self-management. Youssef (2017) agrees with the notion that soft skills are particularly necessary in the tourism and hospitality industry, arguing that as an industry that is people-based and leisure-oriented, soft skills are bound to enable employees to work together towards guests' happiness.

The criticality of soft skills in the tourism and hospitality industry has been further amplified in the post-pandemic era of COVID-19. Boudreau et al. (2022) contends that the pandemic intensified attention on personalized service for guests, increasing the need for soft skills such as emotional intelligence, empathy, and adaptation. Noting that tourism as an experience economy, calls for employees' ability to have a meaningful linkage with guests in their diversity in order to deliver long lasting experiences while managing their expectations. Boudreau et al. (2022) cautions that the post pandemic period is more delicate for the industry and would require patient, trustworthy, and sensitive personnel to oversee sustainable growth.

Today, social and emotional capacities are being integrated into educational programs targeting professional development highlighting the importance of seeking sustainable solutions for the tourism and hospitality industry. Carlisle et al. (2023) recognized the need for inclusion amid the complexity of customer demands being witnessed in today's business environment, and have advocated an array of soft skills for the industry, including ability so solve problems, working in teams, being culturally conscious, and resolving conflicts before they escalate. They posit that in Europe for instance, aligning with the European Skills Agenda has made cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration to be a strategic move. Meanwhile, Čuić Tanković et al. (2021) points to the critical role of soft skills for employees, arguing that such skills deserve recognition and a central role in the training of employees, given their implicit underpinning of innovation, ability to manage crisis, and capacity to attract loyalty from clients in an industry such as tourism and hospitality, which is loaded with customer expectations and emotions.

Soft skills are considered vital for tourism and hospitality personnel, and they are known to increase the employability of graduates (Adeyinka-Ojo, 2018). As Matteson et al. (2016) explains, these skills underpin behavior at the workplace. Their study further established that the soft skills acquired enable staff to become more approachable, listen to customers and show more interest to customer needs for efficient service delivery. This therefore would be a desirable attribute for tourism and hospitality personnel who also directly deal with customers to ensure quality satisfactory service. Acquisition of these "intangible," "people" skills would perhaps revolutionize the professionalism and inter-personal attributes of human resource in this service-based industry.

Wheeler (2016) contends that one's soft skills are more important for success than one's hard talents, even though the latter are necessary for promotion, a fulfilling career and personal life. According to research conducted by the Stanford Institute and the Carnegie Mellon Foundation, soft skills are much more important than technical expertise for long-term job success (Staboulis & Lazaridou, 2020). Marnero et al. (2020) opine that in the field of hospitality, competency is the most studied subject and that the hospitality industry prefers employing workers with soft skills or people management skills who are strong professional and practical in performing their work diligently.

2.1.4.2 Soft Skills Gap in the Kenyan Context

In Kenya, a survey to investigate skills mismatch between what employers' demand and the supply from institutions of higher learning, the Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) established that 46% of the graduates did not have soft skills needed to effectively perform their jobs. The report also revealed that 41% graduates did not have

the right interpersonal skills to perform their jobs without experience and training (FKE, 2018). The report further rated soft skills at position two, as emerging skills and competencies necessary for the 21st century, while attitudes were rated at position three. This scenario gives a clear indication of what learning institutions should include and emphasize in their curriculum. Students should therefore be taught more of work ethics, communication, and interpersonal skills among other competencies.

2.1.4.3 Essential Soft Skills for Tourism and Hospitality Personnel

Among the soft skills mostly considered important for the tourism and hospitality workplace includes communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, emotional intelligence, attention to detail, teamwork and collaboration, and cultural competence (Avdimiotis, 2019; Hussain et al., 2024; Marques & Monteiro, 2024). In tourism and hospitality, communication skills transcend message conveyance and focus more on tourist rapport and experience. Consequently, communication skills in tourism and hospitality lean towards listening, verbalizing, and non-verbal cues (Tankovic et al., 2021). In tourism and hospitality, communication is the only way to make intangible services become a reality to customers. Communication is a channel to interact with one another at the workplace. In their study to explore the importance of communication on employee performance, Hee et al. (2019), expressed the importance of enhancing communication across all levels of the organization. They highlighted some benefits of effective communication at the workplace to include bonding of employees, building stronger teams, reducing turnover rates and boosting their confidence thereby boosting their performance and productivity.

Communication can be categorized as verbal or non-verbal and body language such as gestures, facial expression and personal appearance among others (Dean, 2019;

Kivunja, 2015). It can also be described as horizontal across employees at the same level; upward from subordinates to superiors along the hierarchy and downwards from superiors to subordinates along the hierarchy (Hee et al., 2019). Good communication skills also entail the ability to listen actively and interact with others in order to judge when to talk or listen and pay attention without interrupting the speaker. Communication is therefore considered even more important than other education qualifications because it has the power to make or break the business image (Aarif & Alalmai, 2019). Customers always tend to avoid people with poor communication skills making this soft skill most critical at the workplace of the 21st century where customers are extremely conscious of their right to be treated courteously.

Communication has a significant impact on the success of the operations in the organization. It is important that the management ensures a smooth communication flow at the workplace especially when the work requires cooperation between several employees and departments, as is the case with tourism and hospitality businesses (Stacho et al., 2019). Effective communication eliminates misunderstanding among staff, since everyone understands what is expected of them and hence the work environment becomes conducive. It also creates a good feedback mechanism that management can use as a tool for decision making. Effective communication among staff members, therefore, lays a good foundation for teamwork which is essential for satisfactory service to the customers.

Employees in the tourism and hospitality industry need to communicate effectively with guests in fluent language, patience and in a friendly manner (Parasnis et al., 2022). Front-line workers play an important role in forming good relations with the guests. A front-line employee who is able to eloquently communicate with a guest is able to

identify their attitudes closely and hence strengthen the bond, build a network of relationships with guests and whenever possible, convince the guest to stay longer and spend more. This is critical to customer satisfaction and ultimately propels business success.

Williams (2015) recommended the need to deliberately create a professional development program to help students enhance soft skills before employment, noting that communication is the most important soft skill but yet significantly lacked among the students. This scholar postulated that enhancing training in acquisition of soft skills especially communication may go a long way in ensuring that workers with adequate soft skills enhance hospitality service delivery.

Research also identifies interpersonal skills as critical to hospitality since they involve building strong relations with co-workers. These skills subsume positive attitudes, empathy, and conflict resolution which are key to maintaining smooth operations, enhancing guest experiences, and managing stresses associated with the job (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2017; Avdimiotis, 2019). Employers are happy with staff who demonstrate good interpersonal relationships with guests as well as colleagues. Approachability and courtesy to customers is highly valued. According to (Kivunja, 2015), it is easier to get fired from the job due to lack of interpersonal skills than due to lack of relevant job skills. Today's workplace is a global environment with varied ethnicity, races, social and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, a mastery of interpersonal skills becomes a critical element to enable staff operate in this international arena with an open mind (Kivunja, 2015). It requires individuals who appreciate that their own ideas are not necessarily superior to those of other people. Further, this skill helps employees appreciate the

diversity of view to new ideas, new concepts, and new markets as opportunities and not a threat to their job performance.

Meanwhile, the hospitality industry is a fast-paced industry that requires swift and effective problem-solving skills. Research demonstrates that facets of problem-solving such as adaptability, quick thinking, flexibility, and politeness are necessary for timely solutions to customer concerns and in maintaining a calm demeanor (Stergiou, 2023). Emotional intelligence (EQ) as a soft skill is credited with effective interaction, stress management and exceptional service delivery in hospitality owing to its ability to occasion effective communication and resilience (Mrisho & Mseti, 2024). The hospitality industry provides a multicultural environment whose success depends on effective teamwork and collaboration. Great teamwork has been associated with support and respect for colleagues, as well as working well with diverse personalities (Sitampul et al., 2018). Another soft skill that is central to the hospitality industry is cultural competence. According to Hussain et al. (2024), cultural competence is crucial in hospitality careers since it allows individuals to adapt to diverse work environments, in addition to providing culturally sensitive service.

Hospitality undergraduates often start their careers in the management trainee positions that besides technical competence, also require competence in soft skills. However, there have been concerns among scholars and hospitality stakeholders whether tourism and hospitality education programs impart the requisite soft skills for the industry (Gibbs & Slevich, 2019). Therefore, this study leveraged communication skills, interpersonal (Customer service orientation), teamwork and collaboration to explore the perceptions of the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees regarding acquisition of soft skills.

2.2 The Concept of Affective Learning Domain

Training in higher education is today seeking to move away from cognitive achievement perspective to focus more on training methods and approaches that target student's holistic engagement to learning and training. Scholars are today becoming cognizant of the significant role emotions play influencing change in learning behaviour, and motivating academic outcomes (Lo, 2023). Higher education conventional models of education that hitherto focused on knowledge dissemination and rote memory, are since losing out to frameworks which recognize important and diverse affects among learners. The emphasis among studies has progressively shifted towards promoting emotional effects of engagement, including belonging, confidence, and enthusiasm which impact knowledge retention and academic performance positively (Daher et al., 2021). The onus now rests with educators to strive for training programs that build and promote emotional learning, leading to expansive learning experiences.

With the emerging of the COVID-19 pandemic, several learning institutions were no go zones following the containment guidelines. Following this development, the impact of the affective focus in learning was laid bear with the transition to online and hybrid learning environments. According to Acosta-Gonzaga and Ruiz-Ledesma (2022), during this pandemic period, remote learning was the order of learning. Adapting and being engaged with this mode of learning required the appropriate emotional state of learners, making emotional engagement to be a cornerstone to sustainable learning outcomes, albeit with such disruptions prior unknown. Therefore, the pandemic experience has led to a paradigm shift in pedagogy, with the focus being more on emotional connection, facilitated through technology mediation, empathy, and timely

feedback; all of which underscore the centrality of affective learning frameworks targeted at the integration of emotional and motivational dimensions of education.

Affective learning can be defined as learning which focuses on students' attitudes, interests, and motivations (Bamidis, 2017). According to Jyoti and Rabindra (2023), affective learning remains a process that leverages emotional engagement to impart knowledge, attitudes and skills. In retrospect, affective learning takes cognizance of the fact that emotions are critical in shaping cognitive processes as well as in enhancing decision-making and memory retention. They posit that in higher education, affective learning is responsible for fostering positive emotions, including enthusiasm and curiosity that improve learning outcomes.

Affective learning is embedded in the affective domain as advanced in Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives, developed in 1956 (Grebin et al, 2020). It is a framework for classifying statements of what students are expected or intended to learn as a result of instruction and classifies learning into three domains, namely, cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains (Noushad, 2024)). It serves as a common language for educators and provides an opportunity for learning outcomes to be measured by the extent of knowledge as well as the intensity of knowledge (Bitok, 2020).

Bloom's taxonomy has for many years influenced the development of curricular and educational processes worldwide (Chandio et al., 2016). Specific skills and abilities also known as competencies form the building blocks for curriculum development. Applying the Bloom's taxonomy in curriculum development and implementation enables planners to have a wider depth and breadth of content, thus producing more rounded and competent graduates. The taxonomy also informs the trainer on the most

suitable method to use in delivering in order to achieve the set learning outcomes at all the levels in the hierarchy as developed by Bloom (Ching & da Silva, 2017; Karanja & Malone, 2021).

Research shows that with the increase in global competition, the 21st century graduate cannot afford to enter the world of work without the opportunity to develop expertise across all three domains of the Bloom's Taxonomy (Kivunja, 2014)). Unfortunately, the nature of most instruction in colleges and universities focuses on the cognitive domain. Institutions of Higher education globally are accused of designing curricula that fail to pay the necessary attention to affective learning outcomes (Brown & Irons, 2022). Moreover, the methods of evaluation used also do not allow for adequate assessment of the higher levels of the learning domains.

Learning outcomes are therefore defined in relation to three domains of cognitive, affective and psychomotor. These domains are closely linked since they espouse the lived-body spirit of the moving-feeling experience, advanced by Frank (2021), and which posits that an individual think, feels and moves as an integrated whole. The cognitive domain is about the ability to think or one's mental skills; the affective domain refers to the emotions and feelings especially relationship to a set of values; while the psychomotor domain is concerned with mastery of skills ranging from reflexive movement to exhibiting appropriate body language (Kaffes et al., 2019).

Detimer (2006) observes that the original Bloom's Taxonomy did not pay much attention to the affective domain, nor did it classify objectives about feelings and attitudes. The scholars argued that affective assessment is generally dependent on self-reports which are prone to exaggeration or falsification if the respondents feel it's to their advantage. Recent efforts have shifted on addressing weaknesses in the original

Bloom's Taxonomy, such as under-utilization of the affective learning domain in higher education (Nelson et al., 2020).

The affective learning domain addresses the emotional aspects of learning as manifested through behavioural attitudes such as awareness, opinions, emotions, and values. The focus under this domain is the development of attitudes and behaviour rather than the intellectual abilities upon which the cognitive domain is based (Brown & Irons, 2022). The domain subsumes student motivation and hence promotes greater student learning because affective learning motivates students to engage in task-relevant behaviour. The affective learning domain gives attention to the inner growth that takes place as the learner becomes aware and adopts or internalizes the attitudes and beliefs, supporting the value structure and guiding behaviour (Green & Batool, 2017).

Under the affective domain, learning progresses beyond the level of just receiving the information, to responding to it, valuing it, organizing it, up to a point where the learner internalizes the concept until it becomes character. In addition, this approach enables students to change their attitudes and develops in them skills that enhance their knowledge (Green & Batool, 2017). According to these scholars, affective learning approach enhances student academic achievement. Affective approach can be considered as the core of leaning because it develops in students' characteristics such as motivation, interest, and a desire to learn. An affective teaching methodology is one that enables the teacher to interact with students to establish a beneficial relationship. This approach is therefore a deliberate form of engagement that stirs up affective attributes in students so that they are more enthusiastic about what they are learning (Donina & Luka, 2014).

Despite the positive contribution of affective learning domain, its utilization in higher education often poses challenges, including formulating comprehensive learning objectives that capture diverse emotions, as well as, raising assessment levels and reliability (Adawiah, 2023). Moreover, even where affective learning outcomes are well articulated and valued, it is difficult to assess performance and rate achievement (Aulia et al., 2024). However, the benefits are so rewarding in that they allow students to become better engaged, enjoy learning, and are more likely to retain concepts learnt. The approach also requires a lot more effort from the trainer, who needs to be more sensitive to the needs of the trainees, be approachable, friendly, helpful and a good listener to their feedback.

2.2.1. Levels of the Affective Learning Domain

This attitudinal based domain of learning consists of five levels as illustrated in Figure 1
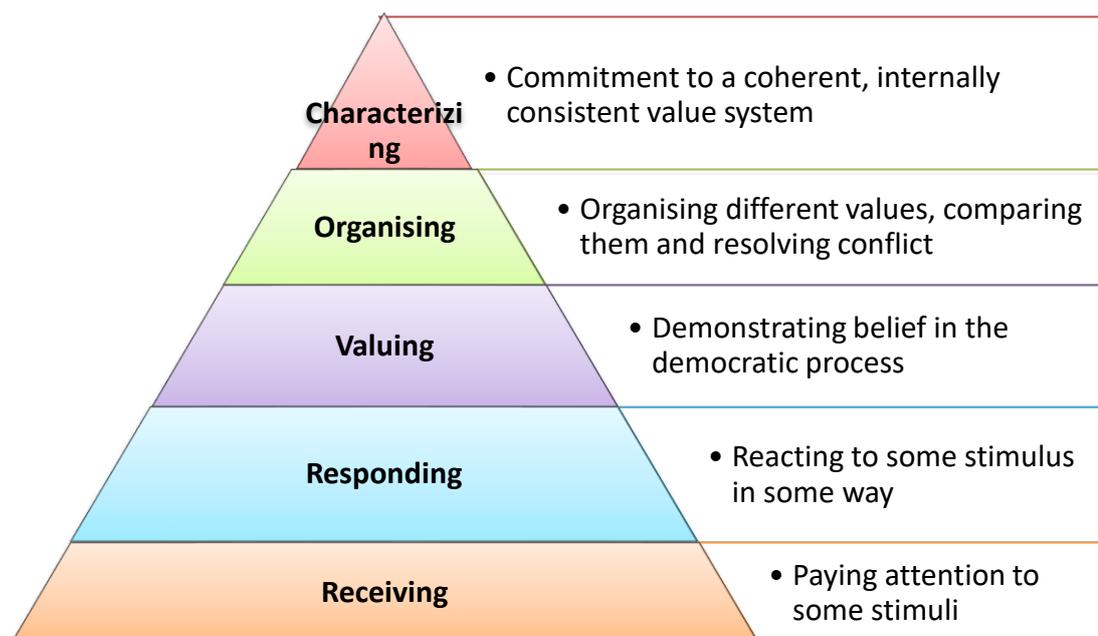
Figure 1: Taxonomy of the Affective Domain

Source: Krathwohl et al., 1964

The affective learning domain is premised on a principle of internalization. The five levels form a continuum of attitudinal behaviour that moves from general awareness of a value; to acceptance, up to a point where the internalized behaviour consistently guides or controls the behaviour of the trainee. The learning outcomes are therefore shifted from a knowledge point of view to focus on how trainees feel while they are learning and how they internalize the learning experiences, attitudes and opinions. The resulting behavioural changes are conceptualized by Krathwohl et al. (1964) in five hierarchical levels of the affective domain as illustrated in Figure 1.

In Krathwohl's conceptualization, continuous internalization and engagement of emotions during learning is reflected in the hierarchical complexity moving from the receiving through the responding, valuing, and organizing level all the way to characterizing by value. According to Krathwohl et al. (1964), the receiving level seeks to interrogate the readiness and awareness of the learner to build a basis for emotional connection as depicted through attention to stimuli. The responding level signals the inception of personal development alongside learning content, and occasioned through active participation. The valuing level sets in when the learner shows the willingness to accept and believe in the worth of other individuals and other phenomena.

Meanwhile, the organizing level comes into play when learners are able to adapt and integrate the newly acquired value and internalize them within their ongoing value systems, while seamlessly ensuring that they do not clash. Finally, Powell (2021) identifies the characterizing level as a point where the learner consistently, and pervasively shows the level of value internalizing within the behaviour. Hammar and Griswold (2023) have recently demonstrated that educational strategies being

implemented recognize that emotional intelligence required to sustain motivation and ethical decisions is a function of learner affective progression through the five levels.

Emerging research reinforces affective learning domain, arguing that instructional designs that intentionally focus on inherent affects, alongside reflective engagement are the impetus required to achieve high order levels of the affective learning domain. For instance, Hammar and Griswold (2023) contend that extensive value internalization and the subsequent emotional development require focused activities like reflective engagement, facilitated dialogue, and learning through serving.

Meanwhile, Nix et al. (2021) advocate for affective learning outcomes to be included into the planning and assessment of the curriculum as opposed to being treated as ancillary. They argue that in periods after a pandemic, higher education should nurture affective learning in order to create self-awareness among learners and eventually raise their levels of empathy and resilience needed for the challenging and complex social and professional trajectories. In essence, the five levels of the affective learning domain provide a dynamic framework through which students' affects can not only be described, but can also be tapped to realize holistic development.

2.2.2 Receiving level of the Affective Learning Domain

That the affective learning domain offers a foundational block for emotional engagement is slowly but surely permeating the realm of students' acquisition of affective learning experiences. Research has recently chosen to build on emotional receptiveness among students as the entry point to incisive behavioural and cognitive engagement (Acosta-Gonzaga & Ruiz-Ledesma, 2022). These scholars argue that higher order affective levels such as the valuing, organizing, and characterizing need the lower levels as building blocks. Therefore, the learner should be willing to react to

stimuli before valuing things. Moreover, the post-pandemic studies exploring the novel hybrid learning spaces continue to demonstrate that emotional attention encompassing openness and a show of interest is critical to motivation and persistence in academic pursuance (Iqbal et al., 2022). Cultivating emotional preparedness alongside authentic attentiveness are therefore key affects that the receiving level of the affective domain should prioritize in addition to ensuring attendance.

The conceptualization of the receiving level in the hierarchical affective learning domain is consistent with modern educational psychology perceptions of cognitive and emotional engagement as reflected among scholars. For instance, Salas-Pilco et al. (2022) builds on the hierarchical nature of the affective learning domain by positing that advancement to higher affective learning domain levels is dependent on the ability of the learner to pay attention, derive value in learning activities, and connect emotionally with the curriculum and programme content. They add that the receiving level is perceived as the first level because through it, the learner gets to consciously experience engagement. Therefore, educational programs aiming at successful practices should take cognizance of the importance of targeting and strengthening the initial responsiveness among the learner. They should seek to prioritize attention fostering through materials that relevantly infuse emotions, promoting inclusivity, and using techniques that lean towards active listening.

The receiving level is the lowest and basic level of the affective learning domain. At this level the trainee is aware of and opens to experience. They demonstrate interest and willingness to learn and consciously pay attention and receive the information or concepts being taught (Gano-Phillips, 2009; Hoque, 2016). Ability to move up the hierarchy in the affective learning domain is determined by the effectiveness of

receiving information. This can be manifested by attending class and listening or paying attention. This level can be further categorized into awareness, willingness and controlled or selective attention. Therefore, the trainee begins by being conscious of the concepts, demonstrate willingness to take note and intentionally pay attention to the preferred stimuli. Trainees demonstrate readiness to learn at this level by their ability to ask, choose, describe, follow, identify, name, point to, select, sitting upright and reply to questions.

The application of the affective learning domain at this level can be evaluated by assessing the attendance registers, the level of concentration and enthusiasm of trainees while in class. Students who are enthusiastic to learn will not only attend class but will also demonstrate a desire to master the concepts taught. It is important that the trainer uses techniques that motivate trainees as much as possible, by attracting or grabbing and holding their attention while in class. Trainees who are demotivated will often find excuses to be absent and may only attend class to fulfil the required threshold percentage of class attendance.

2.2.2.1 Receiving level and perceived acquisition of soft skills

Okafor, 2024 examined the effect of among others openness to experience, a receiving level personality trait on intrapreneurial performance of hospitality in Anambra. The study utilized a survey design and targeted skilled workforce drawn from registered hospitality entities. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using the multiple regression approach. The study established that openness to experience had a significant influence on intrapreneurial performance. Through these findings, the study contributed to the knowledge that openness to experience boosts skills such as intrapreneurship in the hospitality industry. However, despite such a

contribution to existing knowledge, Okafor's (2024) study highlighted some notable gaps. For instance, would such results from a skilled workforce hold for trainees in hospitality industry? Secondly, given that intrapreneurship is a hard skill, would a similar influence be experienced with soft skills? Finally, would findings made in the context of the Anambra state be replicated in other hospitality contexts?

On the other hand, Kosker (2018) used tourism and hospitality management undergraduate students in Turkey to examine how basic personality traits affected service orientation and the urge to work in the tourism and hospitality industry. Using a self-administered questionnaire, data were collected from 1073 students out of whom 800 questionnaires had usable responses. Data analyzed using the multiple regressions approach facilitated by SPSS revealed that openness to experience had a large effect size on the propensity to work in the tourism and hospitality industry. The study reinforced the importance associated to openness to experience in the hospitality industry. However, this study focused only on undergraduate students from Turkey, whose results may not be repeated in other developing nations like Kenya. Moreover, the use of multiple regressions used by Kosker (2018) may not have addressed the multiple unobserved emotions under the openness to experience element, thereby requiring an exhaustive approach such as PLS-SEM that allows for the analysis of research models with multiple variables (Ramli et al., 2018).

Elsewhere, Harb et al. (2024) used the PLS-SEM approach in their structural design model to explore the influence of receiving level traits, among them openness to experience on students' intentions and orientation to work in tourism and hospitality in the Jordanian context. They targeted a cohort of 3,198 Gen Z undergraduate students enrolled in tourism and hospitality majors. Data were collected using a self-

administrated Google Forms Survey Questionnaire. Using the PLS-SEM algorithm and bootstrapping approaches, they revealed that openness to experience and conscientiousness significantly influenced students' self-efficacy and outcome expectations which were both associated with their intentions work in the industry. However, findings made among university graduates in the Jordanian context may not be guaranteed among students pursuing diploma in tourism and hospitality in other study context. Moreover, although self-efficacy and outcome expectation are hinged on soft skills, Harb et al. (2024) gave no hint on how openness to experience shaped acquisition of such skills.

Meanwhile, Yang et al. (2022) leveraged openness to experience as a facet of group diversity when exploring how group diversity would impact service innovation. They employed a multilevel structural equation modeling targeting 44 Chinese hospitality teams. Openness to experience was implicit in their finding showing that service innovation among employees was fostered by group openness diversity. Therefore, the finding of this study contributes to the discourse on openness to experience by showing that group diversity measures similar to receiving level of affective learning has potential to improve service innovation in hospitality. However, whether similar findings would be experienced in group diversity defined among diploma hospitality trainees and their attitude towards service innovation in the Kenyan context remained unanswered. Therefore, this current study utilized a sample of diploma trainees and trainers to explore the receiving level that infuses openness to experience to address such gaps.

In her report that leveraged many researches, Brownell (2009) analyzed what hospitality managers needed to know to exploit listening towards service excellence.

The study found that effective listening involving accurate exchange of information was essential to quality service delivery by employees and consequently to business success. Through the report, Bromwell (2009) underscored the importance of listening as a core competency for service providers that managers ought to model while employees should strive to acquire. This points to the importance of developing listening competences by modelling listening abilities and training at the work place. However, the report mostly focused on views by managers at the work place and did not consider the pre-service training received in tourism and hospitality. In addition, the obsolete nature of the year of the report (2009) does not guarantee similar reactions in contemporary society.

Parks (2017) referenced willingness to hear as a receiving level element in a study seeking to improve sustainability in hospitality. Using both quantitative (corpus linguistics and survey), and qualitative (value analysis and metaphoric criticism) to empirically identify 12 values shared across communities, Parks (2017) demonstrated that learning to listen in an ethical way offered hope for sustainable hospitality. The study pointed to a foundational orientation to openness to learning in which good listening reflected active endeavor to understand other people's core identities and communicated meanings. Further the study emphasized the value of active listening that entails paying attention to the speaker through non-verbal cues like eye contact, as a way of building worthwhile relationships and networks.

Similarly, Min et al. (2021) were concerned why active listening possessed inherent potential to increase customer satisfaction in times of service failure. They established that greater customer satisfaction is derived from perceptions of preferential treatment fostered by active listening. The question then was whether such values of willingness

to hear in affective hospitality training would empirically impact trainee soft skills acquisition and hence customer satisfaction.

In another study, Xu et al. (2022) demonstrated the power of listening skills in the learner's professional development. They postulated that intercultural communication is greatly boosted and enhanced when the training nurtures the skill of listening. They also argued that besides raising intercultural communication, listening skills are also avenues to circumvent sustainability expectations. By aligning with the views of Parks' (2017) showing the strategic positioning of ethical listening in the hospitality industry in the sustainability of mindsets, Xu et al. (2022) attributed increased openness among learners to their willingness to hear, which allows them to understand diverse opinions. For instance, focusing on Neuro-leadership and employees' evaluative judgement de la Nuez et al. (2023) demonstrated that affective experiences drawn from the willingness to hear, and anchored on empathy and active listening positively and significantly impact evaluative judgement among employees' and by extension, organizational commitment. The implication of this finding is that genuine regard for employees require the management to promote environments that guarantee inclusivity and psychological safety needed to ensure ethical and sustainable operations. Such environments are bound to broaden sustainable leadership and resilience in the tourism and hospitality industry.

The importance of active listening has also been demonstrated from the sustainable education perspective. Using the hospitality industry to explore Sustainability in Knowledge, Education, and Industry, Kim (2025) discerned that when affective domain aspects, including active listening are included in the training programs targeting tourism and hospitality, students tend to be more responsible the learning environment.

The implication of such finding by Kim (2025) is that internalization of value and behaviour that is pro-sustainable among students' rest on the program developers. They need to recognize that students need to be emotionally engaged and genuinely listened to if they have to internalize acquired value and behaviour. Such findings provide a framework through which stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry can anchor curriculum design and development, emphasizing the critical role that listening in the grooming of leaders who value sustainability and, personal relationships, and who can address complex needs.

2.2.3 Responding level of the Affective Learning Domain

The responding level emerges as a key transitional level where learners transcend the passive reception of knowledge to become aggressively engaged as they actively participate in the creation of information. According to Dubovi (2022), by focusing on active participation, the responding level of the affective learning domain ranks as a level that nurtures motivation in addition to deeper learning. The responding level often employs learning experiences that are both immersive and interactive, and allow learners to acquire the emotional commitment required for immersive engagement and response to stimuli. Some of the notable experiences in this immersive and interactive realm are simulations, collaborations, and group discussions. Research has shown that greater satisfaction and enhanced performance among students can be attributed to the emotions that such students invest in learning (Raccanello et al., 2022). Through these arguments, the responding level emerges as a crucial level for exposing learners to reacting to external stimuli, questioning, and interacting with content in a meaningful way.

At the responding level, active participation explicitly manifests in the drive by intrinsic motives for nurturing constructive emotional experiences. Liu et al. (2022) through a study on automated detection of emotional and cognitive engagement demonstrated that emotional investment positively and actively impacts learner's engagement in learning through idea contribution, peer collaboration, and dialogue. In their study conducted in higher education, they determined that learning enthusiasm and persistence through uncertainty among students are increased through emotional connection with the trainers or instructors as well as with the materials being learned. In essence, the responding level of the affective learning domain links compliance to learning with emotional engagement, culminating in a learning environment that fosters value and concept internalization.

At this level therefore, the trainee is motivated enough to willingly and actively participate in a visible manner. They demonstrate commitment to an idea by consciously getting involved and actively responding to the information received and complying to expectation. The willingness is not merely out of fear of punishment but there is an emotional attachment that gives an element of satisfaction. Thus, the trainee begins to internalize the concepts learnt. This can be manifested through active participation in class discussions, completing assignment as per requirement, creatively interrogating new ideas and approaches with enthusiasm as well as engaging voluntarily to activities.

At this level also trainees decisively make choices to attend to specific course units even where alternate options may seem more attractive. Learning at this level can be described by the trainees' ability to answer, assist, comply, conform, discuss, greet, help, label, perform, practice, present, read, recite, report, select, tell, write, and react

to stimuli. The preferred teaching approaches at this level are those methods that develop relevant skills in trainees such as presentation, case-based exercise, role-play, simulation, journal entries. and reflection, also referred to as "skill builders." Evaluation of application of this responding level can be done by observing the level of participation in class discussions, seriousness of compliance to course requirements as well the increased motivation to getting involved in the learning process.

Contemporary empirical evidence continues to identify the utility of the responding level of the affective domain in affective development of learners, especially with structured activities for engaging students pushing them through the level. For instance, Wood and Shirazi (2020) used the audience response system as a learning affect in higher education to show that affective learning encourages active participation among learners. They demonstrated that real-time participation facilitated by tools like audience response had a positive impact on both the investment on emotional development and engagement, increasing them substantially. Programme developers should be encouraged to infuse real-time feedback activities in the mainstream programmes such as discussions, and clickers to scaffold learners towards internalization of values and new knowledge.

Researchers have also emphasized the affective learning domain in programmes, noting the need for engagement approaches that transcend cognitive learning towards emotional development. For instance, in a study focusing on emergency online learning set in contexts with low resources, and seeking to explore strategies to harness effective student engagement, Abou-Khalil et al. (2021), leveraged the COVID-19 pandemic period to show that student emotional engagement and active participation in learning activities was greatly boosted by learning approaches that emphasized learner

collaboration, project learning, and learner's own reflection. Abou-Khalil et al. (2021) argue that use of these approaches is similar to providing students with opportunities to explore their affects akin to the expectations of the affective learning domain. In this way students derive pleasure and meaning in self-expression and collaborations with others, and can be enthusiastic, control their learning, and show enhanced commitment.

Meanwhile, research further shows that stimulation of emotional engagement must be deliberately targeted through teaching approaches that have been successfully tried and context specific (Salas-Pilco et al., 2022). Using a systematic review focusing on higher education in the Latin American context, Salas-Pilco et al. (2022) demonstrated that the desire to actively participate and respond in the emerging hybrid tele-learning among students is informed by the emotional connection they elicit towards the coursework. However, such tele-learning would have more impact if affective learning strategies such as skits for problem-solving, interactive simulations of real-life scenarios, and reflective writing are included in the learning activities. Therefore, training programs should look to develop robust frameworks for nurturing learner engagement to maximize affective learning outcomes.

2.2.3.1 Responding level and perceived acquisition of soft skills

Active participation enhances learning as it keeps trainees engaged in the learning process. Huertas–Valdivia (2021) leveraged role play as an active participation facet of the responding level in the context of Bachelor of tourism students. Using in-class role-play, a simulation of a staffing process was conducted where students were given an opportunity to actively participate in a staff selection and placement process. The study demonstrated that this process enabled students not only to internalize key issues in staffing process, but they also learned common mistakes to avoid in job interviews.

Further, this method of learning helped to stimulate a real environment in class and ensured that students became the center of the learning process as opposed to being passive learners. However, by using bachelor of tourism students, it was necessary to see if similar findings would be reported with a diploma tourism study cohort. Moreover, use of simulations may not realistically capture student reactions in real world situations, necessitating a real-world tourism and hospitality diploma students.

In a related study, Chau and Cheung (2017) referenced the active participation element of the responding level as bridging life to learning in hospitality. The study was largely qualitative, employing a comprehensive review of literature in conjunction with in-depth personal and focus group interviews among Asian hospitality educators and students. They determined among other findings that the responding level through active learning is an avenue for implementing emotional and practical learning environments in hospitality education. Besides, in showing the potential for active participation to enhance skills and knowledge seeking, Chau and Cheung (2017) contributed importance information on why the responding level of affective domain ought to be emphasized in hospitality education. However, research conducted among the Asian hospitality educators and students may not have aptly reflected the Kenyan context. Similarly, a predominantly qualitative study may not have given measurable effect of the responding level on skills acquisition, necessitating an exploratory sequential mixed method.

Nyanjom and Wilkins (2021) on the other hand used the Australian higher education context to explore the development of emotional skills by leveraging emotional labor in the hospitality and tourism curriculum. Using an exploratory design that adopted qualitative methods, they sampled thirteen (13) hospitality and tourism educators drawn

from vocational education and university institutions. Through generated codes, they determined that the development and integration of emotional skills in hospitality had inherent challenges, not least the fact that development of emotional skills appeared to be incidental. However, the findings were mainly educator specific, and would have perhaps required a quantitative phase seeking students' opinions. Moreover, the findings did not address the role played by affective learning in development of emotional skills.

Torralba and Doo (2020) in their study on rheumatic disease clinic observe that apprenticeship allowed student trainees to participate more actively thereby increasing their experience and ultimately, to become more independent. Although the study reinforced the importance of active listening as an element of responding to learning, its focus on the field of medicine raised concerns on whether it was possible to replicate the findings in the hospitality industry.

On the other hand, Meza Rios et al. (2018) used the university internship context to determine whether students participating in a formal internship program can become effective agents of change. They used a pre- and post-experimental design targeting students' sustainability leadership to show that an effective learning experience that emphasizes responding to learning is the panacea to acquisition of hands-on experience that enables implementation of strategic intervention. Moreover, the study affirmed that allowing trainees to actively participate in experiential learning outside the classroom is an effective approach to harnessing their emotions. Despite these knowledgeable contributions, the pre-and post-design used may not have proven causality between active participation and acquisition of hands-on experiences, requiring a more robust and comprehensive approach such as the PLS-SEM approach.

The study by Sallata et al. (2024) also advocated for the incorporation of real-life scenarios into education and training, pointing out that it bridges words and worlds. This was beneficial in that it made the curriculum content more relevant and easier to comprehend. Further, De la Mora Velasco et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive literature review on knowledge skills and teaching methods. The study posited that in order to ensure hospitality and tourism graduates were well prepared for the future, there was need to rethink educational content and pedagogies. The study revealed that experiential, project-based and authentic learning as well as social constructivism were the main pedagogical approached applied. In addition, the study observed the need for diverse evaluation methods to capture learning outcomes more objectively.

In his study of the theory of planned behaviour, Musavengane (2019) articulated the understanding of responsible tourism among owners of small budget hotels in Johannesburg, South Africa. While there is a general desire to comply, the findings showed that an appreciation of responsible tourism in daily operations did not necessarily translate into being responsible. Hence a "Best Responsible Tourism Model" was proposed to encourage compliance to responsible tourism by small hotels. This study focused on owners of budget hotels and did not explore how compliance to responsible tourism can be inculcated into hospitality and tourism training, requiring that the contributions of affective learning to skills acquisition be explored at the diploma training level.

In another study, Oriade et al. (2021) used the developing country context of Nigeria and Ghana to explore the role organizational culture plays in sustainable practice and awareness among hotel practitioners. They used purposive and snowball sampling techniques to gather data that was analyzed using the CB-SEM approach facilitated by

the AMOS 24.0 software to establish that there was a strong relationship between organizational culture and employee sustainability awareness. Hence a need to enhance the organizational culture and empower staff for better compliance with sustainability practices. However, the study focused on hotel managers with no reference to hospitality and tourism educators. Moreover, purposive and snowball approaches used to gather were non-probabilistic and did not guarantee equal sampling of the participants, thereby limiting generalizability of the findings. This current study used random sampling techniques that enhanced external validity in the findings.

Elsewhere, using a qualitative case study with managers and supervisors, Meacham et al. (2019) investigated human resource practices that create an ethical climate that can promote authentic work experiences that are also inclusive. The findings confirmed that complying with ethical practices that promote social inclusion led to more authentic work experiences and improved well-being of staff. This study, however, mainly focused on inclusion of workers with disabilities (WWD) without necessarily showing the potential impacts of affective learning levels on such authentic work experiences.

Using a book chapter, Paskova and Zelenka (2024) examined social responsibility in tourism as an avenue of the responding level affects by scoping existing case studies on the subject. The bottom line was to create an understanding of how destinations leverage responding level affects to implement social responsibility, their time consciousness, and strategies they employ to measure the quality of tourism in a destination. The study highlighted the importance of compliance to industry standard requirements as a way to contribute in achieving social responsibility in tourism.

In their study conducted in Southern Philippines, Jesther et al. (2024) recognized the importance of compliance as a responding level affect in sustainability endeavors, and

investigated the knowledge exuded among operators engaged in local tourism business towards compliance to mandatory regulations. They specifically examined how cultural was preserved, compliance with accreditation and licensing, consumer protection, and efforts towards sustainable tourism. Through a quantitative approach employing a diversity of strategies, they highlighted the need for targeted training programs that could address the visible variations in knowledge pertaining to compliance as a responding level affect. Therefore, this current added to literature by emphasizing the direct effect of the responding level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills, albeit from a diploma program's perspective.

From a Kenyan perspective, Merab (2023) used a cross-sectional study that targeted food handlers to explore their Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) knowledge and practices. Survey data was gathered from a sample of 201 respondents, and analyzed quantitatively using the chi-square test of independence. Among other findings, the study offered crucial support for compliance affect in training by showing that most of the handlers had adequate knowledge on HACCP. The study also revealed a significant relationship between conformity with hygiene regulations and HACCP knowledge. Moreover, adherence with food safety systems among hotel staff increased with education levels. This current study focused on examining affects, among them compliance among tourism and hospitality diploma students, as a way of findings solutions to the reported skills gap knowing that through affective learning levels such as the responding level, students are bound to increase their compliance knowledge.

Islam and Kirillova (2021) in their constructivism research paradigm leveraged the reaction to stimuli affect of the responding level to explore the role of non-verbal communication as a medium of experience co-creation. They used focus group

discussions conducted through video elicitation with hotel employees on one hand and guests on the other. Using the exploratory qualitative methods, they demonstrated that affects of reciprocity and engagement were critical in kinesic experiences. Moreover, they established that imperative cues from employees alongside complacent cues among guests were value triggers that enriched experience co-creation between employees and guests. They emphasized on the need for an experience co-creation framework among hospitality front-line employees that is hinged upon kinesics. Therefore, this research explored the viability of the responding level affects in the tourism and hospitality program at diploma level in echoing such a framework.

The study demonstrated that employees' body expression is not just a vehicle to deliver guest satisfaction, but also contribute to how guests engage and reciprocate. Consequently, this contributes to the first impression and fosters positive relationship and affinity with guests. This concept points to the value of developing non-verbal competences that enable staff to react to and co-create favourable guest experiences. This study was however limited to non-verbal communication skills among front office personnel, but can be replicated to capture all hospitality and tourism trainees regardless of the roles or positions in the industry.

 Similarly, Malate et al. (2023) leaned towards the responding level affects when seeking the perceptions of the Filipino hospitality management student interns on the role of non-verbal communication and how its dimensions assist in service encounter. They employed the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) qualitative approach, and targeted the internship Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM) students drawn from Tacloban City. They used the purposive convenience approach to sample 18 interns. The Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis

approach was used to analyze the gathered data. They underscored the importance of non-verbal communication as a facet of responding level affects, showing empirically that hospitality professionals with such affects can not only enhance customer satisfaction, but stand to optimize customer interaction. The study emphasized the importance of non-verbal communication for successful service encounter in hospitality industry. Dimensions such as facial expressions, kinesics, paralinguistics and proxemics significantly contributed to creating exceptional customer experience and enhancing overall service quality. This current study sought to replicate such findings from a Kenyan hospitality perspective, noting the contextual differences between Philippines and Kenya.

2.2.4 Valuing level of the Affective Learning Domain

The smooth progression through the hierarchical nature of the affective domain oversees students undergo change in emotional engagement, moving from a passive participation stage to a point where they appreciate and internalize attitudes and values. Yet to achieve this transition, education programmes require emphasize ethos such as ethical dialogue, self-reflection, and personal conviction. Among students, internalizing values is seen in the manner in which they behave, act and choose their tasks (Song et al., 2021). Usually, these behavior and actions are a result of the way the learning activities reflect meaning in the learning outcomes. Good affective learning should transcend mere compliance with expected tasks and chores, to emphasize an integration of emotional and cognitive affects that connect with the learning content (Song et al., 2021). In this way learners will easily internalize and identify with desired values and behavior.

Additionally, educational programmes should nurture learning environments that are sensitive to emotional development, emphasizing value internalization in the process. Research shows that educational programmes are leveraging innovations to optimize value internalization. These innovations require the enabling environment, and learner's active engagement fostered through a connection of cognitive and emotional affects with the content to be learned (Nix et al., 2021). They aver that such spaces afford learners opportunities to interrogate, articulate, and question own values and beliefs. Moreover, by being exposed to affective learning practices like engagements in the community and participation in projects, students are able to encounter emotional investment that ultimately changing their commitment and perceptions to novel ideas.

The valuing level of the affective domain emerges as a level where learners gain an intellectual awareness and appreciation of concepts, embodying them both in their behaviour and emotionally. At this level the trainee is not merely an active participant but demonstrates a sense of worth and commitment to the concepts and phenomena or behaviour. The attitude changes from acceptance of the value to a commitment-to comply to a value system. Valuing is based on the internalization of a set of specific values or attitudes, where clues to these values are expressed in the trainee's behavior (Song et al., 2021). The trainee accepts the importance of a concept, seeks it out and is willing to be identified with it. Hence an emotional acceptance to the concept believed to be of worth. This is demonstrated when trainees consistently prioritize time effectively and manifests behaviour consistent with beliefs to meet academic obligations such as the practice of good customer care aspects during practical sessions of the course work.

Achievement of learning at this level therefore, is demonstrated by the ability of students to; complete, describe, differentiate, explain, follow, form, initiate, invite, join, justify, propose, read, report, select, share, study and work towards practicing desired values and principles. Educators can use techniques that inspire students to further internalize the concepts learnt such as debriefing, small group activities, think-pair-share, games and review of journal entries among other techniques.

The valuing level sets the stage for emotional commitment. Learners recognize the need to enrich cognitive appreciation and begin to show emotions, engagement, and a personal liking and commitment to their desired behaviour and ideas. Song et al. (2021) perceive this level as a stage where the learner become assertive and action oriented, showing new behaviour and emotional patterns totally different from the earlier ones. In this level the learner's conviction to specific concepts and ideas sees them embody them with a readiness to champion and defend them. Learners become more proactive in looking for avenues to show their internalized concepts and new behaviour while aggressively advancing acquired values, moving away from mere compliance to investing in engagement.

Scholars point out that valuing is an affect that gets a lot of boost from the use of learning approaches in the realm of experiential learning and should subsume approaches that expose learners to community service projects and critical reflection (Deepa & Mansurali, 2022). These scholars acknowledge that learning undertaken in experience loaded immersive environments that support emotional development has greater potential to impart higher commitment and induce internalization of moral values and professionalism among learners. Such students become overt, demonstrating acquired behaviour and engagement in contexts other than the classroom, including

when setting goals, and in their personal growth trajectories justifying the importance of such emotional resonance building learning environments.

Moreover, arguments have been advanced against the reliance of internalization within the valuing level of the affective domain on only having learners interact with ideas. According to Nix et al. (2021), learners would greatly benefit from being given the chance to air their expressions freely as they browse choices to adapt those that they find meaningful. Such dialogic opportunities give learners a chance to reevaluate their value systems, clarifying them appropriately after sharing their thoughts and allaying any contradictions. The argument posited is that such dialogue gives learners the impetus to critique their beliefs and behaviour with the view of having them tally with their academic principles. This way, the learners develop their self-concept genuinely from the strengthened internalization of new attitudes (Nix et al., 2021). In retrospect, affective learning entrenches the spirit of according reflection and choice opportunities during the learning process.

Meanwhile, studies continue to advance the necessity of affective learning domain levels in emotional learning, particularly the valuing level due to the rich repertoire of skills it offers such as empathy, leadership, and resilience. For instance, Green (2024) conducted a study seeking to advance positive education by enriching blended learning by integrating emotionalized learning. Through the study, Green (2024) uncovered many positives of enriching blended learning through emotionalized learning. One such positive was increased emotional intelligence alongside stronger moral decision-making and the increase in knowledge retention. From such findings, it becomes apparent that the valuing level of the affective learning domain acts as the lynchpin that

relates emotional engagement with social responsibility among learners underscored through professionalism and personal growth.

2.2.4.1 Valuing level and perceived acquisition of soft skills.

By reviewing existing literature on creativity and innovation in hospitality as valuing level affects of idea internalization with a bias to how creativity and innovation enhances operational efficiency, customer experiences, and financial performance, Kabangire and Korir (2023) comprehensively scoped case studies and other relevant literature. They established that innovation and creativity impart positively on the success of hospitality organisations. Further, the study revealed that innovation and creativity are derived from idea internalization of key concepts like technological advancements, service design and process improvements. This current study advanced this literature by exploring idea internalization as a key element of the valuing level that has potential to improve students' soft skills when implemented in the tourism and hospitality diploma program.

Still interested in idea externalization as an important valuing level affect, D'Souza and D'Souza (2023) explored how innovative technologies impacted the hospitality industry. Using a mixed methods framework, they conducted an internet search that focused on hotel websites, and held discussions with managers on latest technologies in the qualitative phase. The quantitative phase targeted hotel guests, and gathered data from 631 such guests using a structured questionnaire. The study specifically explored how technological-based innovations that elicited idea internalization contributed to customer experiences and to identify the innovations that were most valued by customers. The study results emphasized the idea of internalization concept in that hoteliers need to keep abreast with technological advancements in terms of process and

product innovations in order to remain relevant and attractive in a dynamic industry. These studies can be replicated to establish the value of innovation in hospitality and tourism training to ensure trainees internalize important concepts.

Meanwhile, leveraging on learning theories and behavioral intellectual theories, Liu (2017), targeted 595 hotel managers to explore the potential of idea internalization in innovativeness required to remain competitive. From the findings, Liu (2017) argues that internalizing ideas through exploratory and exploitative learning enhances social capital thereby giving hotels competitive advantage and strengthening innovative behaviour. Therefore, this current research extended interest in idea internalization and innovativeness by examining how the valuing level of the affective learning domain contributes to perceptions of soft skills acquisition among diploma students enrolled in the tourism and hospitality program.

Tari et al. (2019) on the other hand analyzed the nexus between competitive advantage and internalization of quality standards. They used 407 organizations drawn from six tourism sub-sectors, including rural accommodation, restaurants, travel agencies, beaches, apartments, and tourism information offices. They established that internalization in the hotel industry through dimensions of daily practices and continuous improvement, significantly improved innovations for quality standards and consequently enhanced customer, employees', society and organization processes. While the study by Tari et al. (2019) contributed to the discourse of competitiveness through idea internalizing, it was necessary to explore implementation of such affects in the valuing domain in a tourism and hospitality training program.

In another study, Li et al. (2022) underscored the need for imparting the affect of identifying with others among hospitality professionals. They explored the relationship

between employees' need for belonging and social identity as well as their performance. They drew upon the theory of social identity in a moderation-mediation model analyzed through structural equation modelling (SEM) and hierarchical linear modelling (HLM). The findings affirmed the value of employees' need to identify with or have a sense of belonging, citing this as a key motivator for their performance. Therefore, this study explored how inclusion of belonging affects through the valuing level of the affective learning domain in a diploma in tourism and hospitality program could contribute to soft skills acquisition.

By recognizing the value of identifying with others, Lee and Lim (2023) on the other hand investigated how empathy influenced teamwork among hospitality employees. They used two empathy dimensions, empathetic concerns and perspective-taking and targeted 312 employees recruited from restaurants and hotels. Using a two-step structural equation modeling analysis procedure facilitated through the R Lavaan software, they determined that perspective-taking surpassed empathetic concern in influencing interpersonal relationships among team members. The survey underscored the importance of promoting empathy-related training loaded with affects of identifying with others for the hospitality industry. Needless to say therefore, this research amplified the empathy-related training by exploring the valuing level affects in tourism and hospitality training.

In a study reminiscing identifying with others, Ngunyangi (2023) used Eco-hotels drawn from Kenya to explore how practices used in change management impacted corporate sustainability. The study targeted green star rated hotels in Kenya in the category of Eco-hotels or lodges. A systematic questionnaire was employed alongside the census survey to collect data from all 77 hotels in Kenya ranked as Eco-hotels.

Using means, standard deviations, correlations and regression to analyze data, the study revealed a strong nexus between practices used in change management with corporate sustainability. In essence, the study established that direct involvement and support of management positively influences performance. This demonstrated the value of management identifying with hotel operations to achieve desired goals.

Meanwhile, Nobukawa (2024) used small and medium inns and hotels drawn from Ishikawa Prefecture in the Japanese context to relate the valuing affect of identifying with, to hospitality competencies. The study examined the process of acquiring hospitality competence for employees in the accommodation industry. Young frontline employees drawn from the accommodation industry and specialized in customer relations. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, and analyzed through the Modified Grounded Theory Approach. The study reinforced, albeit implicitly, the need to expose frontline employees to the valuing level affects by revealing that interactions with co-workers and customers, was critical in honing hospitality skills. Besides, the study also revealed that new roles outside the main tasks were also key factors influencing the acquisition of hospitality competence. Following such findings, this current study sought to extend the same conversation by exploring the direct influence of valuing level elements, including identifying with others in acquisition of soft skills as perceived by tourism and hospitality diploma students in Kenya.

 In other related studies, Stangi et al. (2024), utilized a participatory research methodology to develop an integrated model of transferable skills gained by working in the industry. Further, this study presented the industry as suitable platform where transferable skills needed in different sectors can be learned through the valuing affect allowing identifying with others. Yeswa and Ombui (2019) sought to establish how

talent management strategies, including affective learning influenced employee retention in the hotel industry in Kenya. A major strategy identified as having a positive influence was engagement of employees by ensuring their involvement and participation in decision making and other hotel operations. This resonates with the concept of employee being identified with by management and hence creating a better sense of ownership.

Still on the discourse of the valuing level of affective learning, several scholars have referenced the valuing level affect of accepting the worth of others. A study by Kim and Qu (2023) on the role of employees' organization-based self-esteem referenced the affect of accepting others worth. The cross-sectional survey targeted frontline employees drawn from the full-service restaurant context, established that both leader-member as well as co-worker exchanges were antecedents of organization-based self-esteem, and that this was positively related to pro-social behaviors among workers. Such pro-social behaviour were a manifestation of accepting the worth of each other among the workers. Since Kim and Qu (2023) were not explicit on the role of the valuing level affects in organization-based self-esteem, this current research explored the direct effect of the valuing level on perceived acquisition of soft skills.

Further, Achieng and Pepela (2023) took cognizance of the significance of identifying with others in interpersonal relationship to assess how interpersonal communication impacted performance of classified hotels drawn from the tourism hub along the Kenyan coast. They employed a descriptive design that targeted guests drawn from 15 such hotels. By stratifying the hotels across star ratings, 384 guests were sampled proportionately and administered, subjected to interviews and questionnaire. The study demonstrated that the affect of interpersonal communication positively and

significantly impacted hotel performance. This further highlighted the critical role of interpersonal communication as an expression of accepting worth of employees, who then feel more valued.

The study by Sitati et al. (2019) seeking to show how employee recognition affects employee retention from a Kenyan hotel context, implicitly underscored the affect of self-worth. Using a descriptive research, they targeted 213 hotels under the recognition of the Kenya Hotel-keepers and Caterers Association. A sample of 137 hotels was constituted by proportionately stratifying hotels across hotel regions. Through descriptive and inferential statistics, they established that there was a positive and significant relationship between employee recognition on employee retention in hotels in Kenya. Thus, when staff feel acknowledged and appreciated, their sense of self-worth is increased and subsequently their sense of belonging and skills development also increase.

Similarly, the affect of self-worth was implicit in Sibota et al. (2024) who used three star-rated hotels drawn from Kisii to explore how determinants of employee welfare influenced their performance. Using a descriptive survey that targeted 297 employees of these hotels, they established that employee welfare in terms of working conditions and well-being had a positive and significant relationship to organizational performance of hotels in Kisii County, Kenya. When management gets concerned with ensuring the welfare of their staff is well taken care of, they feel valued and their self-worth is enhanced. This finding motivated a study on how the valuing level affects, such as self-worth employed in a tourism and hospitality diploma program could directly influence acquisition of soft skills among diploma students.

2.2.5 Organizing level of the Affective Learning Domain

A key concern among educational stakeholders is the lack of emphasis on the affective learning domain objectives in training curricular. This is despite its importance in the holistic development of professionals requiring that all components of their development should be fostered, including emotions, attitudes, and values. Scholars continue to highlight the importance of affective learning by drawing upon enriched professionalism among graduates who pass through educational frameworks that emphasize affective learning domain objectives in their programmes (Nix & Song, 2020). These graduates are often associated with refined behaviour such as high empathy, moral values, and professionalism. According to Vermunt (2020), affective learning offers learners a plethora of opportunities to develop coherence in value systems, and to make suitable decisions in whichever context. In retrospect, educational systems that seeks to provide professionalism should lean towards affective learning domain levels through which they can nurture morals, resilience, and ability to adapt workplace expectations.

With the hierarchical nature of the affective learning domain, it is apparent that care need to be taken to ensure that learners are duly exposed to authentic activities which progressively develop their emotional faculties and not just for cosmetic engagement. Spaulding et al. (2020) posit that exposing learners to a wide variety of opportunities which build on their previous experiences to inject new views, while actively engaging them in real-life decision-making eases their chances of achieving affective outcomes. Meanwhile, Pun (2023) contributes to the discourse on emotional development by underscoring the competencies aligning with value and emotional development with career development and value for the society. Therefore, structured levels of affective learning as advocated for in the affective learning domain play a critical role in ensuring

that learners are organized enough as to acquire and measure up to the values while remaining coherent in their actions.

At the organizing level, the affective outcomes become increasingly internalized as the trainee synthesizes the value system, arranges and prioritizes them to form pattern of behaviour. Newly acquired values are compared with former ones and given respective priority. Trainees willingly change the way they approach issues related to concepts learnt. This is manifested through acceptance of professional ethical standards and the formulation of a life plan that balances work and personal values.

The organizing level of the affective learning domain is further categorized into conceptualization of values and organization of a value system. In conceptualizing the trainee is able to understand how the new values relate to those they already hold to enable them make judgement. Hence the trainee's action of what to do is based on what is "perceived right" versus what is "perceived wrong" (Hoque, 2016). On the other hand, organization of values enables the trainee to bring together different values into an ordered relationship with one another which is harmonious and internally consistent. This enables them to form a philosophy in life with complex values of a higher order.

Achievement of learning outcomes at this level is demonstrated when trainees recognize their own abilities and intentionally demonstrate behaviour consistent with the value. They are able to identify, conceptualize, organize, synthesize and defends their value priorities. Trainees are therefore able to explain and demonstrate the concepts they have learnt and relate them to real life situations, as well as demonstrate willingness to adhere to acceptable industry standards and organize their work in comprehensible ways.

Educational programmes need to employ intensifiers during the organizing level of affective learning, considering their documented impact on acquisition of affects. There has been growing interest among scholars yearning to justify use of intensifiers in soft skills acquisition. Pun (2023) for instance, demonstrated that intensifiers such as portfolios are critical to fostering emotional engagement and play a central role in scaffolding values among trainees. Through these activities, trainees are able to decode abstractions, connecting them with real-life concepts and applications, and essentially demonstrating the hierarchical nature of value internalization in affective learning. According to Spaulding et al. (2020), several class activities that target affective learners have been classified as effective intensifiers which education programs seeking to expose learners to organizing level ought to adopt. Key among these activities includes, purposeful class discussions and exercises that reflect real scenarios which modify learner behaviour and nurture professionalism.

Meanwhile, the organizing level of the affective domain features in learner assessment. Scholars advocate for the alignment of strategies used in assessing learners with affective ethos, and synthesis, particularly the organizing level. Noting that it allows for consistency in value application irrespective of the context and moves leaner evaluation beyond rote memory (Vermunt, 2020). According to Vermunt (2020), training is supposed to produce graduates who are well versed in industry expectations and can relate theoretical concepts to industry practices, adapting to industry behaviour and value-laden decisions. Liu et al. (2022) argue in support of authentic assessments during learning especially in training institutions, pointing to the inherent accuracy with which that such assessments measure trainees' practical knowledge in industry-specific settings. Therefore, the use of assessments such as reviewing of portfolios, evaluation of learners in the workplace, and project work provides an authentic way of examining

trainees' internalization of affective learning tenets. Scholars with this school of thought are keen to see trainees bridge the learned affects with the expected industry-specific professional competency.

Indeed, the subject of emotional learning alongside cognitive development has continued to gain traction. The focus has become emotional intelligence development in learning infused with resilience. According to Sannino (2024), with the emerging competitive business environment, the professional landscape is undergoing an unprecedented evolution, requiring a focus on soft skills internalization. Industries today more than ever before are looking for trainees who are versatile, reason ethically, and easily adapt to new settings and systems. Therefore, it is incumbent upon trainers and curriculum planners to devise mechanisms through which to enrich training programs with affective learning objectives by integrating intensifiers with the conventional learning models. Institutions ought to embrace individual affective domain levels such as the organizing level, to help trainees order their priorities and values and to guide them to elicit desired behaviour consistently to survive the demanding business world.

2.2.5.1 Organizing level and perceived acquisition of soft skills.

The organization level of affective learning domain features in existing hospitality literature through the affects of value classification and value prioritization. Gallarza et al. (2022) leveraged value classification as an affect of the organization level to explore the dynamism of consumer value by organizing value into active and reactive categories and then distinguishing between them. They used a structural model embracing eight classifications of value, including Escapism, Ethics, Aesthetics, entertainment, esteem, status, service quality, and efficiency. A sample of 585 hotel guests was sampled and

their experiences analyzed using the PLS-SEM approach. They demonstrated that Service Quality directly impacted Satisfaction, and empirically validated the Reactive Values–Active Values–Satisfaction–Loyalty chain shedding light on the need of the organization level in value co-creation in hospitality. To further add to this discourse, this current study examined the direct effect of the organization level on acquisition of soft skills as perceived by students, maintaining the PLS-SEM approach.

In another study on value classification as an affect of the organizing level, Sánchez-Fernández et al. (2020) used the hotel industry perspective to explore how the sequential organization of value dimensions not only depicted dynamism in consumer value, but also how it influenced loyalty and satisfaction. The study focused on tourist hotel accommodations, targeting 285 guests. Using the PLS-SEM approach to test hypotheses empirically, they determined that reactive value dimensions measured through escapism and aesthetics had a positive influence on active dimensions measured through ethics and play, and by extension, influenced consumer loyalty and satisfaction. However, the narrow nature of the value dimensions focusing on only intrinsic dimensions motivated this study which focused on the entire duality of value (intrinsic and extrinsic) and how their organization directly influenced perceptions of soft skills acquisition among tourism and hospitality diploma students.

In the meantime, Li et al. (2024) leaned towards the cognitive-affective personality systems theory to question how adaptive performance among employees is affected by illegitimate tasks. This study was essentially implicitly pointing towards value prioritization in hospitality training. They used a time-lagged design that targeted 330 employees drawn from the frontline department in hotels in China. They demonstrated that illegitimate tasks had a negative influence on employees' adaptive performance.

Moreover, the study revealed that cognitive and affective cynicism was a significant mediator of the nexus between illegitimate tasks and employees' adaptive performance. They concluded that it is imperative for hotel management to promote a positive organizational environment. This current study took note of such a conclusion to explore how organizing affects in tourism and hospitality training could affect soft skills acquisition. The findings would then be used to promote such positive organizational environment by knowing values to prioritize.

Similarly, Davras (2024) reflected the notion of value prioritization in exploring how prioritizing practices used in internal marketing can influence employee satisfaction. Taking note of the fact that satisfied employees bring success to the hospitality industry, the study exploited the Asymmetric Impact-Performance Analysis (AIPA) and the Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) approaches to determine the impact of prioritizing resource allocation on employee satisfaction. Using a sample of 64 hotel employees drawn from hotels in Antalya, the study established that employees perceived the various internal marketing (IM) practices to have a positive influence on their satisfaction. Clearly, the finding by Davras (2024) begged for studies to continue exploring value prioritization as a facet of organizing level and hospitality training from different contexts to reveal the influence it may have on perceived acquisition of soft skills that would make graduates to enhance their satisfaction in the industry.

Lovren and Jablanovic (2023) explored the integration of the cognitive, affective and behavioural domains in learning outcomes of subjects related to environment Serbian elementary and general secondary education. The study revealed a dominance of the cognitive domain when compared to the other domains with emphasis in measurable outcomes. To bridge this gap and achieve a holistic approach, focus in this research was

given to affects such as value prioritization which would not only lead to emotional growth among students, but would also lead to enjoyment in teaching and learning,

Meanwhile, Mais-Thompson et al. (2024) appraised the tourism and hospitality management curriculum pedagogical skills utilized to deliver affective learning outcomes, acknowledging that affective learning enhances a holistic development of students. The study conducted in Community Colleges in Jamaica, revealed that Cognitive learning outcomes dominated formal curriculum while affective learning experienced were facilitated mainly through the informal curriculum, a concept the current study has dwelt with. From such a study, it was necessary to explore affective learning and soft skills acquisition from a Kenyan Tourism and hospitality diploma program, to provide evidence on how individual affective levels such as the organizing level could be exploited in the diploma curriculum.

Wu et al. (2019) combined entrepreneurship massive open online curriculum and blended curriculum design for affective learning. This was in appreciation that entrepreneurs require development in the affective domain to build in them fortitude and attitudes to deal with the challenges they experience. The study established that this approach is useful in helping achieve the learning objectives at different affective levels. Further the study pointed out that the development of the higher levels of the affective domain take longer and require a time-intensive process and hence call for a spiral structure that allows constant review of the lower levels. The case study was however conducted on students undertaking an entrepreneurship course, requiring that the current study replicates the findings by evaluating the affective learning approach in hospitality and tourism course using a mixed method approach.

Dou at al. (2023) explored young adults affective learning outcomes derived from their short-term educational travel abroad experiences. The study showed an improvement of the lower levels of the affective domain after the educational travel experience. Therefore, this current study concentrated on the six affective domain levels, seeking to establish how each individual level would contribute to perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma students. In this way organizing level affects like value classification and value prioritization could get room for being emphasized in the affective learning.

 In his dissertation of learning outcomes in emotional concept, Nix (2019), argued that learning outcomes in the affective domain have been ignored for too long. The study postulated that key aspects of educational effectiveness have for a long time been based on learning outcomes of the cognitive domain with a bias in assessment and evaluation techniques. Consequently, this study keenly explored the affective learning levels emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County and their individual effects on the perceptions the students had of soft skills acquisition. Through the findings, hospitality training programs would cease to ignore affective learning needs leading to graduates with the required soft skills for the industry.

Baum et al. 2016) on the other hand contends that despite the fact that tourism and hospitality workforce is relatively important, it has been neglected and suffers from piecemeal approaches in topic, analytical, theoretical and methods level. Therefore, this current study sought to uncover what hospitality courses were missing out by not exploiting affective learning. The study, in addition to using exploratory approach to identify levels of affective learning, emphasized in the diploma program, and went

ahead to examine the direct effect of these levels on perceived acquisition of soft skills among students.

2.2.6 Characterizing level of the Affective Learning Domain

Educational institutions need to seriously consider proactive inclusion of the affective learning domain objectives in their programmes. This is in consideration that by going through the respective affective learning domain levels, learners are able to curve professional identities from the values they are bound to embody. For instance, in higher levels of the affective learning domain such as the characterizing level, learners start making sense of the values they have been exposed to, and tend to embody and internalize them. This internalization culminates in the consistency of their behaviour and value patterns. According to Findyartini et al. (2022), the process of shaping professional identity is a dynamic one that requires time and continuity, since learners are expected to boost their self-concept with core values. These scholars aver that change in their self-concept is a reflective practice that involves alignment of individual behaviour and attitudes with acceptable professional standards. By building upon their reflections, learners become intrinsically motivated and ethically committed to their responsibilities, while exuding professionalism.

Moreover, at this level, learners are able to acquire relevant experiences by exploring and socializing with professional societal norms, thereby reinforcing their internalized ethos. Kim (2023) contends that professional communities alongside institutions that aggressively foster learner-challenging environments requiring exposure to, and active implementation of ethical codes. In hindsight, affective learning through the characterizing level offers such a challenging environment which offers learners acquire, internalize, and demonstrate desirable characters such as respect, honesty, and

accountability. According to Lee et al. (2023), educators through training programmes have a responsibility of helping learners internalize professional attitude and values by emphasizing reflective learning experiences and modelling moral values. The argument being advanced is that educators ought to take advantage of the characterizing level of the affective learning domain to ensure that learners behaviour are contingent in the standards they embrace, nurturing their professionalism and the overall industry-specific cultures.

At this fifth and highest level in the affective taxonomy, trainees internalize the values and develop a world view based on specific characteristics. Behaviour becomes predictable, typical and consistent to a point where they can be defined by a value system such as trustworthy or honest. Learning outcomes at this level include a demonstration of self-reliance and ability to independently solve problems. While trainees accept professional standards at the organizing level, this acceptance enables them to display a professional commitment to ethical practice on a day-to-day basis at the characterizing level.

At this point, values already have a place in the individual's value hierarchy, organized into internally consistent system and are in control of ones' behaviour. This level is further categorized as generalization and characterization. Generalization gives an internal consistency to the system of attitude and values and determines the tendency or orientation towards the environment. This is a point where the affect moves from a point of general awareness to a point where it is internalized and consistently guides or controls behaviour (Hoque, 2016). Characterization on the other hand is the peak of internalization. The more the person internalizes the value, the more involved and committed and internally motivated they become. For instance, a trainee is able regulate

his/her behaviour based on ethical principles consistent with democratic or acceptable ideals. This is demonstrated when trainees internalize the values that become their character. They are therefore defined by their value system such as integrity, willingness to advocate for the values acquired and repeatedly engage with activities consistent with value.

The characterizing level is where learners have to exhibit acquired values and behaviour, by using their understanding of the acquired values to show exemplary character both professionally and in academics that can be emulated by others. Learners have a large presence in communal affairs showing off the expected ethical and personal values. In all these observable behaviour, learners call upon and use tools that maximize their self-reflection. Research has shown that reflective tools like portfolios are the avenues that learners need to maintain sustainable moral values and self-regulation, as they seek to acquire, internalize and express deep-rooted values in a consistent manner (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2023). Learners are then able to develop a habit of showing actions and behaviour that eventually become traits that their characters can be defined through.

The characterizing level of affective growth exemplifies the essence of peer interaction and mentoring. As trainees internalize professional and moral values, they position themselves at a proximal level where they possess the potential to make well-informed and morally acceptable decisions, while also having the wisdom to model and share acquired behaviour with peers. Hiestermann (2022) contends that such peer mentoring besides entrenching ethos of conforming with values and good behaviour, also nurtures a culture where learners can conduct ethical dialogue. In retrospect, through the internalizing level of the affective domain of learning, ethical leaders are born,

individuals demonstrating unmatched integrity and ethical standards that potentially inspire and motivate peers to emulate the same. Educational stakeholders should therefore recognize the importance of targeting characterizing elements when designing training programmes taking into account the possibility of nurturing mentors.

Moreover, educational institutions should seek to leverage affective learning at the characterizing level to model their leadership training endeavors. According to Martin (2020), ethically demanding disciplines have the opportunity to benefit from the affective domain of learning, especially at the characterizing level which takes cognition of leadership development. Martin (2020) observes that the characterizing level adds a layer of affective evaluation, emphasizing ethics, humility, and empathy. Therefore, by emphasizing affective domain objectives loaded with characterizing elements, educators are poised to offer learners opportunities to not only be passive in training activities, but to also per-take in the training actively, asking questions whenever necessary, suggesting changes, and being responsible for peer wellness. By integrating characterizing level elements in training programmes, educational stakeholders would then be transitioning from a training that emphasizes compliance to one where professionalism reigns supreme, creating learning environments that advance ethical growth through accountability and fairness.

Educational interventions aimed at this level must be carefully scaffolded. Effective strategies include immersive learning environments, narrative ethics, real-life case studies, and community service projects that require ethical action. The use of reflective teaching handbooks, such as that by Zwozdiak-Myers (2023), and character-focused coaching frameworks (Ivanova et al., 2023), empowers learners to connect inner values with external responsibilities. As these tools facilitate personal accountability,

educators are encouraged to support trainees in tracking behavioral trends and building a professional identity that aligns with the values of integrity, equity, and service.

2.2.6.1 Characterizing Level and perceived acquisition of soft skills

Several studies have demonstrated the utility of the characterizing level affects tinkering around value creation, consistency, and personal philosophy in the hospitality industry. Wiegerink (2018) reflected on the hospitality visitor and residents' experiences to imagine how Amsterdam city could achieve a futureproof equilibrium. The study was buoyed by the knowledge that hospitality cities are becoming the focus of urban tourism and are growing in community dynamism that sees cohabitation of hosts and guests leading to co-creation of multisensorial experiences. Through a review of indicators of city hospitality experience, Wiegerink (2018) argued that hospitality training that integrates value creation is bound to motivate, empower and support hospitable service. Therefore, this study explored how value creation through the characterizing level of the affective domain of learning could impact perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma students.

Gibbs and Slevitch (2019) took cognizance of the importance of improving competencies of hospitality employees, to examine the potential to integrate emotional competences alongside technical ones in hospitality education in order empower students who remain the industry's main labour source. They leaned towards a competency-based framework, and used 50 hospitality undergraduates enrolled in service management, to explore the impact of simultaneous application of training in technical and emotional competences. A pre- and posttest experimental design conducted at a southwestern university located in the US was used to gather data. The study revealed significant differences in competences between the pre- and post-test

results with post-test results reporting higher levels of competences after the teaching intervention. Gibbs and Slevitch (2019) averred that it is important to integrate value in the form of technical and emotional competencies in hospitality education.

From the Kenyan context, Wangechi et al. (2020) referenced talent management to examine value integration as an affect under the characterizing level. They analyzed how talent management in the hospitality industry impacts service delivery. Focusing on hospitality industry from a Nyeri County perspective, they employed a cross-sectional survey that targeted 310 hotel employees comprising chefs, storekeepers, waiters, food and beverage managers, room stewards and supervisors. A stratified sample of 104 respondents was used to show that learning and development positively influenced service delivery. They therefore perceived the characterizing level affect of value integration as a talent management strategy that is designed to realize the requisite service delivery quality.

Kanjuru et al. (2023) implicitly suggested that integration of value of training remains a technique towards tacit knowledge creation that ultimately enhances competitive advantage. They employed a descriptive survey that was cross-sectional in nature that targeted 5911 employees and guests of the hotels. A stratified sample of 835 respondents was proportionately constituted. The study combined qualitative and quantitative techniques to demonstrate that tacit knowledge correlated with competitive advantage significantly. This current study examined how the affective learning level of characterization would account for tacit knowledge in the soft skills domain of tourism and hospitality.

Scholars have also documented the potential for consistency affect of the characterizing level can have on acquisition of soft skills. For instance, Prabhakar (2023) while

commenting in the science of digital, contends that consistency creates a seamless and memorable experience for guests, while at the same time, fostering trust, brand affinity and longevity. This therefore motivated a study that would contribute to improvement of implementing affective learning that would infuse the consistency affect in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in educational institutions in Kenya, by exploring the direct affect of the characterizing level on skills acquisition.

Meanwhile, Asif (2023) points towards consistency as the linchpin that holds everything together in the world of hospitality. Accordingly, consistency particularly in service assures uniformity in attention, quality, and professionalism towards guests. Asif contends that consistency is critical towards meeting guest expectations, brand reputation, operational efficiency, guest loyalty, and competitive edge alongside enhancing staff performance. Tourism and hospitality training programs that carters for the consistency affect are therefore likely to prepare graduates with the relevant industry skills.

Omondi (2019) in conjunction with the Tourism Regulatory Authority approached the notion of consistency through standardization and classification of hotels, and noted that such an approach enables system structures to be consistent and amounts to a quality assurance approach. Such assertions were critical in the decision to investigate the direct effects of affective learning domain levels on perceived acquisition of soft skills among students enrolled in the tourism and hospitality diploma program.

Similarly, Muriithi et al. (2019) took cognizance of the critical contribution of organizational culture to competitive advantage to explore the moderation potential of entrepreneurial orientation in the nexus between organizational culture and performance in the context of Christian Faith-Based Hotels operating in Kenya. Using

the mixed methods framework drawing upon a cross-sectional survey, they targeted 1878 junior staff and 72 managers drawn from 24 such hotels. The SEM approach used in the analysis revealed that organizational adaptability depended positively and significantly on performance of such hotels. Essentially, they demonstrated a positive relationship between consistency and performance, albeit under the moderation of entrepreneurial orientation.

Personal philosophy as an element of the characterizing level of the affective learning domain also features in existing literature. For instance, in his book Christou (2020) probed giving and receiving as critical philosophies of tourism and hospitality. The author advocates for personal philosophy ethos by asserting that it is important to acquire and channel philanthropy notions and rudiments both at societal, organizational and personal levels. Christou argues that virtues such as charity, patience, kindness, and love are central to quality and satisfaction among guests. Therefore, Christou (2020) alluded to personal philosophy by concluding that a philosophical approach to tourism can deter the taking advantage of customers, natural environment, and employees. Moreover, such an approach expedites cultivation and enhancement of appropriate virtues, including patience, love, and kindness. Meanwhile, Losekoot et al. (2018) synonymously referred to personal philosophy as the students' voice, and posited that such personal philosophy was critical in acquisition of soft skills during internship.

2.3 Integrating Affective Learning into Teaching

The role played by affective learning elements such as emotions, affect, and motivations in learning need not be undervalued. Through these elements, internalization of knowledge can be guaranteed over time. Therefore, it is important to effectively integrate affective learning into teaching. Several strategies through which

affective learning could be integrated into teaching have been highlighted in existing literature (Awang-Hashum et al., 2019; Nobutoshi, 2023).

Engagement and inclusivity features as a strategy that enhances academic engagement, by nurturing a positive and inclusive learning environment. Such an environment favours trainees' participation in collaborative learning where they feel valued (Awang-Hashim et al., 2019). These scholars argue that affective learning is conscious of failures and setbacks as cogs in the growth process. Trainers can therefore build on engagement and inclusivity to nurture an emotionally supportive environment by leaning towards pedagogical activities which enhance interpersonal and cooperative skills.

Fostering critical thinking also emerges in literature as a good way to integrate affective learning in teaching (Nobutoshi, 2023) Zimmerman and Phillips (2000) were keen to note that affective learning allows trainees to convey their emotions and opinions, and to eventually develop a deeper understanding of topics that may have hitherto been complex to comprehend. Fostering critical thinking is consistent with the changing nature of education in recent times which promotes independent study (Jimenez et al., 2018).

Relationship-centered learning also offers a learning medium or approach through which educators can incorporate affective learning in training programmes. According to Ferreira et al. (2020) through a study conducted to focus on relationship-centered learning as an avenue to promote social emotional learning, determined that emotional safety, a fundamental player in socio-emotional learning outcomes, remains a function of educational environments that nurture strong relationships between students and teachers on one hand and students and peers on the other. Such environments allow

students to feel the sense of being appreciated, with teachers and other students willing to hear them out, respect them, and more importantly value them. Ferreira et al. (2020) argue that with all this appreciation, students get the motivation to tap both from the emotional perspective, and at an intellectual level without prejudice. The onus then belongs to the educators to optimize chances of enhancing emotional engagement among students by ensuring that they provide constructive relational dynamics; and by extension raising chances of knowledge retention and learning affinity.

Two other learning approaches critical to the integration of affective learning in training programmes are the gamification role-play approaches, which innovatively fuses cognitive and affective elements. In a study seeking the connection between game-based learning and critical thinking via social emotional learning, Galindo (2024) establishes that role-playing games, particularly the tabletop ones have emerged quite effective in imparting affective elements during learning. These games have been likened with immersive approaches that have strengthened among other ethos, collaboration, evaluative thinking, empathy, and emotional regulation in learners. According to Galindo (2024), use of role play games embed complicated concepts within learners' value systems by evoking novelty in emotional responses among them. Therefore, by turning to affective learning, educators can comfortably expose learners to skills required in problem-solving across diverse disciplines, handling ethical puzzles, and navigating social justice concerns.

Affective learning is in modern educational environment gaining traction possibly enhanced by the clamour of inclusive education that leverages technology. According to Elmi (2020), exposing trainees to inclusive education elements and emotional engagement has never been more practical, motivating and straight forward as it is with

the coming of digital platforms. The argument advanced is that what it should take is for educators to design such platforms to cater across learner differences, seeking to be truly inclusive. This way, all trainees will be guaranteed of equity in participation opportunities and potential for growth in critical thinking. Elmi (2020) reckons that with the array of digital technology that combines diverse media, trainees have a chance to hone up their skills in among other affective element; mastery, autonomy, integrity, accountability, and belonging leading to authentic learning experiences and holistic development.

Moreover, interest in the affective learning is ramping up with the recognition that learners' emotions are very central to their development, calling for training frameworks that can formatively assess learner reflection as a continuous exercise. Dubovi (2022) used the multi-modal methodology to explore perspectives of emotional and cognitive engagement in the context of virtual reality learning. Key in the findings was the implicit affective learning in multi-modal methods that facilitated trainers to precisely follow up on trainees' individual affective growth. Thus, leaning towards the multimodal methods as an affective learning endeavor takes cognizance of the philosophy of holistic learning, requiring that learner's growth is witnessed both in cognitive schemas and in their emotions for the satiation of real life professional and personal expectations.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on two learning theories suited for affective learning expectations and acquisition of soft skills. The two theories are the humanistic theory of learning and the social constructivism learning theory.

2.4.1 Humanistic Theory of Learning

The humanistic Theory of Learning has its roots in the humanism philosophy. The theory postulates that the individual learner's growth and wellness should inform the learning experiences (Kumari, 2024). The key proponent of this theory was Abraham Maslow, who through his hierarchy of needs provided a fundamental framework for humanistic learning by proposing that learning should first concentrate on basic physiological needs before gravitating to higher needs (Wang, 2023). According to Wang (2023), meeting the fundamental needs requires that educators focus the learning exercise towards self-discovery and personal growth. Maslow's thoughts were expounded by Carl Rogers and James Bungental in the early 1900's. According to Rogers and Bungental, learning is a natural perception whose ultimate goal is self-actualization (Mukhalalati & Taylor, 2019). Rogers proposed a person-centered perspective whose emphasis was the concept of the "fully functioning person" that drives learning towards humanity tenets of openness, adaptability, and self-evaluation (Rogers et al., 2013).

The choice of the humanistic theory to anchor affective domain in this study lies in its belief that individuals are intentional in their actions and are directed by value, which contrasts the behaviorist and cognitivist notion of individuals exhibiting observable behaviour and leaning towards internal mental processes (Wandersman et al., 2016). Therefore, in seeking to explore the potential influence of affective learning levels on perceived acquisition of skills among the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees, this study aligns with the key humanistic learning theory assumptions which gravitate learning to self-actualization. First, the researcher assumes that the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees could be trusted to pursue their own goals by choosing what they would desire to learn. Secondly, the researcher assumes that this cohort of

trainees should be guided to set and evaluate their own standards. The third assumption embedded in the humanist perspective, and upon which this study aligns with is that learning experiences ought to nurture affective relations among peers (Untari, 2016).

By aligning with these assumptions, the study exploited the concepts of learner freedom and autonomy underlying the assumptions to argue that the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County ought to be developed bearing in mind the trainees' self-driven motivation for learning that requires the free will and drive for self-actualized knowledge (Aliakbari et al., 2015). Achieving such self-actualization is likely to bolster attributes of personal growth, talent development, and meaningful living. Moreover, by anchoring this research on the humanistic theoretical framework, the researcher recognizes the humanistic thinking that perceives learning and emotions to be inseparable (Leong, 2022).

However, the humanistic theory has faced some criticisms, not least for placing more emphasis on learners' emotions at the expense of cognitive and social development (Khatib et al., 2013). Yet, this criticism is countered by arguments linking affect with already existing cognitive concentration, and positing that humanism provides opportunities to focus on learners affects alongside mental schema. Other critics have argued that objectifying the real experiences as rooted in the humanistic view remains too difficult a task (Benmoussa et al., 2024). In recognition of such criticisms, and knowing that soft skills acquisition is a social learning phenomenon, this study therefore, integrated the social constructivism theory of learning alongside the humanistic learning theory.

2.4.2 The Social Constructivism Theory of Learning

The social constructivism theory associates learning with social interaction and group learning. The clarion call being, knowledge construction through human activity and creation of meaning through interaction (Lombardo & Kantola, 2021). Social constructivism was implicitly proposed by Lev Vygotsky, a soviet psychologist through his 1924 conception of learning and development. In this conception, Vygotsky identified an interactive culture as the foundation of cognitive development (Cole & Scribner, 1978). According to Vygotsky, construction of knowledge builds on human activity, which is harnessed through joint efforts of group members, who proactively use social processes to create reality. Meanwhile, through interaction with others, facilitated through social activity engagements, individuals are able to create meaning (Lombardo & Kantola, 2021).

Choosing the Social constructivism theory of learning to underpin this study was natural, given that training under the tourism and hospitality diploma program involves social constructs of knowledge that requires a social constructivism lens. For instance, in line with the ethos of social constructivism theory, tourism and hospitality diploma training relies on one or more experienced peers and, or professional with knowledge and skills (usually the trainer) that the trainees seek to acquire. Moreover, such a program should provide room for social interactions involving skilled professional (often during attachment or internship) to expose trainees to real life practice of the skills. Besides, through the social constructivism ideals, trainers ought to be in a position to use scaffolding, or supportive activities that take trainees towards and beyond their zones of proximal development (ZPDs).

Moreover, the social constructivism theory has continued to influence the course of education across diverse disciplines and education levels (Wibowo et al., 2025). Educators have often leaned towards this theory by assigning challenging tasks that can engage students' knowledge construction through interactions with peers and professionals as well as human activities. Therefore, considering that perceived acquisition of soft skills requires creation of meaning through interaction and human activities, the social constructivism theory was considered ideal for this study.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study espoused the interrelations between two categories of variables being the affective learning domain levels as the independent category and perceived acquisition of soft skills as the dependent category. The tourism and hospitality industry is more than ever before keen on developing a new generation of hotel managers to drive competitiveness. With this in mind, the training focus is moving towards the emotional hospitality workplace where managers have the skills to emotionally connect with staff and guests at all times. In retrospect, the affective domain of learning which subsumes affects such as feelings, emotions and attitudes are becoming a key focus in hospitality training.

Research identifies five levels of the affective learning domain that can guide learning, including receiving, responding, valuing, organization, and characterization (Syaiful et al., 2019). Under the receiving level, priority is given to creating awareness of emotions and feelings during learning and the capability to be attentive. The responding level looks at the avenues for the learners' active participation. The valuing level focuses learning towards appreciating the worth of things and showing it by expression. The next level, the organizing level leverages students' value prioritization. The

characterization sub domain looks at the ability to internalize values and let them control the behavior of the individual. Therefore, in this study these affective domain levels were conceptualized as the respective independent variables capable to impact soft skills acquisition.

Meanwhile, several categories of soft skills for the tourism and hospitality industry are given interest in existing research. While defining soft skills as personal values inherent in people, Hussain et al. (2024) identifies such values as leadership, teamwork, communication, proactivity, sincerity, and problem solving as critical hospitality soft skills. While relying on industry recruiters' perspectives, White (2020) identified team-orientation, communication, and leadership as core soft competences prioritized. Therefore, this study labeled the perceived acquisition of soft skills as the dependent variable referencing; perceived acquisition of communication skills, perceived acquisition of customer service orientation, and perceived acquisition of teamwork and collaboration.

The rationale of choosing the three soft skills for this research was because of their central role in the core products of the tourism and hospitality industry, including enabling quality customer experience and operational efficiency. For instance, choice of communication was based on the intangible nature of the tourism and hospitality product, which relies on interactions. The industry's people base and leisure orientation was such that customer service orientation or interpersonal skills were necessary. Moreover, the three soft skills are theoretically aligned with the affective domain receiving level requiring communication skills; responding and organizing levels relying on teamwork and collaborations, and valuing and characterizing levels leaning towards interpersonal skills.

Figure 2 presents the diagrammatic presentation of the conceptual framework.

Independent Variable

(Affective Domain Levels)

Dependent Variable

(Perceived Acquisition
of Soft Skills)

Characterizing
Value Integration
Consistency
Personal

Organizing
Value classification
Value prioritization

- Perceived acquisition of communication skills
- Perceived acquisition of customer orientation
- Perceived acquisition of teamwork and collaboration

Valuing
Idea internalizing
Identifying with
Accepting worth of

Responding
Active participation
Complying with
Reacting to

Receiving
Open to Experience
Willingness to hear

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

Source: Modified from, Taxonomy of the Affective Domain (Krathwahl et.al 1964)

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter presents the overall methodology adopted in this study. The chapter highlights the research philosophical stance and the subsequent research design, the study location, target population and sampling design. The chapter also describes the data collection instruments, variable measurement, instrument pretesting and model validation. The chapter concludes with a description of the thematic analysis procedures adopted for the qualitative phase and the corresponding partial least squares-structural equation model (PLS-SEM) procedure used in the quantitative analysis.

3.1 Research Philosophy and design

This study employed a mixed methods approach advocated for in the pragmatism research philosophy (Shan, 2022). According to Shan (2022), pragmatism alongside realism are dialectical stances that bridge the social constructivism and post positivist worldviews, allowing for multiple perspectives on reality and mixing diverse approaches to prioritize the research problem, while recognizing the value of subjective and objective knowledge (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In retrospect, the research design for this study was chosen so as to allow the collection of ample data to facilitate the integration of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods (Mc Combes, 2019). The study, adopted the exploratory sequential mixed methods design that integrated two distinct phases; the qualitative phase (QUAL) followed by the quantitative phase (QUAN) (Plano Clark, 2017).

In this design, qualitative data was first collected through interviews with trainers and analyzed prior to embarking on the QUAN phase. The QUAL phase was used to identify levels of the affective domain mainly employed in the tourism and hospitality

diploma programs offered in training institutions in Nairobi County, together with the elements mostly amplified in each of the identified levels. The QUAL phase culminated in the development of the quantitative questionnaire that was subsequently administered to trainees drawn from the sampled institutions.

The choice of the sequential exploratory mixed methods design for this study was informed by the contextual nature of the affective domain, requiring that an initial qualitative phase be conducted to develop an ideal framework and instruments for the quantitative phase. The subjective nature of the affective learning domain such as values, emotions, and attitudes required exploring levels of affective learning and associated elements as employed in the tourism and hospitality diploma program; followed with quantification of potential relationships. Therefore, there was need to use the QUAL information to identify levels of affective learning domain exhibited in the tourism and hospitality diploma training program offered in training institutions in Nairobi County and to construct qualitative questionnaire for trainees and subsequently, to use the QUAN approach to explore the effect of these levels of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees undertaking this program.

Research has shown that by exploring a concept before validating it, the exploratory sequential approach allows for greater versatility through the QUAL approach to discover novel ideas (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). Moreover, scholars engaged in projects that require novel instrument construction have often opted for this approach since it has enabled them to use the QUAL information to construct the instrument and then verify it quantitatively (Creswell, 2017; Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017).

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in education and training institutions located in Nairobi County, and offering diploma in tourism and hospitality management as of 2021/2022 (TVETA, 2019). Nairobi County, a successor to the city council of Nairobi ranks as one of the 47 counties established by the constitution of Kenya 2010. Situated in South central Kenya, the county lies on latitude 1°17' south and longitude 36° 49' East, 140 Km South of the Equator. On the basis of the Kenya Population and Housing census 2019 (Cited in Hamad Mohammed et al., 2022), the County covers an area of 696.1 Km^2 and is at an elevation of 1,795 m. As of 2019 it had a total population of 4,397,073 people. The County is surrounded by approximately 113 Km^2 of cliffs, plains and forest that constitute the Nairobi national park.

The researcher selected education and training institutions from Nairobi County to investigate the affective learning domain levels and their impact on perceived soft skills acquisition in tourism and hospitality. According to anecdotal evidence, Nairobi, the world's only capital city with a national park, is a popular tourist destination due to its diverse, multicultural composition, historical landmarks, museums, sites, monuments and five-star hotels (Kennedy, 2020).

The County has a fair representation of public and private tertiary institutions offering diverse training experiences in diploma tourism and hospitality education. The graduates of these colleges are easily absorbed into the robust tourism and hospitality industry both locally and within the region. In addition, Nairobi County is a host to many local and international conferences in its numerous high-end hotels as well as tours and travel agencies. Therefore, the County was viewed to be suitable for a study

that leverages the affective learning domain levels and their effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills in diploma tourism and hospitality training.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted second (2nd) year and third (3rd) year tourism and hospitality diploma trainees, and trainers drawn from registered institutions in Nairobi County offering the diploma program in tourism and hospitality management and listed by the Kenya University and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS). A reconnaissance study conducted in the institutions identified five institutions with robust and unique training models and varied hospitality curricular. In the context of this study, robust training models related to the presence of well-established structured and consistent approaches to instruction, including use of internships, apprenticeship schemes, and simulated labs. On the other hand, unique training models involved distinctive pedagogical strategies transcending minimum curriculum. Meanwhile, varied hospitality curriculum related to choosing a population of institutions offering an array of sub-specializations such as Food and Beverage, Tour guiding, Front office operations and Culinary Arts.

Moreover, the reconnaissance study revealed a total population of 822 trainees taking diploma in tourism and hospitality management and 41 tourism and hospitality trainers in the five education and training institutions. For ethical reasons, the institutions were code-named using alphabetical letters. The total target population for this study was 863 individuals comprising trainers and trainees (Table 1).

Table 1: Target Population

Institution	Number of Trainees undertaking diploma in Tourism and Hospitality	No. of Targeted Trainers
A	282	6
B	126	11
C	122	9
D	119	7
E	173	8
Total	**822**	**41**

3.4 Sampling design

The sampling design encompassed the identification of sampling units, units of analysis, computing the sample size and drawing the convenient samples of trainees and trainers.

3.4.1 Sampling units and unit of analysis

The sampling units in this research were educational institutions offering the diploma program in tourism and hospitality management identified through a reconnaissance study. Meanwhile, the units of analysis were 2nd year and 3rd year diploma trainees and trainers of tourism and hospitality management. The choice of 2nd year and 3rd trainees was based on the desire to have individuals with more exposure to the program and able to share their experiences authoritatively (Frankfort Nachmias et al., 2015). In addition, 2nd and 3rd year trainees were considered to have participated in industrial attachment and hence gained sufficient hands-on experience on the affective learning domain in tourism and hospitality training. The trainers, experienced in tourism and hospitality, were chosen for the qualitative phase to help identify the levels of the affective domain embedded in the program and prioritize the inherent elements for each level.

3.4.2 Sample size

3.4.2.1 Sample size for trainers

The sample size for trainers was determined bearing in mind their participation in interviews and hence the need to take into consideration the issue of saturation in qualitative data collection (Saunders et al., 2018). Accordingly, saturation was used to ascertain the threshold at which the gathered data was sufficient to address the QUAL research problem. Therefore, in line with the assertions by Ando et al. (2014) that twelve (12) interviews form a sufficient sample size for thematic analysis, the sample size for the trainers to participate in the QUAL phase was set at 12. The argument made in settling for 12 trainers was that they would occasion realization of thematic saturation whereby additional trainers would not uncover new themes. Besides, the 12 trainers were large enough to collect required perspectives related to affective learning and soft skills in tourism and hospitality training at diploma level.

3.4.2.2 Sample size for trainees

The sample size for trainees was calculated using the sample size formula derived by Krejcie and Morgan in 1977 and adapted by Nayan et al. (2020) among other scholars. According to Nayan et al. (2020), the ever-increasing need for a representative statistical sample in empirical research has overseen modifications in the Krejcie and Morgan's formula with a view of obtaining an effective method of determining sample size. Consequently, the sample size for trainees was computed as follows;

$$S= \frac{\chi^2.N.P.(1-P)}{d^2.(N-1)+\chi^2.P.(1-P)}$$

Where S= Sample size

N= total population

P= expected population proportion (placed at 0.5)

d= margin of error (5% for this research).

χ^2= chi-square value (computed at 3.841 for 95% confidence interval). The 95% confidence interval was preferred due to its wide acceptance (Hazra, 2017). Moreover, the 95% CI corresponds with a significance level of 0.05 which minimizes the risk of rejecting the null hypothesis when it should not have been rejected (Type I error), and the risk of failing to reject a false null hypothesis (Type II error).

Therefore, based on a trainee population of 822, a χ^2 value of 3.841, a margin of error (d) of 0.05, and a p- value of 0.5, the sample size was given as: -

$$S = \frac{3.841 \times 822 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}{0.05^2 \times (822 - 1) + 3.841 \times 0.5 \times (1 - 0.5)}$$

$$\cong 262$$

Therefore, for a trainee population of 822 in the five institutions, the sample size of trainees was 262.

3.4.3 Sampling

3.4.3.1 Sampling of Institutions

The first stage of sampling involved sampling the institutions to participate in the study. The purposive sampling technique was employed to sample the institutions. The criteria used in purposive sampling were: (1) that the institution offers diploma in tourism and hospitality management, (2) the sample was inclusive of two universities drawn from the public and private sectors, and (3) the sample included three technical training institutes (TTIs) of which two were public and one private. Therefore, a total of five institutions that satisfied all these criteria were sampled.

3.4.3.2 Sampling of trainers and trainees

A mix of stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample first the trainers and secondly the trainees. Stratified sampling was deemed suitable because of the naturally occurring strata in the form of the sampled institutions (Ozturk, 2017). Both trainers and trainees were sampled across the institutions proportionately to ensure that the original population proportions were maintained in the resulting samples (Table 2). Simple random sampling was then used to select the required sample of trainers and trainees, ensuring that each of the trainers and trainees had equal chances of being selected (Bhardway, 2019). To ensure this, trainers were assigned numbers at random with the random number generator being used to select the trainers to participate in the QUAL phase. Similarly, for the QUAN phase, trainees in respective institutions were assigned random numbers which were then used to identify the required sample of trainees.

Table 2 Sampling of Trainers and Trainees

Strata levels (Institutions)	Size in Target Population		Sample Size	
	Trainers	**Trainees**	**Trainers**	**Trainee**
A	6	282	$\frac{6}{41} \times 12 = 2$	$\frac{282}{822} \times 262 = 90$
B	11	126	$\frac{1}{1} \times 12 = 3$	$\frac{126}{822} \times 262 = 40$
C	9	122	$\frac{9}{41} \times 12 = 3$	$\frac{122}{822} \times 262 = 39$
D	7	119	$\frac{7}{41} \times 12 = 2$	$\frac{119}{822} \times 262 = 38$
E	8	173	$\frac{8}{41} \times 12 = 2$	$\frac{173}{822} \times 262 = 55$
Total	**41**	**822**	2	262
Grand Total	**863**		**274**	

3.5 Data collection instruments

In line with the exploratory mixed methods approach used in this study, two data collection instruments were developed and employed. The two instruments included a

trainer's interview guide and the trainees' questionnaire developed using the results of the qualitative data analysis.

3.5.1 Interview Guide

The interview guide for trainers was structured with open-ended questions. The choice of a structured interview was informed by the need to have a standardized approach to interviewing, where each trainer was exposed to the same questions and in the same order. In this way the researcher was able to remain consistent, reduce bias and compare responses easily (Schaeffer et al., 2020).

In order to expand the latitude of responses from the trainers, an open-ended interview guide was preferred. Trainers were therefore able to give wider perspectives on their experiences in training tourism and hospitality at diploma level, share their teaching world views, and their thoughts on affective learning objectives in the diploma programme. Therefore, the open-ended guide allowed the trainers ample flexibility that was critical in discerning the various approaches given to affective learning in different institutional settings. Moreover, research has shown that allowing participants a wide latitude through which to respond, opens room for novelty among participants through authentic viewpoints (Jamshed, 2020). Therefore, the interview schedule transcended quantitative data collection serving also as a prompt for latent perspectives that may have hitherto not been uncovered.

The researcher moderated the interviews in order to be in a position to authenticate the responses and to probe for more underlying affective learning elements. This ensured that the importance of the interview responses in developing the quantitative questionnaire was not lost when designing the interview questions.

The interview guide had three main questions to correspond with the primary and secondary research questions for the qualitative (QUAL) phase. The first question focused on establishing the levels of affective learning domain reflected in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. Through this question, the study generated codes that reflected themes amounting to the desired affective domain levels. The second question examined the elements that each identified level of the affective learning domain amplified under the tourism and hospitality diploma program. The essence was to discern items to be included in the questionnaire to guide examination of the effects of the affective domain levels on students' emotional development. The third question examined the nature of the soft skills that the tourism and hospitality diploma program imparts on trainees. Through the responses to this question the researcher was able to develop an appropriate scale to measure trainees' perception on acquisition of soft skills. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed the trainers to cover a wide latitude when answering.

3.5.2 The questionnaire

The second instrument used in this study was the questionnaire for trainees. The choice of a quantitative structured questionnaire for collecting data from trainees was because of its capability to enable collection of data from a broad spectrum of tourism and hospitality diploma trainees (Brace, 2018). Following successful analysis of the qualitative data in the QUAL phase, five Likert scales were identified consistent with the five levels of the affective learning domain together with the perceived acquisition of soft skills scale. Therefore, the developed trainee questionnaire had seven sections.

Section A collected data on the demographic characteristics of gender, age and course enrolled in, involving nine (9) courses including Hospitality Management, Tourism

Management, Hotel Management, Travel and Tourism Management, Catering and Accommodation Management, Food and Beverage Service and Sales, Food and Beverage Management, Tour Guide and Travel Operations, and Restaurant Management. Research has shown that age and gender (Caiyod et al, 2015; Somlai 2019) alongside course enrolled in (Wesley et al, 2017) are covariates of interest in the development of soft skills. The intent then was to explore these demographic characteristics and account for them when interpreting the final results.

Section B collected data on the elements amplified in the receiving level of the affective domain and zeroed specifically on being open to experience and willingness to hear. Section C collected data on the elements emphasized in the responding level of the affective domain, with specific lineage towards active participation, complying with and reacting to. In section D, data collected related to idea internalization, identification with, and accepting the worth of, as amplified in the valuing level. Section E focused on data relating to the two elements amplified in the organizing level namely; value classification and value prioritization. The sixth section, section F collected data on the characterizing level of the affective domain with specific emphasis on value integration, consistency and personal philosophy as discerned from the qualitative analysis. The final section G, collected data on perceived acquisition of soft skills, coalescing around communication skills, customer service orientation and teamwork, and collaboration.

3.6 Validity and reliability of the instruments

Prior to testing the validity and reliability of the data collection instruments, they were first piloted among five trainers and twenty-five trainees drawn from institutions offering diploma in tourism and hospitality program in the neighbouring Kiambu County. The choice of Kiambu County for the pilot study was to allay any fears of

repeating respondents in the actual study sample and increasing internal validity chances. The five trainers and twenty-five trainees were randomly selected and administered with the respective tools.

3.6.1 Validity of the instruments

Both the qualitative and quantitative data collection tools were validated before use. According to Krippendorff (2018) validity relates to the capability of the instrument computing the desired value accurately. Besides, collected data ought to fulfill the basic requirements set by the sampling design. In the case of the qualitative data, the pilot interview verbatim transcription relevance and completeness was critical to the overall validity as suggested by Hayes and Krippendorff (2007). Therefore, for this study validity was achieved by having respondents to complete interview sheets. Furthermore, probing techniques were used to ascertain that trainees interviewed provided relevant and complete responses to each of the three questions.

Regarding the trainees' questionnaire, content validity was preferred in this approach, the researcher engaged the supervisors and hospitality experts to ascertain that the content covered the scope of the research problem and that such content could be accounted for by existing research. Meanwhile, the structured questionnaire as developed prevented the respondents from being skewed by improper selections instead ensuring that only valid alternatives were selected from the provided Likert items. Validation of the measurement (outer) model and structural (inner) model was conducted using the PLS algorithm outputs of convergent and discriminant validity, including average variance extracted (AVE) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion requiring the square root of the AVE to be greater than other correlations.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Instruments

3.6.2.1 Reliability of the qualitative data instrument

With the consideration that reliability is often a concept used for testing or evaluating quantitative research (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020), the focus of the qualitative data was information elicitation. Therefore, quality of the qualitative phase was paramount. Quoting Eisner (1991), "a good qualitative study can help us to understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing". The criteria of ascertaining the quality of the qualitative phase lay in examining trustworthiness, and included testing data credibility, neutrality or confirmability, consistency or dependability and applicability or transferability. Under credibility, the focus was on whether data could be believed from the trainers' view. This was ascertained first through member checking (Birt et al., 2016). Under this approach, trainers were involved in data validation. The collected data was returned to the trainers to verify accuracy and whether they resonated with lived experiences. Peer debriefing was also used to test data credibility. Use of peer debriefing to improve qualitative data credibility is a phenomenon that has received wide recommendation from several researchers (Collins et al., 2013; Cypress, 2017; Haq et al., 2023). Therefore, the researcher engaged colleagues and supervisors in exploring and probing aspects of affective learning and soft skills acquisition that might otherwise have remained only implicit within the researcher's mind.

Regarding confirmability or neutrality, the focus was on proving that the qualitative data was independent of researcher bias. Therefore, confirmability was demonstrated through an audit trail detailing each step of data analysis and showing that the findings portrayed the trainers' responses. In particular, a summary of the content of each question asked during the interview was made in terms of themes arising from open and

axial codes. This showcased the overlapping themes, plus other comments made since they all provided value to the research questions.

Dependability and transferability were assured by giving a concise and in-depth description of the qualitative data collection and analysis procedures, allowing for replication. Additionally, supervisors and other tourism and hospitality experts were employed as outside reviewers to conduct an inquiry audit trail of the methods and associated data. According to Ibiamke and Ajekwe (2017), "Enhancing dependability and transferability can be achieved by presenting a detailed and step-by-step explanation of the research processes undertaken, as well as providing the main instruments used to gather empirical data, allowing for an audit trail."

3.6.2.1 Reliability of the quantitative data questionnaire

In the case of the quantitative questionnaire for trainees', reliability of the measurement (outer) model and structural (inner) models was conducted using the PLS algorithm outputs of internal consistency (measured through Cronbach's alpha) and composite reliability. The threshold for the reliability coefficients was 0.7 in both cases.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected in two phases. First, qualitative data was collected from the sampled trainers during the QUAL phase. The researcher was fully in charge of administering the interviews. First the researcher sought permission from the administrators of the sampled institutions to interview some selected trainers. Once permission was granted the researcher explained to the trainers the purpose of the study and established rapport with them before booking interview appointments. Interviews were therefore scheduled at the convenience of the respective trainers. Using the interview guide, the researcher interviewed each trainer separately but used a common

structure with the consent of the participants, interview responses were recorded and back up notes were also made. The recordings and notes were later transcribed using two research assistants and subsequently analyzed.

In the second phase of data collection, quantitative data was collected from sampled trainees. The researcher visited the sampled training institutions and met with heads of departments of tourism and hospitality management to request for authority to use selected trainees in the study. With the help of the heads of department, the researcher met with trainees undertaking diploma in tourism and hospitality management, and formally briefed them on the purpose of the study. Random numbers were used to sample the number of trainees required from each institution. The researcher then hired two research assistants to help with questionnaire administration. These assistants were graduates who could easily comprehend the questionnaire contents. The researcher trained them on the tenets of data collection, focusing closely on research ethics and researcher respondent relationship.

The research assistants dropped the questionnaires to the trainees on conveniently agreed days, gave the trainees ample time to respond to the questionnaire items, and then picked them up thereafter. They were asked to be on standby during the filling of the questionnaire to clarify any emerging issues. Having picked the questionnaires, they were required to hand them over to the researcher for safe custody.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data were also analyzed in two phases. First the researcher collected qualitative data from the sampled trainers, analyzed this data and used the findings to develop the quantitative questionnaire. Next the quantitative data was collected from the sampled

trainees using the developed questionnaire. This data was subsequently analyzed in the second phase of the study.

3.8.1 Qualitative data analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed with the aid of Taguette, the free and open-source computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQ-DAS). CAQ-DAS comes to the aid of researchers employing pure qualitative designs to organize, collaborate on, annotate, analyze, and visualize their studies. Taguette is a web application built in Python and Tornado Web Framework, used in research articles and self-hosted by research institutions. It allows real-time collaboration on desktops or servers, and has been running a server at app.taguette.org since March 2019. The application is cross-platform, accessible in seven languages, and has been downloaded over 12,000 times. It features installers for MacOS and Windows, a Docker image, and a Python package index. Since March 2019, app.taguette.org has had around 2,000 monthly active users (Rampin & Rampin, 2021).

According to Rampin and Rampin (2021), Taguette addresses a specific research need for qualitative researchers who lack access to software for their work. Moreover, it enables real-time collaboration for qualitative researchers in the analysis of text materials such as used in this research. First collected data were transcribed using two research assistants and then converted into the pdf format that is compatible with the software. This data was then imported into the software for the required qualitative analysis process.

Open codes were first generated from verbatim quotes in line with each of the research questions. The generated codes were each given a meaningful name and, in some cases, a convenient description. Related codes were grouped into axial codes drawn from

existing research on the affective learning domain and soft skills. Thematic analysis was used to group axial codes into themes and interpret data. First the researcher and her team looked for relationships and patterns in the axial codes that later informed broader themes.

3.8.2 Quantitative data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). Structural equation modeling (SEM) is a second-generation technique that aims to account for the weakness of conventional approaches. According to Hair et al. (2021), whereas covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) is used mainly to confirm or reject theories, PLS-SEM is basically used to predict theories in exploratory research. Therefore, this approach was suitable for predicting the effect of levels of affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees pursuing diploma in tourism and hospitality. Moreover, PLS-SEM can be used with smaller samples compared to CB-SEM and was therefore ideal for the expected sample of 262 trainees.

The choice of PLS-SEM for this study was informed by the increasing use of this approach in social sciences owing to its enabling characteristics. Shmueli et al. (2019) contends that PLS-SEM serves well when the main objectives are explanations and prediction. Shmueli et al. (2019) adds that PLS-SEM easily navigates the formative constructs. This was a motivating feature in choosing PLS-SEM since the elements amplified in each level of the affective domain collectively gave meaning to the respective level. The arrows needed to point from these observable indicators to converge on respective latent levels, making these indicators to be formative. Besides, PLS-SEM is not sensitive to the normal distribution and remains quite robust to

skewness. Hair et al. (2022) also argue that PLS-SEM does not specify model fit indices but rather relies on indices such as construct reliability and validity and the outer and inner models.

3.9 Analysis procedure

The smart PLS software version 3.3.9 was used to run the PLS-SEM following the path weights scheme that maximized the variance explained (R^2) in the perceived acquisition of soft skills construct. The predictive ability of PLS-SEM was investigated by boot strapping and using PLS algorithm as the outer model and the structural model called the inner model were evaluated for each of the five models for levels and perceived acquisition of soft skills.

3.9.1 Evaluating the outer model

The outer models in this study comprised of the latent constructs representing each level of the affective domain and its associated indicators represented by amplified elements. In this research, indicators were formative in nature, in which case they were deemed to define the affective learning level and soft skills constructs. In the resulting graphical illustrations, the indicator arrows were drawn to point to the respective constructs.

Evaluation of the outer model entailed examining content validity, requiring to elucidate and justify why each of the specific constructs were included; indicator weight, using the bootstrapping approach to examine whether the indicator weights were significant, and the respective contribution of each indicators to the constructs they define; and collinearity, seeking to examine variance inflation factors (VIFs) to test whether at the threshold of 5, any closeness existed among the indicators, convergent validity and discriminant validity.

In this evaluation, the PLS algorithm and bootstrapping results were used. For internal consistency, Crombach's Alpha was expected to be above 0.7. The threshold for convergent validity was an average variance extracted (AVE) of 0.5. For discriminant validity the Fornell-Larker criterion was employed where the square root of AVE in every latent variable was expected to be more than other correlation values. Discriminant validity was used to confirm that the constructs that were not to be related were actually unrelated (AbHamid et al., 2017).

3.9.2 Evaluating the inner model

Five inner models were conceptualized with respect to the effect of the five levels of affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees. The path models were formulated to show how each level through its elements directly affected perceived acquisition of soft skills. To assess the relevance of the inner model, the structural paths were bootstrapped and results accessed by inspecting the bootstrapped path outputs in the bootstrapping summary. The path coefficient estimates for each of the constructs gave an indication of the effects of each element on perceived acquisition of soft skills while the R^2 value gave the overall contribution of the particular level on the acquisition of those skills. Statistical significance was tested at the 5% significance level, which minimized the risk of committing the type I error and the risk of committing the type II error.

Meanwhile, to determine the combined effect of the level of affective learning domain, the bootstrapped total paths element of the summary was inspected. The model's explaining power was determined by checking the R^2 and f^2 effect size of affective domain levels from the PLS algorithm output.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The study was conducted in compliance with ethical requirements in social research. Collection, analysis and interpretation of data respected the rights of participating trainers and trainees as well as training institutions. Specifically, before embarking on data collection, the researcher obtained an authorization letter from Moi University and a research permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Using these authorization documents, the researcher sought further authority from the director of education, Nairobi County to collect research in the sampled institutions.

A consent note seeking informed consent of the participants was prepared. The letter was given to potential participants to solicit for their participation in the research. As a show of acceptance, they were requested to append their signatures on this note. The right of anonymity and confidentiality included the assurance than the study was solely for academic purposes. Anonymity was guaranteed by concealing the participants' identity, ensuring that information could not be traced back to them. Confidentiality was assured through the researchers' obligation to take responsibility to protect all data collected within the study's scope. Moreover, the researcher accorded the right to privacy. Therefore, participants were allowed to determine the time, extent and circumstances under which they were to be interviewed.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents results obtained from the research examining levels of the affective learning domain and its effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills in tourism and hospitality diploma training program offered in Nairobi County. In retrospect the chapter reports results of the two phases of the exploratory sequential study. In the first part the study reports the results of the qualitative (QUAL) phase culminating in the development of the quantitative questionnaire. In the second part, the chapter reports results of the quantitative (QUAN) phase culminating in the effects of levels of affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills.

4.1 Phase One: Qualitative Data Analysis

In line with the exploratory sequential mixed methods design employed in this study, qualitative data collection and analysis preceded the quantitative approaches, with findings of the qualitative phase used to develop the quantitative questionnaire. The primary research question (PRQ) and secondary research questions (SRQs) for the qualitative approach included: -

PRQ: What levels of the affective learning domain are emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma training program offered in educational institutions in Nairobi County?

SRQ1: For each of the levels identified, what elements does the program amplify?

SRQ2: Which soft skills does the tourism and hospitality program emphasize among trainees?

The source of data was semi structured interviews, conducted with twelve (12) trainers with expertise in tourism and hospitality industry. The server based Taquette software package which is easy to use and could be accessed freely was used to generate open codes from verbatim quotes, culminating in desired axial codes and themes.

4.1.1 Levels of Affective Domain

PRQ: *What levels of the affective learning domain are emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in Nairobi County?*

Regarding the levels of affective learning domain emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County, five key themes emerged from the interview responses and highlighted the levels of affective domain commonly emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in Nairobi County. As highlighted in Table 3, which is a summary of the generated axial codes and corresponding themes, the themes were: 1. Receiving level (2) Responding level (3) Valuing level (4) Organizing level and (5) Characterizing level

Table 3 Affective Learning Domain Levels

Themes	Codes
Receiving Level	• Listening • being receptive • awareness
Responding Level	• active engagement • participation • reaction to learning
Valuing Level	• commitment • prioritization
Organizing Level	• comparison • relating • synthesizing • hierarchy
Characterizing Level	• consistency • internalization

The first theme, receiving level reflected the focus of the program to nurture students who were open and receptive to new knowledge by highlighting the importance of listening and awareness. One trainer code-named tourism and hospitality trainer 4 (THT 4) stated that,

> ...of course, the driving factor in our tourism and hospitality diploma program is to foster the emotional responsiveness in our trainees.... quite often we emphasize the virtue of being receptive to others ideas among the trainees in order to develop a rich pool of different ideas and perspectives (THT4)

Another tourism and hospitality trainer noted that,

> ...our focus on affective learning is built on the premise that it remains a crucial emotional resource in training. In this regard, our tourism and hospitality program emphasizes on trainees' remaining focused and open to others ideas, and to be motivated by the learning environment (THT 1)

The theme of receiving level was also reflected in the response by a third trainer who reported that,

> .... Our tourism and hospitality program leverages the affective domain in a manner that recognizes trainees' emotions, feelings and attitudes... therefore, the program creates awareness among trainees on the importance of their own feelings and attention during training sessions...he added that the program underscores emotional connectedness and hearing of one another (THT 5).

Responding level was the second theme to emerge as reflected in axial codes like active engagement, participation, and reaction to learning. One of the verbatim quotes by a trainer was that,

> ...while the program emphasizes being receptive to others ideas, it also expects trainees to actively respond to and partake in the learning process...with the argument that engaged trainees easily respond to learning through self-interest and willingness (THT 8).

Another trainer observed that,

> .... our tourism and hospitality program reinforces the notion of group discussion with a view of making trainees to participate actively and enhance their response to training... with genuine interest (THT 3).

The other recurrent theme identified from codes such as commitment and prioritization, is the valuing level. A participating trainer shared the following,

> *...you know; hospitality is a value-oriented industry. Therefore, our tourism and hospitality diploma program extols the virtue of valuing hospitality training as manifested in the emphasis on involvement and commitment (THT 1).*

Yet the valuing level also resonated with a trainer who noted that

> *.... the program underscores creativity among trainees and fully encourages them to learn new ideas and values from one another, and to act like industry personnel as they continue to grow (THT 2).*

Organizing level emerged as the fourth theme relating to affective domain levels emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in Nairobi county. This theme was derived from axial codes such as comparison, relating, synthesizing, and hierarchy. Typical verbatim quotes yielding these axial codes included,

> *...I need to mention here that by continuously emphasizing value acquisition the tourism and hospitality diploma program fosters novelty in behaviour which often forces trainees to reorganize their value system (THT 7).*

> *... while underscoring creativity and innovation, the program goes further to encourage trainees not to hesitate to prioritize values depending on the uniqueness of these values to the prevailing situations (THT 4)*

> *...the program expects the trainees to grow the acquired values by organizing their thoughts to align with their professional realm. Consequently, trainees are encouraged to elicit hospitality industry ethos by letting their profession reflect in their daily undertakings (THT 6).*

The final theme reflecting affective domains emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in Nairobi County was the characterizing level decoded from the consistency and internalizing axial codes. Most trainers noted that the program expected values acquired to be transitive in nature and hold for future behaviour. For instance, one trainer reported that,

> *…once trainees have been exposed to and acquired new values, they are characterized and expected to behave according to such values (THT 3).*

Another trainer's response was that,

> *…in emphasizing value acquisition, the tourism and hospitality diploma program expects trainees to be consistent in their behaviour by internalizing and employing the acquired values (THT 8).*

A third trainer observed that,

> *…hospitality being a complex industry, our trainees are expected to internalize developed values and use them to decide and shape their career orientation… in doing this, they are encouraged to transcend beyond learning and embody the roles played by hospitality industry personnel (THT 5).*

These results confirmed that the affective learning domain was proactively embedded in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. The results answered the primary research question by echoing Benjamin Bloom's theory in identifying the receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterizing levels as the affective learning domain levels that are mostly emphasized in the tourism and hospitality program offered in the institutions.

SRQ1: *What elements does the tourism and hospitality diploma program amplify in each of the identified affective learning domain levels?*

The first secondary research question guiding the qualitative phase sought to explore the elements amplified by the tourism and hospitality diploma program under each affective domain level. The main results of this section were derived from trainers' responses pertaining to elements amplified for receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing levels.

4.1.2 Elements of the Receiving level of Affective Learning Domain

Two themes, "open to experience" and "willingness to hear" were derived from the axial coding as shown in Table 4 to reflect key elements that the tourism and hospitality diploma program amplifies under the receiving level of effective learning domain.

Table 4 Elements Amplified under the Receiving Level

Themes	Axial codes
Openness to experience	• Open-minded
	• Curiosity
	• Creativity
	• Preference for routine
Willingness to hear	• Listening
	• Focus
	• Discussion

The first theme related to amplified elements generated under the receiving level of affective learning domain was "openness to experience" highlighted through four axial codes named as open-minded, curiosity, creativity, and preference for routine. These codes were consistent with respective verbatim quotes and resulting open codes. One tourism and hospitality trainer reported that,

> *...the tourism and hospitality program emphasizes nurturing of trainees receiving level of affection...in this regard, the trainees are exposed to learning environments that can make them to be open-minded, willing to try new ideas and also engage in novel experiences (THT 7).*

A second trainer highlighted the notion of curiosity among trainees by stating that,

> *...the program encourages trainees to be more inquisitive, and approach unfamiliar aspects with some level of curiosity...this way, they will be good in thinking and making connections (THT 2)*

The code of creativity was implicit in the following verbatim quote of another trainer's response,

> *....in emphasizing open-mindedness, the tourism and hospitality diploma program recognizes the need for trainees to be exposed to higher levels of creativity… trainees are therefore given a practical orientation towards creativity in the hospitality industry through 'hands-on' experiences gained in our labs (THT 5).*

Another code recurrent in the responses, and which contributed to the theme of "open to experience" is preference for routine. According to one female trainer,

> *...some trainees have shown a preference for routine, and often approach novel ideas and experiences with a lot of caution… in fact, last week I was sharing with one trainee about the opportunities missed for not being open to new ideas and experiences...but the trainee was adamant about doing that which she is familiar with (THT 1).*

The second theme under the receiving level was "willingness to hear" manifested in the codes of listening, focus, and discussion. One trainer indicated that,

> *...the tourism and hospitality diploma program underscores the importance of trainees listening to one another in a respectful manner… the program asks trainees to always listen to and show respect for contributions made by newly introduced trainees… the essence is to be receptive to all novel ideas (THT 3).*

Another trainer was categorical on the role of active listening in the receiving level of affective domain of learning. The trainer remarked that,

> *...this program is categorical on trainees acknowledging others contributions...aah...eeh … they need not necessarily agree with what others are saying but it is important to focus and listen to them, using body language to acknowledge their contributions...you see, by acknowledging others, they are encouraged to continue sharing whatever information they may have (THT 6).*

A third trainer leveraged discussion as an avenue for 'willingness to hear others'. According to this trainer as quoted verbatim,

> *… the program requires trainees to be actively involved in a conversation driven by others. In this way, the program notes that individual trainees will concentrate more and be receptive to what is being said....by being actively involved, contributing to discussions whenever necessary, trainees are able to willingly tune into others thinking and get the point being driven home (THT 08).*

These interview results with lecturers confirmed that being open to experience and willing to hear out others are two critical elements emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. This finding reflects the importance associated to the virtues of openness to experience and active listening in training.

4.1.3 Elements of the Responding level of Affective Learning domain

When asked to enumerate the key elements amplified by the tourism and hospitality diploma program under the responding level of the affective learning domain three themes, "active participation", "complying with", and "reacting to" were unearthed through the Taquette qualitative analysis Software (Table 5).

Table 5 Elements Amplified under the Responding Level

Themes	Axial codes
Active participation	• Provision of ample opportunities
	• Observable responses
	• Feedback culture
Complying with	• Adherence to rules
	• Compliance training
	• Timely task completion
	• positivity
Reacting to	• Makes suggestions
	• Gives proposals
	• Offers encouragement

The first theme, "active participation" was implicit in the codes ample opportunities, observable responses, and feedback culture derived from the verbatim quotes of tourism and hospitality trainers' responses. One trainer code named THT 03 revealed the following:

> *...our tourism and hospitality diploma program recognizes the importance of providing our tourism and hospitality trainees with ample opportunities to respond to presentations while they go through*

> *their training… you know what? by responding, trainees are able to connect with others and the training affectionately (THT 05)*

Another trainer borrowed from the theory of behaviourism by stating that the tourism and hospitality program encourages observable behaviour as a show of responding to stimuli. This trainer noted that,

> *…you know, trainees can respond to others through non-verbal cues such as interacting socially with them, raising their hands, and use of facial expressions…the tourism and hospitality program emphasizes that trainees should respond to situations using actions that are visible, and which can be transcended to their profession (THT 06).*

The axial code of feedback culture was also identified through a trainer who remarked as follows,

> *…the program builds on the need to nurture trust and engagement as an affectionate way of responding to others… indeed my sister, feedback as a two-way communication is very critical in tourism and hospitality practice…the culture of feedback is therefore vital to our trainees to foster trust and engagement. This may be realized through recognition and appreciation of others contributions (THT 01).*

The second theme, "complying with" was generated from axial codes such as adherence to rules, compliance training, timelines, and positivity, which were recurrent in trainers' responses. One trainer reported that,

> *…the tourism and hospitality is a very sensitive industry that has its standards and laws… the program requires that trainees should respond to these expectations by adhering to rules, regulations, and standards as set out by the relevant department…in this way, they will learn to comply with the standards and regulations of the industry when in practice (THT 04).*

Another trainer confirmed that,

> *…the tourism and hospitality program recognizes compliance training as a tool through which trainees understand their expected roles and responsibility in relation to tourism and hospitality… the program therefore emphasizes trainees exposure to compliance training that fosters a culture of trust and respect among them (THT 07).*

A third trainer alluded to timeliness by revealing the following,

> *.... the program emphasizes timely completion of tasks achieved through clear deadlines…you see, when we create a structured timeline, specific tasks can have compliance requirements and realistic deadlines…in this way, trainees are able to have enough time to finish their tasks and respond to situations as required (THT 03)*

Positivity is another axial code that emerged in relation to complying with trainers who

mentioned positivity noted that a positive attitude when complying with expectation

was a crucial interaction aspect required in the responding level of affective domain.

For instance, a tourism and hospitality trainer noted that,

> *…the program expects trainees to be surrounded by others who are positive, energizing, and solution-oriented… imagine being in the company of positive and humorous colleagues!!…this is a sure recipe of getting trainees from the mode of being closed up and fostering an environment that is more open and collaborative. (THT 02).*

The third theme, "reacting to" was characterized by axial codes such as making

suggestions, giving proposals and offering encouragement. One trainer was very

categorical in commending trainees' suggestions and proposals as a positive reactionary

indicator of affective learning. The trainer stated that,

> *…through suggestions and proposals, the trainees are affectionately engaged in learning…this enhances an environment that is not only inclusive but also positively condones participation in collaborative projects…you know, when trainees contribute to the learning through suggestions, they acknowledge that failures can be part of growth (THT 05).*

Another trainer extolled the utility of verbal encouragement in effective response during

training skits. This particular trainer reported that,

> *…the tourism and hospitality diploma program emphasizes verbal encouragement among trainees, knowing particularly well that it provides the required, external stimuli for trainees' self-efficacy…you see, when we uplift the ability for trainees to believe in themselves, we raise their intrinsic motivation and end up challenging themselves with more difficult tasks… in the full knowledge that they are in control (THT 03).*

The foregoing results derived from interviews with tourism and hospitality diploma trainers confirms that the key elements amplified in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in Nairobi County under the responding level of affective domain include active participation, complying with, and reacting to stimuli.

4.1.4 Elements of the Valuing level of Affective Learning Domain

Three themes, "idea internalizing", "identifying with", and "accepting the worth of", were derived from the axial codes, including proficiency, support, debate, compatibility, commitment, acceptance, preference, and desire (Table 6).

Table 6 Elements Amplified under the Valuing Level

Themes	Axial codes
Idea internalizing	• Proficiency
	• Supports
	• debates
Identifies with	• Compatible with
	• Commitment
Accepts the worth of…	• Acceptance of ideas
	• Shows preference
	• Shows desire

On the theme of "idea internalizing", proficiency, support and debate emerged as critical axial codes as contained in the verbatim quotes by a section of the trainers. One trainer noted that,

> *…this tourism and hospitality diploma programme endeavors to proficiently enable trainees to express value internalization by being consistent in showing value…the program aims at making values to be part of trainees' personality such that they trainees can be consistent in the manner that they behave (THT 04).*

Another trainer remarked that,

> *…the program underscores the importance of support in internalizing ideas… through support for example, trainees feel encouraged and reinforced to acquire and accommodate attitudes, values, and beliefs into their thought systems… you know, when trainees feel amply supported, they envision safety in continued exploration and are ultimately become more confident and aware of self (THT 07).*

The axial code of debate for idea internalizing was reflected in the following verbatim quote of one trainer,

> *...the program recognizes the power, inherent in trainees' engagement in debate towards their critical reflection...through debate, we anticipate to nurture trainees who commit to novel ideals by refining values and beliefs to align to these novel ideas...such debates transcend ordinary dispositions towards emotional engagement (THT 08).*

The second theme representing the second element amplified under the valuing level was "identifying with". Two axial codes, "compatibility" and "commitment" were recurrent. According to one trainer,

> *... the tourism and hospitality diploma program seeks to nurture a trainee who is proud to propagate the value of identifying with others ideas and beliefs. The program emphasizes the urgency of trainees' to be in harmony with attitudes, beliefs and values of the tourism and hospitality program...in this way, their behaviour are likely to reflect emotional or even personal connection with their training (THT 07)*

Another trainer presupposed the following,

> *...through our tourism and hospitality diploma program trainees are exposed to the importance of commitment as a cornerstone of identifying with others in a social way...we encourage a commitment of purpose such that trainees willingly contribute to joint actions targeting their growth. Imagine having trainees participating in actions that they would have not been willing to?... that's our ultimate aim (THT 01).*

Still under the valuing level of affective domain, "accepting the worth of" was identified as a critical element amplified by the tourism and hospitality diploma program and typified in the codes named as acceptance of ideas, show of preference, and showing desire. It was apparent that the program seeks to develop trainees with unconditional positive regard for customers. A verbatim quote from one of the trainers concerning acceptance of the worth of went like this,

> *...the program underscores the importance of trainees to show positive regard to other trainees as a prelude to what they would be expected to do with customers... you know, we value this attitude of self-worth on the premise that the confidence and motivation to*

accomplish goals is a product of a strong sense of self-worth (THT 03).

Another trainer stated that,

...quite often, trainees are asked to make choices that reflect and demonstrate their ability to value diverse perspectives.... the program recognizes that through preference, trainees are able to display their appreciation of the worth of others... and more significantly they be seen to acknowledge value (THT 05).

The show of desire also emerged as an axial code that led to the theme of "accepting the worth of...". According to another trainer,

.... the program recognizes that accepting the worth of is inherent in genuine desire...in retrospect, the program integrates interactive modules that motivate and drive meaningful trainees' engagement (THL 04).

From the thematic results, the tourism and hospitality diploma trainers identified idea internalizing, identifying with, and accepting the worth of, as the three crucial elements amplified under the valuing level of affective domain in the diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. These elements are consistent with what literature has previously unearthed.

4.1.5 Elements of the Organizing level of Affective Learning Domain

The fourth level of the affective learning domain identified with regards to the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County is the organizing level. The thematic analysis of elements amplified in this level yielded two themes, notably value classification and value prioritization (Table 7).

Table 7 Elements Amplified under the Organizing Level

Themes	Axial codes
Value classification	• Identification
	• modification
	• Synthesis
	• Ordering
	• Arrangement
Prioritizing values	• Prioritize
	• Contrast
	• Reconcile
	• Relate

The element of value classification was characterized by axial codes such as identification, modification, synthesis, order, and arrangement. One trainer implicitly referenced identification and order by stating the following,

> *...this tourism and hospitality diploma program highlights, the priorities of the course by first categorizing the content into personal growth, social development and professional progress. By doing so, the program enables the trainees to gauge and decide on their focus...in this way, the program clearly puts everything into perspective and order (THT 06)*

Another trainer made reference to modification and synthesis by observing that,

> *...over the time, the program has undergone modification in order to combine ideas and align courses to the practical orientation of the profession...this has seen trainees fit very well in their majors... they are able to sort their goals based on attention priority... such an arrangement allows trainees to have a clear vision of their trajectory (THT 01).*

In contrast, the element of value prioritization was adduced from four axial codes notably; prioritize, contrast, reconcile and relate. Two verbatim quotes that stood out in relation to value prioritization were that,

> *...the program takes cognizance of the specialized nature of courses in tourism and hospitality training... therefore priority is given to courses that nurture trainees to recognize the industry's brand promising comfort and luxury... meanwhile, trainees are also sensitized on the need to factor environmental sustainability and budgetary allocations (THT 04).*

> *... the program emphasizes the need for trainees to reconcile the needs of others with theirs in order to align with what can be offered...this*

way, trainees are able to relate guests concerns with the promise for quality service (THT 08).

These findings showing that value classification and value prioritization are key elements in the organizing level of the affective learning domain under the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County aligns with expectations and the conversation that exists among industry stakeholders.

4.1.6 Elements of the Characterizing level of Affective Learning Domain

The characterizing level was identified as the last level of the affective learning domain applied in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. Analysis of the elements amplified under this level by the tourism and hospitality program offered in institutions in Nairobi County identified three elements through the themes "value integration", "consistency", and "personal philosophy". These themes were derived from axial codes in the form of self-reliance, teamwork, objectivity, professionalism, value continuum, lack of contradiction, binders, attitude, behaviour, guiding principle, enabling beliefs, and limiting beliefs as displayed in Table 8.

Table 8 Elements Amplified under the Characterizing Level

Themes	Axial codes
Value integration	• Self-reliance
	• Teamwork
	• Objectivity
	• Professionalism
Consistency	• Lack of contradictions
	• Value continuum
	• Binders
Personal philosophy	• Attitude
	• Guiding principles
	• Behaviour
	• Enabling beliefs
	• Limiting beliefs

Value integration was implicit in four axial codes namely self-reliance, teamwork, objectivity, and professionalism. Some four trainers interviewed had the following responses;

> *...the tourism and hospitality diploma program is cognizant of the need for individual responsibility in deeper understanding...therefore, trainees are encouraged to seek self-initiatives to identify and resolve issues (THT 07).*

> *...this program emphasizes teamwork such that in working together trainees transcend the notion of only sharing tasks to partnering in respectful endeavors towards resolving problems together...in this way, they integrate positive ethos like openness to others ways of thought (THT 03).*

> *... through a focused content structure, the program requires trainees not to be hasty in judgement for relying on emotions...the program encourages them to instead look at situations from an objective perspective, noting that the diversity in hospitality clientele does not require personal biases (THT 02).*

> *... at all times, the program underscores the essence of professionalism in hospitality practice. Trainees are often reminded about the need for a professional attitude irrespective of the situation...in this way, the program imparts values of trust and conflict resolution in trainees, which are critical in hospitality practice (THT 06).*

The element of consistency as a measure of characterizing level of the affective learning domain in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County was deducible from the axial codes such as lack of contradiction, value continuum, and binders. One lecturer commenting on characterizing level noted that…

> *...this program advocates for consistency in what trainees say and do...it requires trainees to align their actions with their innate values so that they do not contradict themselves and lose the trust of others ... eeh ... as you know, the hospitality industry thrives on cultivating trust among the customers (THT 05).*

Another trainer also alluded to consistency as a critical element propagated by the characterizing level by observing that….

> *...you know what? .... the essence of this program is to nurture a continuum of values gained through experience. The program*

underscores the need for trainees to build on new experiences and beliefs during their training… in this way, they will be able to refine their beliefs and apply them in different circumstances easily (THT 01).

A third trainer reflected the importance of core principles by arguing that,

…we leverage our training on the core principles of the hospitality industry which requires prioritization of guest satisfaction…this principle acts as the binder that ensures that trainees are consistent in their actions and values, and do not stray from the expectations of the profession (THT 04).

The third and final element inherent in the characterizing level of affective domain as amplified by the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County is the personal philosophy element. This element was inherent in codes such as attitude and guiding principles, behaviour and enabling beliefs and limiting beliefs. The first trainer to allude to personal philosophy noted that,

…the tourism and hospitality program recognizes the importance of personal philosophy in hospitality training. Trainees are therefore encouraged to remain positive and persistent in their mindset…. in this way, their approach to situations will be based not on their reaction but on a clear set of values (THT 08).

Another one to reference personal philosophy said that:

…the characterizing level is highlighted in the tourism and hospitality diploma program in form of how trainees behave and their subsequent enabling beliefs…. you see…the program underscores the importance of trainees to take small but consistent steps that ultimately account for bigger differences. The program recognizes that gradual progress motivates desired behaviour that is consistent with realization of goals (THT 03).

A third trainer identified motivation arising from limiting beliefs as key in personal philosophy as a characterizing element… the trainer stated that,

…. taking cognizance of the knowledge that trainees are at times held back by the fear of failure, the tourism and hospitality diploma program drives trainees to challenge such negative thoughts and doubts by leveraging them as growth opportunities. (THT 02).

This research like others before it underscored the importance of the characterizing level of the affective domain of learning in the tourism and hospitality training.

4.1.7 Soft Skills Emphasized for tourism and hospitality Diploma Trainees

SRQ2: *Which soft skills are mostly emphasized by the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County?*

The second secondary research question posed to tourism and hospitality trainers sought their enumeration of the soft skills mostly emphasized by the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County.

Three themes were delineated with respect to the common soft skills that the program expects of the trainees. These themes are: communication skills, customer service orientation, and teamwork and collaboration. Some of the verbatim quotes registered under communication skills were as follows: -

> *...we take cognizance of the role that strong communication plays in the hospitality industry in general...the extent of interactions between colleagues, across colleagues and guests, and within the management is quite high in this industry (THT 03).*

> *... the program underscores the importance of attentive listening to others, understanding their needs, and showing empathy in response....therefore, trainees are expected to show clarity in communicating desired information, have acumen in offering solution and explaining policies, and be able to vary the verbal communication tone depending on situations and individuals...for instance, the program exposes trainees' majoring in front desk to polished skills in communication to manage and welcome guests alongside providing clear directions on available services (THT 06).*

The theme of customer service orientation as a soft skill was reminiscent in the following verbatim quotes,

> *...trainees are trained on the skill of customer service orientation through comprehension and response to customer needs... they are exposed to rapport building with a focus on their future interaction with customers during practice (THT 01).*

> *…this program recognizes that trainees who excel in this course create positive guest experiences by giving priority to customer service… trainees are therefore encouraged to anticipate customers' needs and provide enjoyable interactions, loaded with professionalism and empathy…. trainees undergoing the restaurant service course are for instance expected to be warm to customers, and accommodate specific needs (THT 02).*

On the soft skill of teamwork and collaboration, typical verbatim quotes included,

> *…this program embraces the skill of teamwork…trainees are often required to cooperate in delivering quality service consistently…moreover, the program emphasizes the idea of efficiency maintenance acquired through support for one another (THT 05).*

> *…this program is very conscious of the fact that working cohesively as a team is a key cog in the functioning of the tourism and hospitality practice… trainees are encouraged to collaborate, share tasks and to support each other towards realizing desired goals… sometimes they are asked to be flexible in their roles to maximize outputs…. for instance, in working together as a team, the housekeeping trainees are able to meet expected standards and efficiency (THT 07).*

Clearly, interviews with trainers confirmed that trainees are often exposed to a variety of soft skills relevant for tourism and hospitality practice. The soft skills delineated are consistent with the skills that other scholars have identified for the hospitality industry.

4.2 Quantitative Questionnaire Development

On the basis of the exploratory sequential mixed methods approach employed in this research, the qualitative findings were subsequently used to develop the questionnaire administered to the trainees for the quantitative phase of the study. The five levels of affective domain identified during the qualitative phase namely receiving, responding, valuing, organizing, and characterizing together with the soft skills outcome represented in six likert scales for the trainee questionnaire. The resulting likert scales for the five levels of affective learning domain together with the perceived soft skills scale, are as presented in (Annex B).

4.2.1 The Receiving Level Scale Development

The receiving level scale was developed to comprise of two sub-categories namely; "openness to experience" and "willingness to hear" consistent with the two elements amplified in the receiving level. Four likert items were generated in line with the axial codes depicting "openness to experience". Similarly, three likert items were generated to reflect the three axial codes for "willingness to hear".

4.2.2 The Responding Level Scale

The responding level scale was developed with three sub-categories referencing "active participation", "complying with", and "reacting to". A total of ten likert items, 3 for active participation, 4 for complying with, and 3 for reacting to were generated in line with the axial codes depicting the three elements.

4.2.3 The Valuing Level Scale Development

The valuing level scale comprised of three sub-categories namely; "idea internalization", "identification with", and "accepting the worth of" consistent with the three elements amplified in the valuing level. Three likert items were generated in line with the axial codes depicting "idea internalization". Two likert items were generated under "identification with". Similarly, four likert items were generated to reflect the four axial codes for "accepting the worth of".

4.2.4 The Organizing Level Scale Development

In line with the two elements amplified in the organizing level of the affective learning domain, the likert scale for organizing level was developed to consist of two sub-categories. The two sub-categories were referenced "value classification" and "value prioritization". A total of eight likert items, four for each sub-category were discerned from the qualitative findings.

4.2.5 The Characterizing Level Scale Development

The last level of the affective domain that was identified by the qualitative phase is the characterizing level. Consistent with the three themes signifying the three elements amplified under this level, the characterizing level likert scale had three sub-categories designated as "value integration", "consistency", and "personal philosophy". A total of ten likert items were generated to reflect these sub-categories.

4.2.6 The soft skills scale development

Consistent with the three themes signifying the soft skills amplified in the tourism and hospitality diploma program, the acquisition of soft likert scale had three sub-categories designated as "perceived acquisition of communication skills", "perceived acquisition of customer service orientation", and "perceived acquisition of teamwork and collaboration". A total of sixteen likert items were generated to reflect these sub-categories.

4.3 Phase Two: Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis was guided by five objectives seeking to establish the effect of each of the five levels of the affective learning domain determined in the QUAL phase on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees pursuing a diploma course in tourism and hospitality. Data were first examined for response rate and then cleaned for missing values and outliers bearing in mind that most advanced statistics are sensitive to missing values and extreme cases.

4.3.1 Response rate

Data used in this quantitative phase were gathered from trainees pursuing the diploma program in tourism and hospitality and drawn from selected registered institutions in Nairobi County. A total of 262 questionnaires were administered consistent with the

number of trainees sampled. The response rate was calculated using questionnaires returned completely and properly filled. Out of the 262 trainees, 254 returned completed questionnaire representing a response rate of 96.9%. This response rate was well above the acceptable threshold of 66.5% as suggested by Ellis et al. (2022).

4.3.2 Data diagnosis

Data diagnosis targeted missing data and outliers which often interfere with the accuracy of estimated parameters. The idea was to clean the data of any missing data or outlets prior to running smart PLS.

4.3.2.1 Missing Data

Scholars have documented the importance of examining missing data patterns when analyzing quantitative data (Little & Rubin, 2019). Therefore, researchers have consistently identified three such patterns. According to Fletcher Mercaldo and Blume (2020), the missing completely at random (MCAR) pattern relates to missing data that do not however impact observed data. In contrast they point to the missing at random (MAR) pattern as one where the missing data affects observed data. Meanwhile, the missing at random but not ignorable (MNAR) pattern is perceived as the missingness that depends on unobserved data.

 In retrospect, this study employed the MCAR technique that allowed for imputation of data in cases where missing data was less than 5% in the given case. Five cases (24, 25, 38, 77 and 120) had 1 missing value each while 6 cases (49, 18, 50, 62, 155, and 201) had two missing values each (Table 9). Given that none of the cases had missing values above 5%, the missing data was imputed using hot deck imputation. Little and Rubin (2019) describe hot deck imputation as an approach to handle missing data that involves replacing the missing values using observed values from similar cases, also known as

donors from the same data set. This approach preserves the original distribution of the data and avoids introducing bias.

Table 9 Missing Patterns (cases with missing values)

Case	# Missing	% Missing
24	1	2.3
25	1	2.3
38	1	2.3
77	1	2.3
120	1	2.3
49	2	4.7
18	2	4.7
50	2	4.7
155	2	4.7
62	2	4.7
201	2	4.7

4.3.2.2 Univariate outliers

Little and Rubin (2019) define univariate outliers as data points that deviate significantly away from the distribution of a single variable. Such outliers are typically identified using a threshold of ± 3 or through histograms or box plots. When they exist, outliers signify presence of an observation that is unusually small or large compared with other observations. Therefore, in this research the Z-score approach was used. Z-scores of all data points in the given indicators were calculated. Univariate outliers were identified as Z-scores beyond ± 3. A total of 14 cases had univariate outliers in several indicators as demonstrated by Z-scores above ± 3 (Table 10). The 14 cases were deleted from further analysis.

Table 10 Univariate outliers

Indicator			Case (Z-score)
Openness to Experience (OE)		OE1	27 (-3.26); 89 (-4.58); 102 (-3.26); 135(-4.58); 157(-4.58); 175(-4.58); 198(-3.26); 226(-3.26)
		OE2	27(-4.03); 89(-5.60); 102(-4.03); 198(-4.03)
		OE3	27(-3.84); 89(-5.36); 102(-3.84);175(-3.84); 198(-3.84)
		OE4	27(-4.08); 89(-5.66); 102(-4.08); 198(-4.08)
Willingness to hear		WH1	27(-3.25); 89(-4.57); 102(-3.25); 198(-3.25)
		WH2	27(-3.24); 89(-5.50); 102(-3.95); 198(-3.94)
		WH3	27(-3.85); 89(-5.37); 102(-3.85); 198(-3.85)
Active participation		AP1	27(-3.25); 89(-4.57); 102(-3.25); 135(-4.57); 157(-4.57); 175(-3.25); 198(-3.25); 226(-3.25)
		AP2	27(-4.03); 89(-5.60); 102(-4.03); 198(-4.03)
		AP3	27(-3.84); 89(-5.36); 102(-3.84); 175(-3.84); 198(-3.84)
Identifying with		IW 1	6(-3.10); 48(-3.10); 89(-3.10); 105(-3.10); 141(-3.10); 157(-3.10); 201(-3.10); 229(-3.10)

4.3.2.3 Multivariate outliers

According to Little and Rubin (2019), multivariate outliers occur in simultaneous examination of multiple variables, such that observations deviate from the expected pattern. Whereas multivariate outliers may not appear unusual when considering a single variable, they are conspicuously unusual when a combination of variables is considered. In this study the Mahalanobis distance approach was used to examine presence of multivariate outliers. Under this approach, multivariate outliers were deemed to be present wherever the values of the probabilities of the Mahalanobis chi-squares were less than 0. 001. The results indicated lack of multivariate outliers.

4.3.2.4 Trainees demographic characteristics

Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were used to analyze trainees' gender, age and course enrolled in. These characteristics were of particular interest since previous studies have associated them with soft skills required to succeed in the tourism and hospitality industry. (Aziz et al., 2024; Elzen, 2019; Siddinky 2020; Talawanich & Wattanacharoensil, 2021) has for instance, demonstrated that there is a significant variation in soft skills development by gender. Vetrakova et al. (2019) highlighted the positive influence of age on educational diversification. Wesley et al. (2017) on the other hand reported variations in perceived importance of soft skills between retailing and tourism management students.

With this background this study sought to document the presentation of these demographics among trainees in order to use the results of the effect of levels of affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills with caution bearing the potential influence of these demographics. Results displayed in Table 11 revealed the following; the trainee sample was largely female (77.9%) compared to male (22.1%). Most of the trainees were aged between 20 to 24 years (48.8%) followed by trainees in the age bracket 25-30 years (24.2%). While several courses attracted enrolment from trainees, tourism management (23.3%), hospitality management (19.2%), hotel management (15.0%) catering and accommodation (13.8%) and travel and tourism management (10.8%) appeared to be more popular.

Table 11 Results of Trainees Demographic Characteristics

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	53	22.1%
	Female	187	77.9%
Age	below 20	43	17.9%
	20-24	117	48.8%
	25-30	58	24.2%
	Above 30	22	9.2%
Course Enrolled in	Hospitality mgt	46	19.2%
	Tourism mgt	56	23.3%
	Hotel mgt	36	15.0%
	Travel and tourism mgt	26	10.8%
	Catering and accommodation mgt	33	13.8%
	Food and beverage service and sales	20	8.3%
	Food and beverage mgt	13	5.4%
	Tour guide and travel operations	6	2.5%
	Restaurant mgt	4	1.7%

4.4 Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills Among Trainees

On the question of soft skills mostly emphasized by the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County, three skills were recurrent among the participating trainers. These skills were communication skills, customer service orientation, and teamwork and collaboration. To gauge how the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees perceived their acquisition of these skills, descriptive statistics combining proportions, means and standard deviations were used. On trainees perceived acquisition of communication skills, the proportion of agreements and associated mean scores confirmed that there was consensus that the trainees perceived themselves to have acquired communication skills. Specifically, there were high proportions and consistent agreements that the trainees have acquired the ability to interact highly with trainers (M=4.36, SD=0.652); that they have acquired the ability to demonstrate clarity in conveying desired information (M=4.33, SD=0.700); that they are able to interact effectively with guests and peers (M=4.35, SD= 0.636); and that they can adapt verbal tones depending on situations and individuals (M=4.34, SD=0.691).

There were also indications that trainees perceive themselves to have acquired the skill of customer service orientation. However, the slightly higher standard deviations suggested that the trainees may not have been consistent in their agreements. They tended to agree that they are able to handle customer complaints effectively (M=3.77, SD=0.995); that they have developed strong rapport with each other as would be expected in the industry (M= 3.92, SD=0.938); that they are able to anticipate customer needs and provide enjoyable interactions (M=4.10, SD=0.870); that they are able to uphold professionalism and exhibit empathy towards customers (M=4.24, SD=1.005); and that they have been equipped with the ability to perform multiple tasks to meet customer needs effectively (M=4.04, SD=1.008). There were also strong and consistent perceptions of acquiring skills of teamwork and collaboration as demonstrated in Table 12.

Table 12 Trainees' Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills

	SA	D	MA	A	SA	M	SD
Perceived Acquisition of Communication Skills							
We are able to interact highly with trainers.	0.8%	0.8%	2.1%	53.8%	42.5%	4.36	.652
We are able to demonstrate clarity in conveying the desired information.	1.3%	1.3%	2.1%	54.2%	41.3%	4.33	.700
We are able to interact effectively with guests and peers.	0.4%	0.8%	3.8%	53.3%	41.7%	4.35	.636
We are able to adapt verbal communication tones to suit different situations and individuals.	1.3%	0.8%	2.5%	53.3%	42.1%	4.34	.691
Perceived Acquisition of Customer Service Orientation							
We are able to handle customer complaints effectively	3.8%	7.5%	18.3%	48.8%	21.7%	3.77	.995
We have developed strong rapport as would be expected in the industry.	2.9%	7.1%	9.6%	56.3%	24.2%	3.92	.938
We are able to anticipate customer needs and provide enjoyable interactions.	1.7%	2.9%	14.6%	45.8%	35.0%	4.10	.870
We are able to uphold professionalism and exhibit empathy towards customers.	1.3%	9.6%	5.0%	32.5%	51.7%	4.24	1.005
We have been equipped with the ability to perform multiple tasks to meet customer needs effectively.	3.3%	7.5%	6.3%	47.9%	35.0%	4.04	1.008
Perceived Acquisition of Teamwork and Collaboration							
We are able to work effectively in teams	1.3%	0.8%	5.4%	57.5%	35.0%	4.24	.703
We collaborate in consistently delivering quality service.	0.4%	0.0%	3.8%	50.4%	45.4%	4.40	.606
We are able to collaborate, share tasks and to support each other to realize our goals	0.4%	0.4%	3.3%	51.3%	44.6%	4.39	.618
We adapt to our roles to optimize outputs.	0.8%	0.8%	4.2%	50.8%	43.3%	4.35	.680
We uphold strong work ethics as expected in teamwork.	0.8%	0.8%	2.5%	48.8%	47.1%	4.40	.665
We have strong connections with our seniors.	0.4%	0.0%	5.4%	49.6%	44.6%	4.38	.629
We are capable of resolving our conflicts	0.4%	0.0%	3.3%	48.3%	47.9%	4.43	.603

4.4.1 The effect of the receiving level of affective learning on trainees' perceived acquisition of soft skills

The first objective of this study sought to establish how the receiving level of the affective learning domain employed in the tourism and hospitality diploma program affected trainees' perceived acquisition of soft skills. This objective was analyzed using both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive analysis focused on trainees' perceptions regarding the emphasis given to the receiving level elements in the training. In contrast, the inferential analysis used the PLS-SEM approach to explore the resulting effect of receiving level elements on perceived acquisition of soft skills.

4.4.2 Descriptive analysis of the receiving level elements

Two elements amplified in the receiving level were recurrent in the interviews with trainers. These elements were code named as openness to experience and willingness to hear. To gauge the emphasis placed on these elements from a trainee perspective, the proportions of agreement were analyzed alongside the associated mean response scores and standard deviations. Under the openness to experience element of the receiving level, trainees had high agreements on its application in the tourism and hospitality diploma program (Table 13). For instance, they strongly agreed (58.3%) and also agreed (35.8%) that the training fosters an environment that promotes open mindedness and a willingness to explore. Similarly, there were strong agreements (62.1%) and agreements (34.6%) that the training provides a practical orientation towards creativity through hands on experiences, that the training encourages new ideas and experiences (SA=59.2%, A= 37.1%); and that it prompts trainees to become more inquisitive and curious (SA=64.2%, A= 32.5%).

The willingness to hear element revealed that trainees perceived highly the capability of the training to necessitate active listening highly (SA=57.1%, A=37.1%), that the training encourages the use of gestures as a means of acknowledging the efforts of other trainees (SA= 60.4%, A=35.8%); and that the training necessitates trainees' active participation in discussion (SA=60.0%, A= 36.3%).

Table 13 Prevailing Status of Application of the Receiving Level

	SA	D	MA	A	SA	M	S D
Open to Experience							
1. The training fosters an environment that promotes open-mindedness and a willingness to explore new ideas.	1.3%	2.1%	2.5%	35.8%	58.3%	4.48	.760
2. The training provides a practical orientation towards creativity through hands-on experiences.	0.4%	1.3%	1.7%	34.6%	62.1%	4.57	.637
3. The training encourages new ideas and experiences.	0.4%	1.7%	1.7%	37.1%	59.2%	4.53	.659
4. The training prompts me to become more inquisitive and curious.	0.4%	1.3%	1.7%	32.5%	64.2%	4.59	.634
Willingness to hear							
5. The training necessitates me to actively listen and show respect to the contributions of other trainees.	1.3%	2.1%	2.5%	37.1%	57.1%	4.47	.759
6. The training encourages the use of gestures as a means of acknowledging the efforts of other trainees.	0.4%	1.3%	2.1%	35.8%	60.4%	4.55	.645
7. The training necessitates my active participation in training discussions.	0.4%	1.7%	1.7%	36.3%	60.0%	4.54	.659

4.4.3 Evaluation of the outer models of receiving level and acquisition of soft skills.

Research hypothesis H_01 formulated after the QUAL phase postulated a lack of significant effect of the receiving level of the affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees pursuing the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. Before embarking on testing this hypothesis, the PLS–SEM outer model evaluations were run to determine internal consistency, measured through Cronbach's alpha, convergent validity measured

through AVE, and discriminant validity measured using the Fornell-Larker criterion. In these evaluations, Cronbach's alpha was expected to be above the threshold of 0.7 while AVE was required to be above the threshold of 0.5.

Results of the evaluation of the outer model confirmed that the statistical model linking the receiving level of the affective learning to perceived acquisition of soft skills was suitable. The internal consistency was satisfactory as depicted by Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.7. Similarly, the AVE scores were all significant above 0.5 (Table 14).

Table 14 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Results for the Receiving Level-Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	Convergent validity (AVE)
1. Open to experience	0.955	0.982
2.Perceived Acquisition of Soft Kills	0.716	0.607
3. Willingness to hear	0.923	0.867

Discriminant validity was also satisfied with the square root of the AVE surpassing other correlation values (Table 15).

Table 15 Discriminant Validity Results for the Receiving Level-Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Open to experience	Perceived Acquisition of Soft Kills	Willingness to hear
1. Open to experience	0.939		
2.Perceived Acquisition of Soft Kills	0.752	0.779	
3. Willingness to hear	0.923	0.867	0.931

4.4.4 Evaluation of the inner model of the receiving level and acquisition of soft skills model

The inner model (Figure 3) alongside the path coefficients (Table 16) affirmed that the formative receiving level elements namely openness to experience and willingness to hear explained up to 99.2% (R^2=0.992) of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft

skills. Moreover, openness to experience (β=1.004, p<0.05) was a positive and significant predictor of perceived acquisition of soft skill among the trainees. However, contrary to expectations willingness to hear (β=-0.008, p>0.05) was not a significant predictor of perceived acquisition of soft skill among the trainees in the context of the tourism and hospitality diploma program.
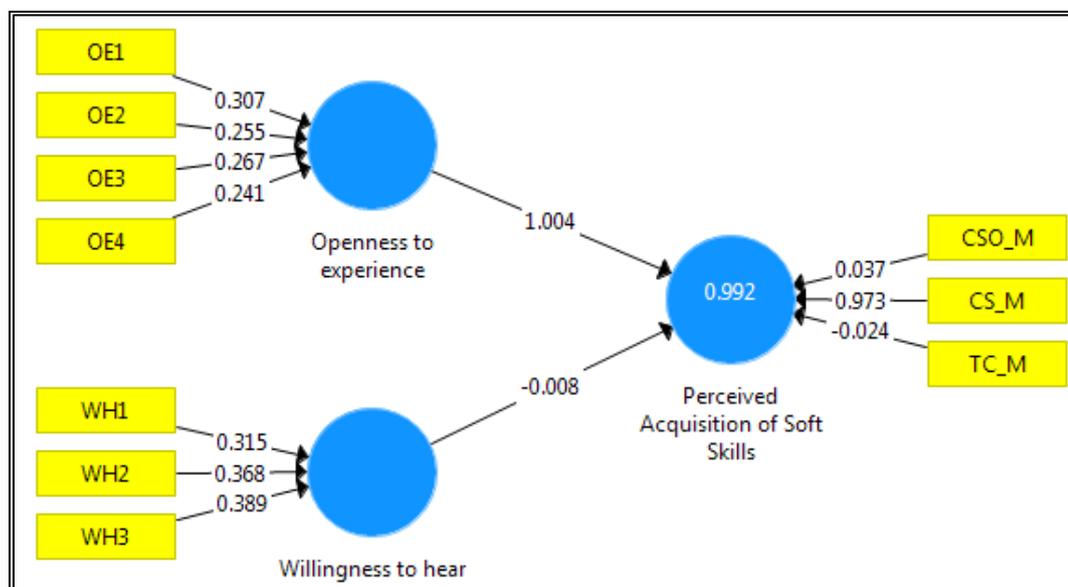
Figure 3 Structural model for the relationship between the receiving level and acquisition of soft skills

Table 16 Path Coefficients for the receiving level and soft skills model

Construct	Regression coefficient (β)	P values
1. Openness to experience ⟶ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	1.004	0.010
2. Willingness to hear ⟶ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	-0.008	0.457

From these results, it was clear that the receiving level of affective learning domain applied through openness to experience and willingness to hear in the tourism and hospitality diploma program was having a significant contribution to how trainees undertaking this program perceived their acquisition of soft skills. By being exposed to training that made them open to experiences and willing to hear such as open

mindedness, hands-on experiences, curiosity, active listening, gesticulations and active participation, trainees were bound to hone their soft skills such as building rapport with other trainees, upholding professionalism and collaborating with peers in the desire for quality services.

4.5 The effect of the responding level of affective learning on perceived acquisition of soft skills

The second objective of this research determined the effect of the responding level of the affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees pursuing the tourism and hospitality diploma program in educational institutions in Nairobi County. This objective was analyzed using both the descriptive and the inferential statistics. The outer models were based on the formative indicators where the responding level was a result of the particular indicators. The analysis of this objective focused on three elements amplified under the responding level namely, active participation, complying with, and reacting to.

4.5.1 Descriptive Results of the Responding Level Elements

Responding level of the affective domain was conceptualized as the second independent variable in this study. It determined the three elements amplified in the tourism and hospitality diploma program. Descriptive analysis highlighted trainees' views on the application of responding level of the affective domain through these elements during training. Results as presented in Table 17 indicated the following: with regards to "active participation", trainees strongly agreed (57.1%) that the training offers ample opportunities for responding and participating in presentations. A good proportion (37.1%) agreed with this likert item. Meanwhile, there were also agreements that the training allows use of non-verbal cues in responding to contributions made by other

trainees (SA = 62.1%, A = 34.6%) and that the training fosters trust and engagement through feedback (SA = 59.2%, A=37.1%). The mean response scores in items measuring active participation were above 4 while the standard deviations were all below 1. This implies that there was consistent agreement that the active participation element of the responding level is highly applied in the training.

In the case of "complying with", trainees elicited agreement that the training necessitates adherence to rules, standards, and regulates (A = 47.5%, SA=25.8%); that the training nurtures compliance ethos (A=37.5%, SA=34.6%); that the training provides specific deadlines to complete assigned tasks (A = 50.4%, SA=13.8%); and that the training promotes positive, energizing and solution oriented relationships (SA = 47.9%, A=36.3%). The mean response scores varied between 3.65 and 4.14 while the standard deviations ranged between 0.906 and 1.228. The slightly lower mean scores indicate that the application of the "complying with" element of the responding level in the training was slightly lower than that of the active participation element. Besides, the high standard deviations show that trainees' responses were not consistent regarding this element.

The descriptive statistics for the "reacting to" element of the responding level indicated agreements among trainees that the training encourages making suggestions to other trainees to improve their contributions (SA = 53.3%, A=22.9%); that it encourages the giving of positive proposals to improve discussions (A=35.4%, SA=31.7%) and that it recommends provision of verbal encouragement to other trainees (SA=55.4%, A=16.3%). The mean response scores ranged between 3.7 and 4.11 indicating high application of the elements. However, the high standard deviations ranging between

1.223 and 1.253 revealed that there were high variations in trainee responses towards

the "reacting to" element.

Table 17 Prevailing Status of Application of the Responding Level

	SA	D	MA	A	SA	M	Std Dev
Active participation							
1.The training offers ample opportunities for responding and participation in presentations.	1.3%	2.1%	2.5%	37.1%	57.1%	4.47	.759
2.The training allows use of non-verbal cues in responding to contributions by other trainees.	0.4%	1.3%	1.7%	34.6%	62.1%	4.57	.637
3.The training fosters trust and engagement through feedback	0.4%	1.7%	1.7%	37.1%	59.2%	4.53	.659
Complying with							
4.The training necessitates adherence to rules, standards, and regulations.	9.2%	0.0%	17.5%	47.5%	25.8%	3.81	1.108
5.the training nurtures compliance ethos.	9.2%	5.8%	12.9%	37.5%	34.6%	3.83	1.228
6.the training provides specific deadlines to complete assigned tasks.	3.3%	5.8%	26.7%	50.4%	13.8%	3.65	.906
7.The training promotes positive, energizing, and solution-oriented relationships.	9.2%	0.0%	6.7%	36.3%	47.9%	4.14	1.165
Reacting to							
8.The training encourages making suggestions to others to improve their contributions	9.2%	0.0%	14.6%	22.9%	53.3%	4.11	1.224
9. The training encourages positive proposals to improve discussions.	9.2%	5.8%	17.9%	35.4%	31.7%	3.75	1.223
10.The training recommends provision of verbal encouragement to others.	9.2%	0.0%	19.2%	16.3%	55.4%	4.09	1.253

4.5.2 Evaluation of the outer models in the responding level – acquisition of soft skills nexus

The second null hypothesis, **H₀2** of this research formulated after the QUAL phase

claimed that the responding level of the affective learning domain has no significant

effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma

trainees pursuing the program. The outer model's evaluation output presented in Table

18 revealed the following. Internal consistency across the responding level elements and the acquisition of soft skills construct were satisfactory (Cronbach's alpha values were all greater than or closer to threshold of 0.7). Although the "reacting to" construct had a value of 0.682, it was considered acceptable on the basis of suggestions by Hair et al. (2010) that Cronbach Alpha values in the range 0.6 to 0.7 can be accepted for exploratory studies such as this research. Meanwhile the AVE scores were all significantly greater than 0.5 indicating acceptable convergent validity.

Table 18 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Results for the Responding Level-Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	Convergent validity (AVE)
1. Active participation	0.930	0.878
2.Complying with	0.862	0.706
3. Perceived acquisition of soft skills	0.716	0.655
4. Reacting to	0.682	0.607

An examination of the Fornell–Larcker criterion output revealed that the square roots of the AVE were greater than other correlations on respective constructs (Table 19), an indication that discriminant validity was satisfied.

Table 19 Discriminant Validity Results for the Responding Level-Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Active participation	Complying with	Perceived acquisition of soft skills	Reacting to
1. Active participation	0.937			
2.Complying with	0.038	0.840		
3. Perceived acquisition of soft skills	0.757	0.663	0.810	
4.Reacting to	0.007	0.494	0.408	0.779

4.5.3 Evaluation of the inner model of the responding level and acquisition of soft skills model

Results of the inner model (Figure 4) revealed that the three elements of the responding level accounted for up to 98.6 percent (R^2 = 0.986) of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees, confirming that the responding level involves a deeper engagement compared with the receiving level, though still a foundational order level.
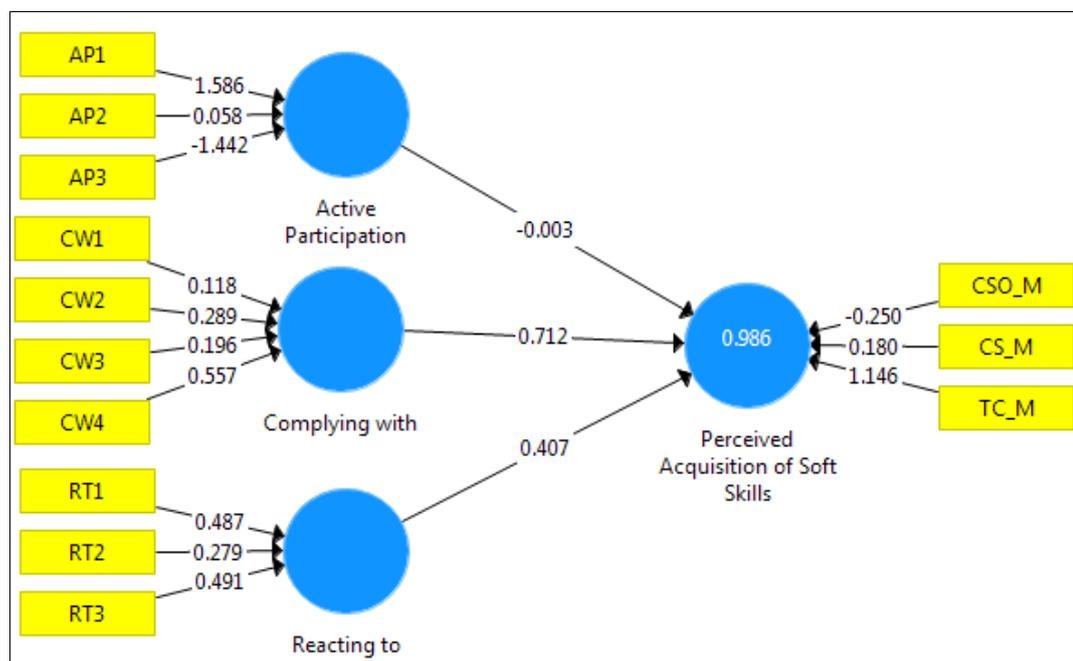
Figure 4 Structural model for the relationship between the receiving level and acquisition of soft skills.

The active participation element (β = -0.003, p>0.05) surprisingly failed to affect perceived acquisition of soft skills significantly. However, complying with (β = 0.712, p<0.05), and reacting to (β = 0.407, p<0.05) were all positive and significant predictors of perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees (Table 20).

Table 20 Path Coefficients for the responding level and soft skills model

Construct	Regression coefficient (β)	P values
1. Active participation →Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	-0.003	0.994
2.Complying with →Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.712	0.020
3.Reacting to →Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.407	0.032

These findings confirm that tourism and hospitality diploma students are exposed appropriately to training that is consistent with the required skills to navigate the tourism and hospitality industry. Through active participation, trainees enhance their capacity to interact with customers. Besides, the responding level through the element of "reacting to" nurtures emotional intelligence alongside attentiveness. Still, training ensures that trainees are able to comply with external stimuli such as service standards and procedures.

4.6 The effect of the valuing level of affective learning on perceived acquisition of soft skills

The third objective of the quantitative phase explored the effect of the valuing level of the affective learning domain as identified in the QUAL phase on perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees drawn from training institutions in Nairobi County. Three Valuing level elements, "idea internalization",

"identifying with" and "accepting the worth of "delineated in the QUAL phase were used in the analysis of this objective.

4.6.1 Descriptive Analysis Results of the Valuing level

The valuing level of the affective learning domain leveraging "idea internalizing", "identifying with" and "accepting the worth of" was conceptualized as the third independent variable of the QUAN phase. Descriptive analysis sought to explore trainees' views on application of the valuing level through its elements in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered to them. The descriptive results displayed in Table 21 indicated the following; trainees largely agreed with the application of the idea internalizing element of the valuing level of the affective domain. In particular, they agreed that the training has enabled them to behave and act consistently (SA = 47.9%, A=34.6%); that the support they receive during training motivates and upholds their values and beliefs (SA = 55.8%, A=25.4%); and that the training enables them to engage in reflective debate (A=53.8%, SA = 36.3%). In these three items, the mean response scores indicated a typical response of agreement while the standard deviation values indicated that there was some level of consistency in the agreements.

In the case of the "identifying with" element of the valuing level, the trainees were consistent in agreeing that the training nurtures a sense of alignment with the program's values and beliefs (A=45.4%, SA=44.2%); and that it has exposed them to the inherent significance of demonstrating commitment to others (SA = 44.2%, A=40.4%). Regarding the 'accepting the worth of' element, the trainees exuded agreement that the training has fostered a positive perception of other trainees (SA = 47.5%, A=28.3%); that it has helped them regain a sense of self-worth (SA=47.5%, A=34.2%); that during the training they appreciate the diverse perspectives from individual trainees (SA =

57.5%, A=32.5%); and that the training offers interactive modules that enhance trainee engagement (SA= 69.9%, A=15.5%).

Table 21 Prevailing Status of Application of the Valuing Level

	SA	D	MA	A	SA	M	SD
Idea Internalizing							
1.The training has enabled me to behave and act consistently.	5.0%	0.4%	12.1%	34.6%	47.9%	4.20	1.015
2.The support I receive during training motivates and upholds my values and beliefs.	1.3%	3.8%	13.8%	25.4%	55.8%	4.31	.931
3.The training enables me to engage in reflective debate.	3.3%	0.8%	5.8%	53.8%	36.3%	4.19	.850
Identifying with							
4.The training nurtures a sense of alignment with the program's values and beliefs.	2.5%	1.7%	6.3%	45.4%	44.2%	4.27	.852
5.The training has exposed me to the inherent significance of demonstrating commitment to others.	2.9%	3.3%	9.2%	40.4%	44.2%	4.20	.946
Accepting the worth of							
6.The training has fostered a positive perception of my colleagues.	3.3%	13.8%	7.1%	28.3%	47.5%	4.03	1.184
7.The training has helped me regain a sense of self-worth.	6.3%	0.8%	11.3%	34.2%	47.5%	4.16	1.078
8.During training, I often appreciate the diverse perspectives that individuals bring to the table.	6.3%	0.8%	2.9%	32.5%	57.5%	4.34	1.043
9.The training offers interactive modules that enhance trainee engagement.	7.9%	1.7%	5.0%	15.5%	69.9%	4.38	1.181

4.6.2 Evaluation of the outer models in the valuing level and acquisition of soft skills model

The third hypothesis **H₀3** for the QUAN phase posited that the valuing level of the affective domain of learning has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees. The formative outer models output (Table 22) revealed the following results. The three constructs measuring the valuing level together with the perceived acquisition of soft skills constructs had

adequate internal consistency, with the Cronbach's alpha coefficients surpassing the 0.7 threshold. The AVE values were all above 0.5 showing that convergent validity had been achieved.

Table 22 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Results for the Valuing Level and Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	Convergent validity (AVE)
1. Accepting the worth of	0.908	0.787
2.Idea internalizing	0.892	0.823
3. Identifying with	0.702	0.611
5. Perceived acquisition of soft skills	0.716	0.589

The Fornell–Larcker criterion output also revealed that discriminant validity was achieved. The square roots of the AVE's were all greater than all the other corresponding correlations involving the respective constructs (Table 23).

Table 23 Discriminant Validity Results for the Valuing Level and Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Accepting the worth	Idea internalizing	Identifying with	Perceived acquisition of soft skills
1. Accepting the worth of	0.887			
2.Idea internalizing	0.793	0.907		
3. Identifying with	0.380	0.519	0.782	
4.Perceived acquisition of soft skills	.0.559	0.649	0.402	0.768

4.6.3 Evaluation of the inner model of the valuing level – acquisition of soft skills model

To test hypothesis **H₀3** which posited that the valuing level of the affective learning domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills, the inner model was evaluated using the bootstrapping approach. Results of the Inner Model (Figure 5)

confirmed that the valuing level accounted for only 50% of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills.
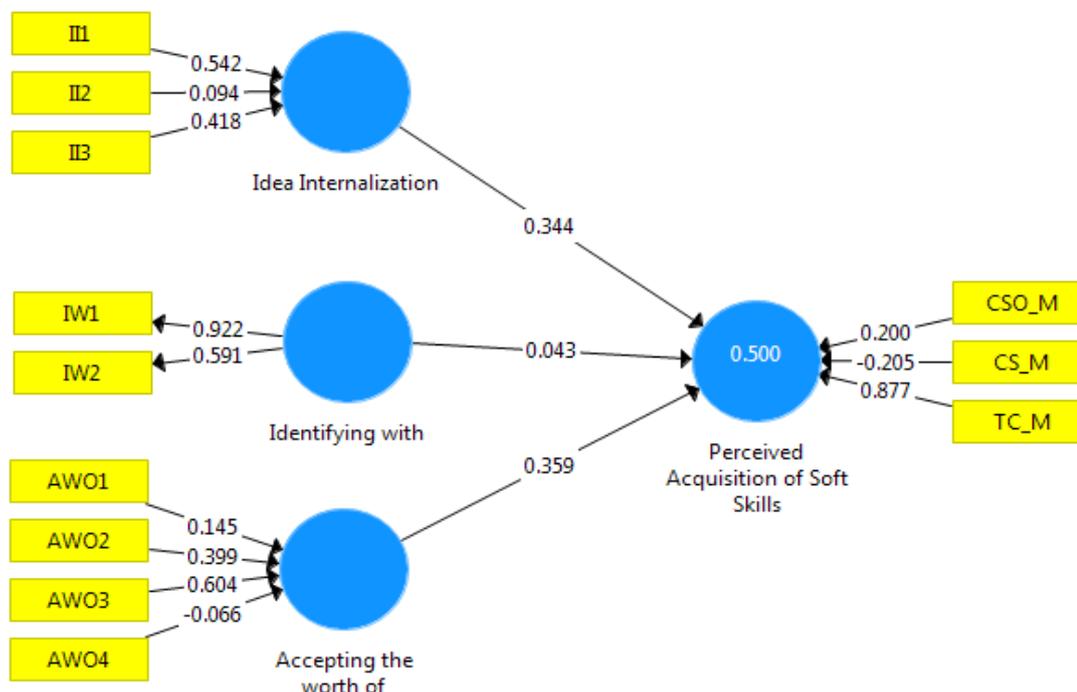
Figure 5 Structural model for the relationship between the valuing level and acquisition of soft skills.

Two of the elements, accepting the worth of ($\beta = 0.359$, $p < 0.05$) and idea internalizing ($\beta = 0.344$, $p < 0.05$) had positive and significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills. Identifying with ($\beta = 0.043$, $p < 0.05$) had a positive but non-significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills (Table 24).

Table 24 Path Coefficients for the valuing level and soft skills model

Construct	Regression coefficient (β)	P values
1. Accepting the worth of ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.359	0.002
2. Idea internalizing ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.344	0.000
3. Identifying with ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft	0.043	0.629

4.7 The effect of the organizing level of affective learning on perceived acquisition of soft skills

The fourth objective of this study sought to establish how the organizing level, through its two elements identified during the QUAL phase affects the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees' perception of acquisition of soft skills. Therefore, the organizing level elements of value classification and value prioritization were first taken through a descriptive analysis to explore their application in the program and thereafter they were evaluated to establish their effects on skills acquisition.

4.7.1 Descriptive analysis results for the organizing level

The organizing level of the affective domain identified value classification and value prioritization as the two reflective indicators. Eight Likert items, four each for the two constructs were used. Trainees were asked to share their agreements or disagreements on the application of the organizing level practices in the tourism and hospitality diploma program. The descriptive statistics (Table 25) revealed that despite agreeing with most items, the degree of agreement among the trainees was not as high as in the other levels. This is an indication that being a higher order level, the organizing level requires more efforts to be applied in the program.

Specific results indicated that most items were characterized by smaller mean scores, and large standard deviations, an indication of high variations in trainees' agreements. Nevertheless, they tended to agree, albeit minimal that the training supports personal, social and professional growth (M=3.70, SD = 1.133), that it enables assessment of and decision making on future actions (M=3.57, SD= 1.095); that the program aligns training courses with industry expectations (M= 3.74, SD=1.200); and that being

practically–oriented, the training gives a clear vision of progress (M=3.81, SD = 1.134), among others.

Table 25 Prevailing Status of Application of the Organizing Level

	SA	D	MA	A	SA	M	SD
Value classification							
1.The training supports my personal, social, and professional growth.	3.3%	15.0%	18.8%	34.6%	28.3%	3.70	1.133
2.The training enables me to assess and make decisions about my future course of action.	3.3%	16.3%	21.3%	37.9%	21.3%	3.57	1.095
3.The program aligns my courses with the expectations of the hospitality industry.	9.2%	7.5%	10.4%	45.8%	27.1%	3.74	1.200
4.The practical nature of the training provides a clear vision of my progress.	3.8%	14.6%	9.2%	42.1%	30.4%	3.81	1.134
Value prioritization							
5.The training prioritizes the brand of comfort and luxury expected in the hospitality industry.	15.0%	13.8%	8.8%	32.1%	30.4%	3.49	1.429
6.The training raises awareness on environmental sustainability and budgetary constraints	3.3%	5.8%	16.3%	36.3%	38.3%	4.00	1.041
7.The training has taught me to balance my needs with those of other trainees.	9.2%	5.8%	6.3%	42.1%	36.7%	3.91	1.219
8.The training has enabled me to connect customer concerns with service quality.	9.6%	22.1%	14.6%	25.8%	27.9%	3.40	1.350

4.7.2 Evaluation of the outer models in the organizing level–acquisition of soft skills model

The fourth hypothesis for the quantitative phase (**H₀4**) postulated a lack of significant effect of the organizing level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees. The outputs of the outer models (Table 26) revealed that the three constructs, value classification, value

prioritization, and perceived acquisition of soft skills had acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha scores were above 0.7), and that convergent validity was satisfied (AVE Scores were all above 0.5).

Table 26 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Results for the Organizing Level and Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	Convergent validity (AVE)
1. Perceived acquisition of soft skills	0.716	0.574
2. Value classification	0.898	0.767
3. Value prioritization	0.756	0.585

Similarly, the Fornell–Larcker criterion output (Table 27) indicated that the square roots of the AVE were all greater than the correlations for the respective constructs. Therefore, discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 27 Discriminant Validity Results for the Organizing Level and Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Perceived acquisition of soft skills	Value classification	Value prioritization
1. Perceived acquisition of soft skills	0.758		
2. Value classification	0.563	0.876	
3. Value prioritization	0.568	0.751	0.765

4.7.3 Evaluation of the inner mode of the organizing level – acquisition of soft skills model

The Inner model (Structural model) was evaluated to test the null hypothesis that the organizing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived

acquisition of soft skills among the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees. The inner model results confirmed that the organizing level elements contributed only 46.7% (R-square = 0.467) to the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills (Figure 6).
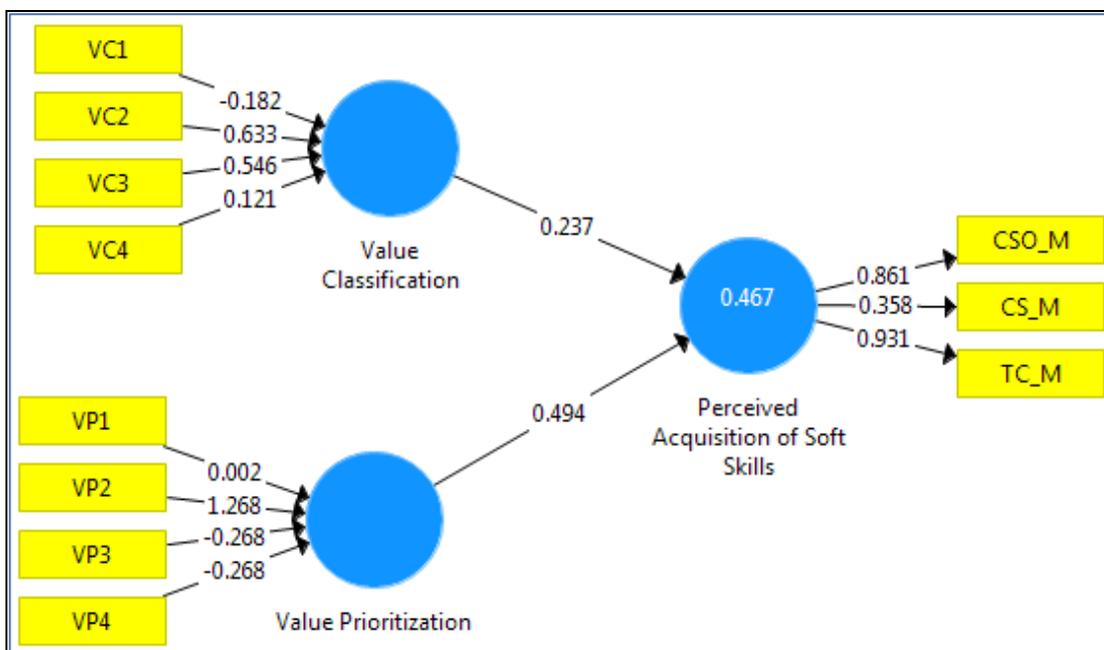
Figure 6 Structural model for the relationship between the organizing level and acquisition of soft skills

The resulting path coefficients (Table 28) confirmed that both value classification (β=0.237, p<0.05) and value prioritization (β = 0.494, p<0.05) were positive and are significant predictors of perceived acquisition of soft skills among the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees.

Table 28 Path Coefficients for the organizing level and soft skills model

Construct	Path coefficient (β)	P values
1. Value classification ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.237	0.000
2.Value prioritization ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.494	0.000

4.8 The effect of the characterizing level of affective learning on perceived acquisition of soft skills

The fifth objective of this study analyzed how the characterizing level of the affective learning domain affected acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees in training institutions in Nairobi county. This objective was also analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive analysis examined the trainees' opinions on application of several practices under this level in the tourism and hospitality program. Meanwhile, the inferential analysis determined the effect of the characterizing level through its elements on perceived acquisition of soft skills.

4.8.1 Descriptive analysis results for the characterizing level

Three elements amplified in the characterizing level were recurrent in trainers' responses during the qualitative phase. They included value integration, consistency and personal philosophy. Trainees were therefore asked to show their agreement /disagreement with items under each of these elements. Their response scores presented in Table 29 revealed variations in agreements across several items. For instance, in the case of value integration, whereas; trainees appeared to highly agree that the training encourages the use of own initiatives to identify and resolve issues (M=4.07, SD=1.107), and that the training emphasizes the importance of objectivity in addressing issues (M=4.22, SD=1.064), they on the contrary showed moderate and very inconsistent agreement that the training promotes teamwork ethos and encourages openness towards task sharing (M=2.99, SD=1.609), and that it instills the values of trust and conflict resolution (M=3.12, SD=1.544).

Regarding the items measuring consistency, trainees tended to agree that the training enhances frequent adherence to the fundamental principle of guest satisfaction (M=4.04, SD=1.060); that it helps maintain consistency in words and actions (M=3.78, SD=1.028); and that it enhances beliefs and previous experiences in performing tasks (M=3.61, SD=1.371). However, the high standard deviations were an indicator of lack of consistency in the agreements. Similarly, while there were agreements regarding personal philosophy as highlighted by mean scores closer to 4.00, the standard deviations were equally large signifying the inconsistent nature of the responses.

Table 29 Prevailing Status of Application of the Characterizing Level

	SA	D	MA	A	SA	M	SD
Value integration							
1.The training encourages the use of own initiatives to identify and resolve issues	3.3%	8.8%	11.7%	30.4%	45.8%	4.07	1.107
2.The training promotes a teamwork ethos and encourages openness towards task sharing.	28.3%	16.3%	12.1%	15.0%	28.3%	2.99	1.609
3.The training emphasizes the importance of objectivity in addressing issues.	1.7%	8.8%	11.7%	22.1%	55.8%	4.22	1.064
4.The training has instilled in me the values of trust and conflict resolution.	21.7%	20.8%	8.8%	21.3%	27.5%	3.12	1.544
Consistency							
5.The training has helped me to maintain consistency in my words and actions.	3.3%	11.7%	10.8%	51.7%	22.5%	3.78	1.028
6.The training enables me to enhance my beliefs and previous experiences in performing tasks.	9.2%	17.1%	14.6%	22.1%	37.1%	3.61	1.371
7.The training has enhanced my frequent adherence to the fundamental principle of guest satisfaction.	3.3%	5.8%	16.7%	32.1%	42.1%	4.04	1.060
Personal philosophy							
8.The training has enabled me to approach situations based on a clear set of values.	9.2%	9.6%	10.4%	43.8%	27.1%	3.70	1.225
9.The training encourages me to gradually improve my behavior.	9.2%	15.4%	4.6%	32.1%	38.8%	3.76	1.351
10.The training encourages me to utilize fear and failure as opportunities for personal growth.	3.3%	11.7%	12.5%	37.5%	35.0%	3.89	1.111

4.8.2 Evaluation of the outer models in the characterizing level and acquisition level

The fifth and final hypothesis of the quantitative phase of this research pre-supposed that the characterizing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees drawn from institutions in Nairobi County. Results of the construct reliability and convergent validity (Table 30) revealed that the four constructs had the required internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha were all above 0.7), and had satisfactory convergent validity as demonstrated by AVE scores greater than 0.5.

Table 30 Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Results for the Characterizing Level and Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Construct reliability (Cronbach's alpha)	Convergent validity (AVE)
1. Consistency	0.784	0.702
2.Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.716	0.578
3. Personal Philosophy	0.969	0.942
4. Value integration	0.845	0.677

The Fornell- Larcker criterion output (Table 31) confirmed that the constructs achieved adequate discriminate validity.

Table 31 Discriminant Validity Results for the Characterizing Level and Acquisition of Soft Skills Outer Models

Construct	Consistency	Perceived acquisition of soft skills	Personal Philosophy	Value integration
1. Consistency	0.838			
2.Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.594	0.760		
3. Personal Philosophy	0.874	0.492	0.971	
4.Value integration	0.632	0.554	0.417	0.823

4.8.3 Evaluation of the inner model linking characterizing level with perceived acquisition of soft skills

The inner model based on formative indicators was evaluated to test the hypothesis postulating that the characterizing level has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills. Results of the inner model presented in Figure 7 confirmed that the characterizing level of affective domain contributed 54.3% of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills (R.square = 0.543).
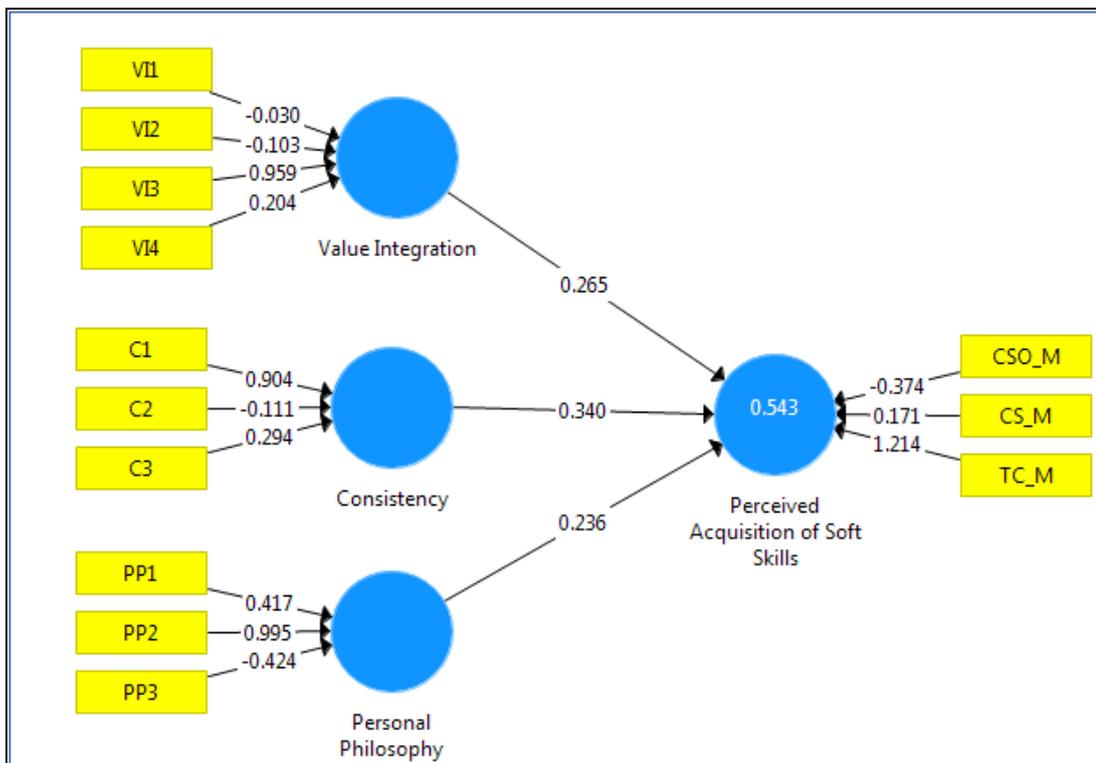
Figure 7 Structural model for the relationship between the characterizing level and acquisition of soft skills

The associated path coefficients (Table 32) indicated that the three measures of the characterizing level namely; value integration (β=0.265, p<0.001), consistency (β=0.340, p<0.001), and personal philosophy (β=0.236, p<0.05), were positive and significant predictors of perceived acquisition of soft skills.

Table 32 Path Coefficients for the characterizing level and soft skills model

Construct	Path coefficient (β)	P values
1. Consistency ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.340	0.000
2. Personal philosophy ➡Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.236	0.001
3. Value Integration➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.265	0.000

4.9 The effect of Affective Learning Domain on Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills

The five levels of the affective domain were used to model the combined effect of the affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees. Consequently, the mean scores of the indicators measuring each level were computed. The inner model based on reflective indicators was evaluated to test the hypothesis postulating that the affective domain levels have no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma students in institutions in Nairobi County. Results of the inner model presented in Figure 8 confirmed that the combined level of the affective domain of learning contributed 96.9% of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills (R.square = 0.969
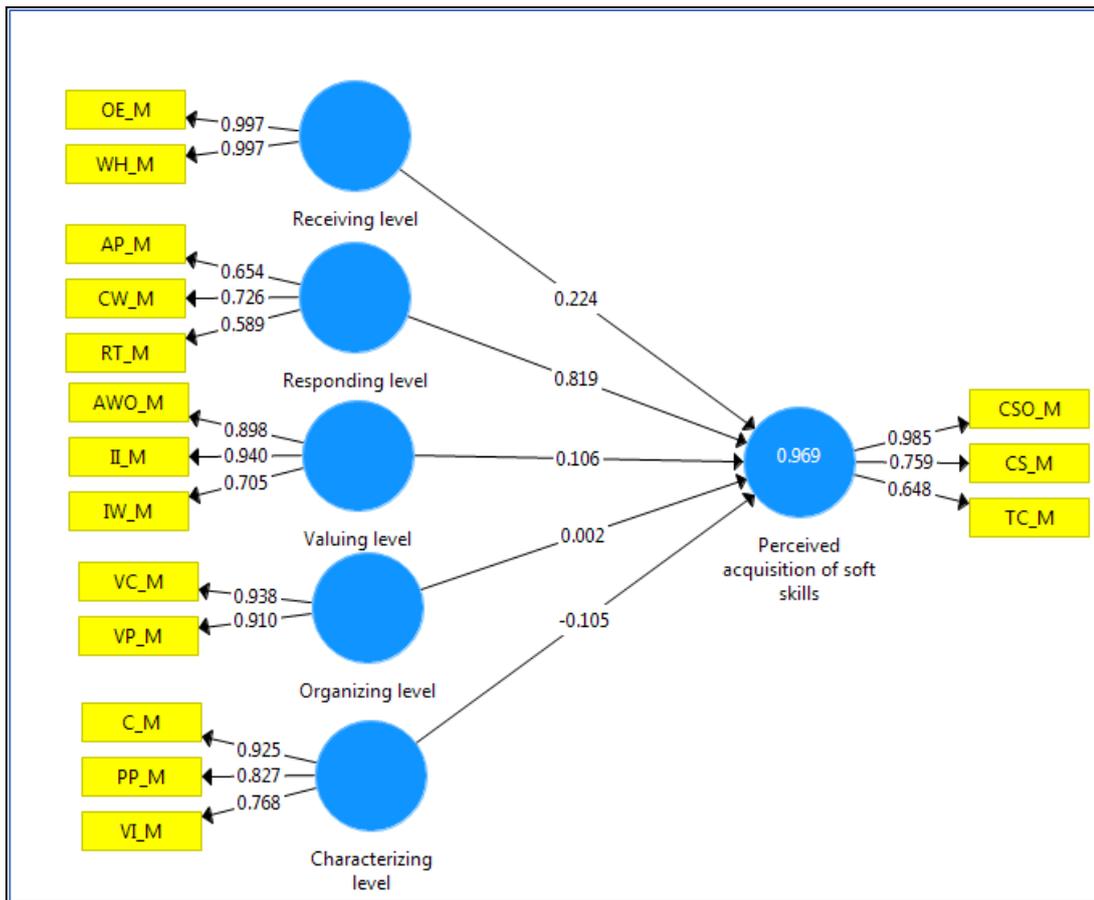
Figure 8 Structural model for the relationship between the Affective domain levels and acquisition of soft skills

The resulting path coefficients (Table 33) indicated that out of the five levels, the responding level (β=0.819, p<0.001), the receiving level (β=0.224, p<0.001), and the valuing level (β=0.106, p<0.001) had positive and significant effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills. Although the characterizing level (β=-0.105, p<0.001) had a significant effect, the effect was negative perhaps mirroring the hierarchical implementation required in teaching at such high levels. The organizing level (β=0.002, p>0.05) had a positive but non-significant effect on perceived acquisition of skills reflecting the difficulties in teaching affects in this level.

Table 33 Path Coefficients for the perceived acquisition of soft skills model

Construct	Path coefficient (β)	P values
1. Characterizing Level ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	-0.105	0.000
2. Organizing Level ➡Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.002	0.930
3. Receiving Level ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.224	0.000
4. Responding Level ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.819	0.000
5. Valuing Level ➡ Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	0.106	0.000

Therefore, the final model relating affective learning domain levels to perceived acquisition of soft skills is as shown in the equation below;

$$PAS= 0.224REC + 0.819RES + 0.106VAL + 0.002ORG - 0.105CHAR + \varepsilon$$

Where; PAS is Perceived Acquisition of Skills

REC is receiving level

RES is responding level

VAL is valuing level

ORG is organizing level

CHAR is characterizing level, and

Ɛ is the random error term

Table 34 Summary of Hypothesis Test Results

Null Hypothesis	Test	Decision criteria	p	Decision
H_{01}: **Receiving level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills**	Bootstrapping Path coefficient ($\beta = 0.224$)	1.Reject if p<0.05 2. Do not reject otherwise	.000	Reject H_{01}
H_{02}: **Responding level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skill**	Bootstrapping Path coefficient ($\beta = 0.819$)	1.Reject if p<0.05 2. Do not reject otherwise	.000	Reject H_{02}
H_{03}: **Valuing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skill**	Bootstrapping Path coefficient ($\beta = 0.106$)	1.Reject if p<0.05 2. Do not reject otherwise	.000	Reject H_{03}
H_{04}: **Organizing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skill**	Bootstrapping Path coefficient ($\beta = 0.002$)	1.Reject if p<0.05 2. Do not reject otherwise	.0930	Do not reject H_{04}
H_{05}: **Characterizing level of the affective domain has no significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skill**	Bootstrapping Path coefficient ($\beta = -0.105$)	1.Reject if p<0.05 2. Do not reject otherwise	.000	Reject H_{05}

From the summary of hypotheses, the following were inferred:

1. The receiving level of the affective domain plays a significant role in perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees, with a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.224$, p< 0.05) such that; a unit increase in receiving level elements in the diploma programme leads to 0.224 units' improvement in perceptions of acquisition of soft skills among the trainees.

2. The responding level of the affective learning domain has a commanding contribution to the perceptions of acquisition of soft skills among this cohort of trainees. This level has a positive and significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees ($\beta = 0.819$, p< 0.05). The path coefficient of 0.819 indicates that with every unit increase in the responding level elements,

there is an increase of 0.819 units in trainees' perceptions of acquisition of soft skills.

3. The valuing level of the affective domain contributes positively and significantly to perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees, albeit minimal compared to the lower order levels ($\beta = 0.106$, $p< 0.05$) such that; a unit increase in valuing level elements in the diploma programme leads to 0.106 units' improvement in perceptions of acquisition of soft skills among the trainees.

4. As a higher order level, the organizing level of the affective learning domain seemed to make no significant contribution to the perceptions of acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees. This level had a very minimal positive and non-significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees ($\beta = 0.002$, $p> 0.05$). The path coefficient of 0.002 indicates a near to none contribution of the organizing level elements to the trainees' perceptions of acquisition of soft skills, showing the difficulty involved to get higher order level elements across.

5. Similarly, as a higher order level, the characterizing level of the affective learning domain seemed to erode the perceptions of acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees. This level had a negative and significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees ($\beta = -0.105$, $p< 0.05$). The path coefficient of -0.105 indicates that as the endeavor to increase the characterizing level elements increased by unity, the trainees' perceptions of acquisition of soft skills declined by 0.105 units, showing the care required to internalize and embody values.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This study employed a two-pronged approach to explore the levels of the affective learning domain and their effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills in tourism and hospitality training programs offered in Nairobi County with a focus on trainees pursuing the diploma level. Consequently, Prong 1 employed the qualitative approach to identify levels of affective learning domain, elements amplified in these levels, and the soft skills given emphasis in the tourism and hospitality diploma program. In contrast, prong 2 examined the effect of the levels of affective learning domains on perceived acquisition of soft skills using quantitative data derived from the results of prong 1. Therefore, this chapter gives a summary of the findings, discussions, conclusions drawn from these findings, and recommendations made for theory, practice and policy.

5.1 Levels of the Affective Learning Domain Emphasized in the Tourism and Hospitality Program

The primary research question of the qualitative phase of the exploratory sequential mixed methods design was to identify levels of the affective learning domain emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in training institutions in Nairobi County. By employing thematic analysis, the study revealed five levels consistent with those associated with Bloom's affective learning domain. The first level, the receiving level was characterized by three axial codes identified as listening, being receptive, and awareness. The second level was the responding level and was inherent in three axial codes, active engagement participation, and reaction to learning. Valuing level manifested in two axial codes, commitment and prioritization

was the third level identified. The organizing level implicit in the axial codes' comparison, relating, synthesizing, and hierarchy together with the characterizing level manifested in the codes consistency and internalization were the fourth and fifth elements of the affective learning domain that were discerned.

The use of the five affective learning domain levels in the tourism and hospitality diploma program mirrored the argument by Kallou et al. (2022) that an emphasis on emotional intelligence growth in tourism training facilitated via innovation education programs, can impart emotional abilities and qualification relevant for the tourism sector. This finding also emboldens the argument requiring the management of emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge given their strong association (Avdimiotis, 2019).

Moreover, Johnson and Park (2020) identify use of affective learning domain in tourism training as mindfulness training that potentially reduces burn out among front-line employees in the tourism and hospitality industry while at the same time enhancing their levels of affective learning domain, these employees are able to regulate their emotional labor. Meanwhile, Borges et al. (2022) demonstrated that emotional intelligence among tourists impacts positively on tourism.

5.1.1 Elements the Tourism and Hospitality Diploma Program Amplifies in each of the Affective Learning Domain Levels.

The first secondary research question probed the elements that the tourism and hospitality diploma programs amplify in each of the affective domain levels. Once again, thematic analysis was used to identify the elements amplified in each of these levels. The receiving level had two elements amplified. The first element, openness to experience was implicit in four axial codes namely; open-minded, curiosity, creativity,

and preference for routine. The second element, willingness to hear was reflected in three axial codes namely; listening, focus and discussion. In doing so, this study echoed previous findings focusing on the receiving level from diverse contexts. Research shows that openness to experience is an avenue for curiosity, creativity, and hunger for knowledge such that individuals high in openness embrace novelty in terms of ideas and experiences (Silvia & Christensen, 2020). The bottom-line being that trainees who possess curiosity and imagination always cast their interest wider and are more likely to succeed in diverse job training disciplines (Lanford & Maruco, 2018). Zedelius et al. (2022) posit that deprivation of curiosity is as a result of excessive openness to inaccurate information. Murayama (2022) avers that openness to experience that integrates interest and curiosity relates to a reward-learning framework of knowledge acquisition.

Meanwhile, listening and hearing others out has been identified as a trigger for positive group processes, including an increase in intimacy and the willingness to aid each other (Kluger et al., 2021). By hearing others out, trainees are able to build trust and develop greater psychological safety. Scholars have pointed out that effective listening contributes to among other positives; enhanced performance (Itani et al., 2019), creativity (Castro et al., 2018), and engagement at work (Jonsdottir & Kristinsson, 2020).

Therefore, by emphasizing these virtues of openness to experience and willingness to hear, the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County seeks to nurture trainees who have curiosity and imagination to succeed in their tourism and hospitality fields, while at the same time producing trainees who can use their creativity to remain engaged in their work and enhance their performance.

Regarding, the responding level, three elements were identified as being amplified in the tourism and hospitality diploma program. The first element, active participation was manifested in three axial codes (provisions of ample opportunities, observable responses, and feedback culture). The second element, complying with was decoded from four axial codes (adherence of rules, compliance training, timely task completion, and positivity). The third element, reacting to was reflected in three axial codes (makes suggestions, gives proposals, and offers encouragement). These elements were consistent with elements that are mentioned in existing scholarly work focusing on the responding level of affective domain.

For example, Didion et al. (2020) identify active participation and engagement in instruction as important facets of increased response opportunities accorded in an affectionate manner like the use of response cards. Nguyen et al. (2018) demonstrated the importance of active participation through student interactions with teachers and peers in engagement behavior. Franklin and Hannington (2019) had meanwhile identified students' engagement as a critical responding level element through which students own the learning process. Contributing to the same discourse, Wu et al. (2019) pointed towards student feedback as a reaction to learning and an important element in the development of the affective domain. Meanwhile, Morina (2022) identified inclusive pedagogy that encourages students' response as an effective strategy in learning.

Three elements amplified in the valuing level were identified. The first element was "idea internalizing" depicted in the codes proficiency, supports and debates. The second element was "identifies with" implicit in the codes compatible with and commitment. While the third element was "accepts the worth of" reflected in the codes acceptance of

ideas, shows preference, and shows desire. These elements resonated with what literature has previously unearthed.

The notion of idea internalizing continues to feature strongly in the discourse on the valuing level of affective domain, and is seen both from positive and negative dispositions. For instance, Zittovivu and Gillespie (2015) argue that through internalization, culture can be changed to become the mind. The essence then is that valuing is not innate but rather it can be acquired through internalization of ideas. Meanwhile, despite being negative, it has also been demonstrated that racism can also be acquired through internalization (David et al., 2019) in more or less the same way Islamic moderation has been internalized (Kuswanto et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, the psychology of social worth features prominently with respect to belonging, recognition, and intervention in specific situations (Rothers & Cohrs, 2023). Besides, Svararsdottir (2014) relates "accepting the worth of" as value that leans towards desire, admiration, enjoyment, love and cherishing.

The organizing level had two elements amplified. The first element was value classification identified from five axial codes namely; identification, modification, synthesis, ordering and arrangement. The second element was value prioritization reflected in four codes namely; prioritize, contrast, reconcile and related. These elements reflect scholarly arguments leaning towards them in pointing out the importance of drawing a balance between freedom and behaviour, accepting responsibility for one's actions, and planning systematically when solving problems, and also the need to prioritize time effectively (Syniful et al., 2019). Others have pointed out that individuals hold diverse values and beliefs and also need to navigate conflicting messages (Davis et al., 2021; Sherefetdinova, 2024). Therefore, arguments

are made to the effect that there is a need to organize and contrast such messages to understand the unique world experiences (Shapiro, 2017).

Meanwhile, the characterizing level had three elements amplified. Value integration was the first element and was implicit in four axial codes (self-reliance, teamwork, objectivity, and professionalism). Consistency as the second element was captured from three axial codes (lack of contradictions, value continuum and binders). The last element, personally philosophy was manifested in the axial codes attitude, guiding principles, behaviour, enabling beliefs and uniting beliefs. Through these elements, this research like others underscored the importance of the characterizing level of the affective domain of learning in the tourism and hospitality training. This level, reflects trainees' acumen in integrating values, being consistent in actions, and leveraging personal philosophy in training.

Indeed, Pool and Sunder (2021) used the Pavlovian conditioning context to show that integration of values is an emotional learning aspect that reinforces the learning of algorithms. Moreover, integration of values as a characterization aspect of affective learning reflects sentiments by Djoub (2023) that integrating the affective domain empowers students to actively participate in the learning by pursuing suitable values. Meanwhile, the finding showing that personal philosophy is an antecedent of the characterizing level of affective learning is consistent with the arguments of Greene (2017) that acquisition of good moral intuitions is a product of value-aligned training that seeks to permeate trainees' personal philosophies

5.1.2 Soft Skills Emphasized in the Programs

The second secondary research question probed the soft skills mostly emphasized by the tourism and hospitality diploma programs offered in institutions in Nairobi County.

Thematic analysis of the trainers' responses revealed three sets of soft skills highlighting communication skills, customer orientation, and teamwork and collaboration as the predominant skills set amplified in the tourism and hospitality diploma program. These soft skills set was consistent with what other scholars have referenced in existing research.

For instance, in noting that soft skills are critical in enhancing the entire service experience in the hospitality industry, Hussain et al. (2024) identified effective communication, teamwork, work ethics, and proactivity among the key soft skills needed in the hospitality industry. Meanwhile, while observing that soft skills are central to sustainable development in tourism, Kiryakova-Dineva et al. (2019) referenced core soft skills such as customer focus, effective communication, environment consciousness, and teamwork among soft skills to be leveraged.

Meanwhile, the descriptive results confirmed that trainees pursuing the hospitality and tourism program in institutions in Nairobi County perceived themselves to have acquired soft skills needed to succeed in the hospitality industry. Such perceptions echoed findings by other scholars regarding hospitality training and skills development. For instance, Losekoot et al. (2018) demonstrated the importance of the hospitality industry internship by showing that, such internships not only enhanced hard skills required for the industry, but also developed professionalism, communication skills, interpersonal skills and teamwork. Mbagga et al. (2021) used the Arusha hospitality industry context to show that, when well implemented, a hospitality program can facilitate soft skills acquisition among trainees. Therefore, it was necessary to examine how levels of affective learning employed in the tourism and hospitality program offered in institutions in Nairobi County contributed to the positive perceptions

experienced among the trainees regarding their acquisition of soft skills. This was achieved by analyzing each quantitative phase objective.

5.2 Effects of the Affective Domain Levels on Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills

Five objectives were developed to guide the quantitative phase of this study. The objectives explored the specific effects of the five delineated levels of the affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills. The following sub-sections gives a summary of the quantitative phase findings.

5.2.1 Receiving level and Perceived Acquisition of soft skills

The descriptive analysis revealed that there is high application of the receiving level in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs offered in educational institutions in Nairobi county, underscoring the dominant application of foundational levels of the affective domain in learning. The PLS-SEM results confirmed that the receiving level of the affective learning domain was a positive and significant predictor of perceptions of acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma students. The path coefficient of 0.224 implied that an increase of 1 standard deviation in the use of the receiving level would result in an increase of 0.224 standard deviations in perceived acquisition of soft skills. This fundamental level contributed significantly to perceived acquisition of soft skills among the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees with openness to experience, and willingness to listen coming out as very critical affects to the acquisition of soft skills. By demonstrating the positive and significant effect of the receiving level, the study emboldened the use of the humanistic learning theory and existing findings showing the impact of open mindedness, hands-on training, use of gesticulations, and active listening.

The descriptive statistics pertaining to the receiving level usage in the institutions under study yielded high mean scores and lower standard deviations, which was testament to the fact that the trainees were consistent in their high regard to the application of the receiving level elements in the training. This finding showing the high application of the receiving level of the affective learning domain in the tourism and hospitality diploma program underscored arguments that have shown that the receiving level, reflecting awareness of the need and willingness to hear, ranks as a foundational level of the affective domain, and takes a shorter time to achieve while remaining highly applied (Wu et al., 2019). Moreover, research has shown that the receiving level as an awareness level is highly practiced due to its effectiveness in education and engagement (Pany et al., 2022; Trendak, 2016).

In essence, the high application of the receiving level of the affective learning domain in the tourism and hospitality diploma program reflects the use of the pedagogy of hospitableness in training. Such a pedagogy subsumes conditions and practices that ultimately trigger, amplify, support and accelerate a learning setting that nurtures a Hospitable Service Mindset (HSM) as suggested by Manfreda et al. (2024).

The finding showing that the willingness to hear element of the receiving level was equally highly practiced resonates with the views by Brownell (2009) showing that service excellence in hospitality can be fostered through listening. Singh et al. (2024) implicitly points to the ability to willingly hear others out as a service recovery avenue from failure that enhances service excellence in the industry. Additionally, Parks (2017) contends that learning to listen ethically provides hope for the sustainability of hospitality. Moreover, the results showing that under the receiving level of the affective domain, the training seemed to promote idea exploration, practical orientation, active

listening and acknowledgment, and respect for others. It was apparent that the program was keen on embracing diversity and empowering every trainee, which are key tenets of inclusive education (Sudarso et al., 2024). This further explains the high application of the receiving level in the tourism and hospitality diploma program.

The PLS-SEM results which revealed that openness to experience positively and significantly impacted perceived acquisition of soft skills were not surprising. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of openness to experience as an affective personality trait suitable for the hospital industry. For instance, Okafor et al. (2024) underscored the statistically significant influence of openness to experience on the entrepreneurial performance, albeit in firms drawn from the Anambra State of Nigeria. In another study, Kosker et al. (2019) used tourism and hospitality management undergraduate students in Turkey to demonstrate that openness to experience had a large effect size on the propensity to work in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Similarly, Harb et al. (2024) used the PLS-SEM approach to show that openness to experience positively and significantly influenced student's self-efficacy in the tourism and hospitality industry. Meanwhile, openness to experience was implicit in Yang et al. (2022) finding in the Chinese hospitality industry context showing that service innovation among employees was fostered by group openness diversity. Therefore, in finding that openness to experience positively and significantly impacted perceived acquisition of soft skills, this study contributes to the discourse on openness to experience by showing that such findings could be replicated using the Kenyan tourism and hospitality diploma context and would equally impact acquisition of soft skills positively among the trainees.

The finding showing that willingness to hear did not significantly affect perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees was contrary to the finding by Brownell (2009) who argued that hospitality managers needed to know that willingness to listen fosters service excellence in the hospitality industry. The finding also contradicted Parks (2017) who demonstrated that learning to listen in an ethical way that offered hope for sustainable hospitality. In the meantime, Min et al. (2021) established that greater customer satisfaction is derived from perceptions of preferential treatment fostered by active listening. Therefore, the finding showing the non-significant effect of willingness to hear points at the need to re-examine not only the study's context and the sample of trainees used, but also the open codes that led to the axial code of willingness to hear.

5.2.2 Responding level and perceived acquisition of soft skills

The second objective of the quantitative phase sought to explore the effect of the responding level of the affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees pursuing diploma in tourism and hospitality programs. The descriptive results confirmed that the responding level of the affective learning domain, equally a foundational order level, is highly applied in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi county as demonstrated through the high and consistent mean response scores. However, the emphasis was mostly on trainees' active participation, complying with phenomena, and their reaction to stimuli. Although the trainees indicated that they were also exposed to complying with requirements, the high variations in their responses indicated that this exposure was not given a lot of prominence.

The PLS-SEM results revealed that the responding level had a positive and significant effect on trainees' perception of acquisition of soft skills, contributing up to 98.6% of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills through the positive and significant effects of complying with requirements and reacting to stimuli. The path coefficient of 0.819 confirmed that the responding level was likely to increase the standard deviation of perceived acquisition of soft skills by 0.819 units for every unit increase in the responding level. While the non-significant effect of active participation contradicted many of the existing studies, it highlighted the need to reflect more on the study context and sample.

These findings underscore the importance of the responding level as a foundation level of the affective learning domain in the attitudinal and emotional tourism and hospitality learning, and offers support to existing research. For instance, several studies have demonstrated the critical role of active participation in hospitality training activities. Huertas–Valdivia (2021) used the Bachelor's in Tourism students' context to show that role playing was an active participation practice that enhances chances of trainees to internalize pertinent issues regarding staffing processes and the key emotional mistakes to avoid during job interviews. In another study, Chau and Cheung (2017) used the hospitality education context to demonstrate that active participation was similar to bringing life to learning and boosts students' skills as well as their knowledge seeking efforts. Commenting on active participation in hospitality training, Nyanjom and Wilkins (2021) postulated that emotional skills development requires a hospitality and tourism curriculum that incorporates active participation targeting opportunities for experiential learning and multi-disciplining approaches.

The finding in this study showing that the 'complying with' element of the responding level receives attention, albeit in a minimal way in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County, augured well with studies that have previously documented the importance of complying with expectations in the tourism and hospitality industry. Musavengane (2019) referenced complying with expectations as an avenue for small hotels to practice responsible tourism as articulated in UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Meacham et al. (2019) determined that complying with expectations amounted to the ethical management required to enhance authentic work experiences in the hotel sector. Meanwhile, Oriade et al. (2021) used a developing countries context to implicitly show that complying with requirements was a response towards sustainability awareness and organizational culture across hotels. Therefore, the finding that the training nurtures compliance ethos resonates with the desire to build institutions and capacity for the effective management of protected area systems as underscored in Leung et al's (2018) tourism and visitor management discourse.

The finding showing that the reaction to element of the responding level was also highly practiced in the tourism and hospitality diploma program, resonates with research that has documented the importance of responding to external cues in hospitality learning. Islam and Kirillova (2021) used Kinesics to show that use of non-verbal cues in responding to stimuli not only enhanced reciprocity (insight exchange and mutual recognition) and engagement (Relationship building and customized attention), but also acted as value triggers. Similarly, Malate et al. (2023) used hospitality management student interns drawn from the Filipino hospitality industry to demonstrate that non-verbal reaction cues such as facial expressions, paralinguistics, Kinesics, and proxemics are critical to overall service quality and customer experiences.

The finding showing that active participation was not a significant predictor of perceived acquisition of soft skills among tourism and hospitality diploma students in educational institutions in Nairobi County was not in concordance with other previous findings, raising interest for future research directions. Torralba and Doo (2020) observed that through active learning, teachers and learners get the opportunity to interact, engage more and acquire skills in critical thinking. Similarly, Meza Rios et al. (2018) posited that through active learning, students are exposed to hands-on experiences that enable them to implement strategic interventions. Elsewhere, de la Mora Velasco et al. (2024) posited that tourism and hospitality trainers recognize the importance of active learning approaches such as experiential learning, project based learning, and social constructivism in the evolving labour market. Meanwhile, Sallata et al. (2024) pointed out that active learning through real life situation bridges words and worlds.

The finding showing the positive effect of complying with on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees, resonates with and reinforces existing literature. According to Paskora and Zelenka (2024) complying with requirements such as regulations and industry standards represents a social responsibility move that is bound to instill sustainable soft skills. Calza et al. (2019) established that compliance with management standards and innovation drives productivity. In another study targeting sustainability in tourism in Southern Philippines, Jesther et al. (2024) noted that responsible tourism was a factor of targeted programs and stakeholder partnerships aimed at enhancing compliance with accreditation and licensing requirements.

The positive impact of exposure to compliance training is also emphasized in a study conducted by Merab (2023) from a Kenyan hospitality industry perspective. The study

carried out in fine dining hotels in Nairobi County suggested that appropriate compliance training among food workers is key to preventing foodborne infections. Similarly, Nzuva (2022) leveraged the hospitality industry to show that compliance with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) improves organizational culture and augments brand image.

5.2.3 Valuing Level and Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills

The third objective of the quantitative phase analyzed the effect of the valuing level on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees in the tourism and hospitality program. The descriptive results through high mean response scores, indicated that similar to other foundational order levels, the valuing level was being highly applied in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs offered in institutions in Nairobi County. Key affects associated with this level in respect with the tourism and hospitality diploma programs in question were highlighted including idea internalizing, identifying with, and accepting the worth of. The study established that the use of these values elicited consistency, commitment, and a feeling of self-worth among trainees as demonstrated in existing literature.

The PLS-SEM results confirmed that the valuing level positively and significantly influenced perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees, contributing 50.1% of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills particularly with the positive and significant effects of valuing level elements of accepting the worth of, and identifying with. The path coefficient was 0.106, an indication that an increase of 1 standard deviation in the valuing level elicited an increase of 0.106 standard deviations in perceived acquisition of soft skills.

These findings are consistent with studies which have highlighted the central role that the valuing level plays in hospitality training. Kabangire and Korir (2023) implicitly referred to idea internalizing when exploring the role of innovation and creativity in hospitality. They contend that the concepts of innovation and creativity which impact positively on the success of organizations in hospitality, are derivatives of idea internalizing. Moreover, by exposing trainees to facets of idea internalizing through the tourism and hospitality diploma program, the institutions were cognizant of research which seeks hoteliers to keep abreast with technological advancement by enhancing both process and product innovation (D'Souza, E. & D'Souza, K., 2023).

The finding showing that trainees were exposed to experiences and ethos of identifying with others during training, reflect the finding by Li et al. (2022) showing that social identity plays a motivational role on work related behaviour or performance. Moreover, the finding resonates with Li et al's. (2022) assertions that perceived need for belonging acts as a precondition for the creation of social identity among hospitality personnel. Meanwhile, referencing identifying with others as empathy, Lee and Lim (2023) underscored the importance of advancing empathy-related training in the hospitality industry. From a Kenyan hotel's context, Ngunyangi (2023) proxied 'identifying with' as managers' direct involvement to show the positive nexus between management support and performance.

In revealing that the training fosters elements of 'accepting the worth of' aspects such as positive perceptions of other trainees, regaining a sense of self-worth, and appreciation of diverse perspectives, the study echoed sentiments by Kim and Qu (2023) that coworker exchange is an antecedent of organization-based self-efficacy leading to prosocial behaviour. Meanwhile, Achieng and Pepela (2023) inferred that

interpersonal communication, a facet of accepting the worth of related significantly with the performance of classified hotels drawn from Mombasa County.

The inner model results show that the effect of the valuing level of affective learning depends on the specific values imparted, with accepting the worth of, and idea internalizing having more telling effects. The finding showing the positive but non-significant effect of idea identifying with others on soft skills acquisition among tourism and hospitality diploma trainees contradicts findings of other studies perhaps as a result of the study context or methodology.

For instance, Liu (2017) leveraged the learning theories alongside the intellectual capital theory to implicitly argue that identifying with others' ideas was a facet of exploratory and exploitative learning that earns hotels competitive advantage that was bound to strengthen innovation behaviour. Tari et al. (2019) determined that identifying with others in the hotel industry through its dimensions of daily practicing and continuous improvement plays a significant role in innovations and reflection on improving work processes resulting in improvements for customers, employees and the society at large. Therefore, the non-significant effect of idea internalizing on acquisition of soft skills calls for further interrogation of their application in the tourism and hospitality diploma program.

In contrast, the findings showing that accepting the worth of, and idea internalizing as elements of the valuing level of affective domain had positive and significant effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills are notable. These findings resonate with other existing studies. For instance, Nobukawa (2024) revealed that accepting the worth of co-workers and customers in the accommodation industry leads to enhanced interactions with them facilitating acquisition of hospitality competence.

Meanwhile, Stangl et al. (2024) were implicit in suggesting that idea internalizing alongside interns provides an opportunity to be exposed to transferable skills in tourism and hospitality leading to sustainable development. Yeswa and Ombui (2019) referenced idea internalizing with and accepting the worth of others as strategies for talent management which impact positively on employee retention in the hospitality industry. Sitati et al. (2019) used employee recognition as a proxy of accepting the worth of employees and demonstrated that such a move correlated positively with employee's retention. Similarly, accepting the worth of, and idea internalizing amounts to determinants of trainee welfare, which Sibota et al. (2024) found to relate positively and significantly with the performance of star-rated hotels in Kisii County.

5.2.4 Organizing level and perceived acquisition of soft skills

The fourth objective of the quantitative phase of the study sought to explore the effect of the organizing level of the affective domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees enrolled for diploma in tourism and hospitality programs in institutions in Nairobi County. The descriptive results, with low mean response scores depicting high disagreements, confirmed that the organizing level measured through value classification and value prioritization was a higher order level that required more efforts to be applied in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs.

The PLS-SEM results revealed that on the overall, the organizing level had a positive effect on trainees' perception of acquisition of soft skills, contributing a modest 46.7% of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills, however, the effect was not significant. Meanwhile, the effects of value classification and value prioritization on perceived acquisition of soft skills was significant. The path coefficients of 0.237 and

0.494 confirmed that at the individual indicator level, the organizing level was likely to be valuable in soft skills acquisition especially if implemented hierarchically.

These results, particularly the descriptive ones demonstrated that some levels of the affective domain, including the organizing level were not given prominence in hospitality training owing to their complexity and requiring spiral considerations. Such a finding is however not an anomaly given that previous studies have noted the dominance of the cognitive dimensions in training. For instance, in seeking to bridge the gap of dimensions of learning outcomes in recent environmental education literature, Lovren and Jablanovic (2023) established that the focus of education is mostly on measurable outcomes. Yet, preferences, values and enjoyment are critical in bridging the gap towards holistic training. Holding a similar view, Mais-Thompson et al. (2024) contend that most educational activities fail to link defined learning outcomes for the affective learning practices.

The finding showing the minimal application of the organizational level in the tourism and hospitality program reflects scholars who find that such higher order levels are time intensive processes. According to Wu et al. (2019), the final levels affective development requires a longer time to achieve and often occasion a spiral structure that consumes time. The finding also underscores the reported information about good affective teaching and learning in tourism and hospitality (Dewe, 2023, Singh, 2014).

The minimal contribution of the organizing level elements on the variance of perceived acquisition of soft skills is vindictive of the non-dominant applications of higher order levels in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. The positive and significant effects of the two elements on perceived

acquisition of soft skills show the potential that the organizing level can have if effectively implemented in hospitality training.

The non-dominant application of higher order levels of the affective domain has been highlighted by several scholars. Nix (2019) underscores the idea of ignoring the affective domain by questioning how much longer the affective domain will remain ignored. Doll et al. (2023) implicitly referenced the subtle application of the organizing level by finding that lower order affective learning is highly manifested among travelers following their short-term education travel overseas. Meanwhile, Baum et al. (2016) highlighted the minimal application value loaded learning embedded in the organizing level.

The finding showing that the organizing level through its elements of value classification, and value prioritization positively affected acquisition of soft skills, resonates with findings by Shum et al. (2018) who organized competencies in hospitality into several clusters based on value prioritization for leadership. Similarly, Wu et al. (2018), demonstrated that service value prioritization was critical to service delivery from a hospitality perspective.

Moreover, the finding showing the positive contribution of value prioritization towards acquisition of soft skills adds to the findings by Kamotho (2024), showing that prioritizing values such as functionality, aesthetic appeal, and comfort were crucial for guest satisfaction with hospitality from a Kenyan perspective. Similarly, Nasiche (2024) determined that prioritizing the wellness value was likely to improve marketing differentiation and operational efficiency in the hospitality industry in Kenya. Meanwhile, Musembi and Ragui (2021) used multiple regression to show the utility of value classification to the competitiveness of hospitality establishments operational in

Nairobi County. They particularly demonstrated that there was a statistically significant effect of classification and branding on hotel competitiveness.

5.2.5 Characterizing Level and Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills

The fifth objective of the quantitative phase analyzed the effect of the characterizing level of the affective learning domain on perceived acquisition of soft skills among trainees in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs. The descriptive results indicated that similar to other high order levels, the characterizing level was not very explicitly applied in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs offered in institutions in Nairobi County. Key affects associated with characterizing level in respect with the tourism and hospitality diploma programs in question were highlighted including value integration, consistency and personal philosophy. The descriptive findings suggested that the characterizing level of the affective domain, a higher order level, was equally being applied minimally in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs offered in institutions in Nairobi County.

The PLS-SEM results confirmed that the characterizing level negatively and significantly influenced perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees, contributing 54.3% of the variance in perceived acquisition of soft skills particularly with the positive and significant effects of the characterizing level affects of value integration, consistency and personal philosophy. The path coefficients for each of the three affects, notably 0.265 for value integration, 0.340 for consistency, and 0.236 for personal philosophy were a confirmation that if given time during implementation, the characterizing level affects have great potential to impact perceived acquisition of soft skills positively.

The descriptive findings suggested a minimal application of the characterizing level of the affective learning domain in the tourism and hospitality diploma program offered in institutions in Nairobi County. In doing so, the study vindicates existing literature which depicts the characterizing level as a high order level is not easily comprehended and applied during hospitality training. A large body of research reveals that hospitality training puts more emphasis on operational and technical competences as opposed to emotional development (Marneros et al,, 2020; Putra et al., 2022, Raizada, 2021). Indeed, Wu et al. (2019) have demonstrated that it takes longer to achieve the affective development of the final level, requiring a spiral structure of teaching.

These results show that the characterizing level of the affective domain has the potential to contribute significantly to acquisition of soft skills in tourism and hospitality training. However, as a higher order level, its contribution to perceived acquisition of soft skills in the diploma program was low perhaps due to its complex implementation process that prefers a spiral curriculum.

Nevertheless, the result showing the positive and significant effect of the characterizing level through its elements of value integration, consistency and personal philosophy lends credence to other previous findings. Wiegerink (2018) argues that hospitality training that integrates value creation is bound to motivate, empower and support hospitable service. Gibbs and Slevitch (2019) averred that it is important to integrate value in the form of technical and emotional competencies in hospitality education. From the Kenyan context, Wangechi et al. (2020) perceive value integration as a talent management strategy that is designed to realize the requisite service delivery quality. Still in the Kenyan context, Kanjuru et al. (2023) implicitly suggested that integration

of value of training remains a technique towards tacit knowledge creation that ultimately enhances competitive advantage.

The finding showing the positive effect of consistency on acquisition of soft skills resonates well with many scholars. For instance, Probhakar (2023) while commenting in the science of digital, contends that consistency creates a seamless and memorable experience for guests, while at the same time, fostering trust, brand affinity and longevity. Meanwhile, Asif (2023) points towards consistency as the linchpin that holds everything together in the world of hospitality. Omondi (2019) in conjunction with the Tourism Regulatory Authority approached the notion of consistency through standardization and classification of hotels, and noted that such an approach enables system structures to be consistent and amounts to a quality assurance approach. Similarly, Muriithi et al. (2019) used the Christian Faith Based Hotels context to demonstrate a positive relationship between consistency and performance, albeit under the moderation of entrepreneurial orientation.

The finding showing that personal philosophy as an element of the characterizing level of the affective learning domain had a positive and significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills also lends support to existing literature. Christou (2020) alluded to personal philosophy by concluding that a philosophical approach to tourism can deter the taking advantage of customers, natural environment, and employees. Moreover, such an approach expedites cultivation and enhancement of appropriate virtues, including patience, love, and kindness. Meanwhile, Losekoot et al. (2018) synonymously referred to personal philosophy as the student's voice, and posited that such personal philosophy was critical to acquisition of soft skills during internship.

5.3 Conclusion

This study explored the application of levels of the affective learning domain and their effects on perceived acquisition of soft skills in diploma tourism and hospitality training programs in Nairobi County. The findings revealed that all five levels of the affective learning domain (receiving, responding, valuing, organizing and characterizing) were applied in the training of tourism and hospitality and that this approach significantly enhanced the acquisition of soft skills by trainees. Further the study revealed the elements amplified in the training at each level of the affective domain and influenced the development of emotional aspects of learning. While learning in the cognitive domain concentrates on development of intellectual abilities, learning in the affective domain focuses on building attitudes and behaviours, thereby stirring up affective attributes in students so that they are more enthusiastic about what they are learning. Therefore, the study established that applying affective learning levels has a potential to enhance perceptions in the acquisition of soft skills among trainees.

The receiving and responding, being the foundational levels were easily applied and contributed significantly to perceived acquisition of soft skills among the tourism and hospitality diploma trainees. Training at receiving level influenced trainees to become more open to experience and willing to hear hence developing the much-needed soft skills. The responding level on the other hand, encouraged trainees to actively participate, comply with rules and regulations as well as react positively to values imparted.

Achievement of learning outcomes at these levels is critical as it determines the ability to arouse curiosity for high level learning to take place. Success in creating enthusiasm to learn ensures that trainees are motivated enough not only to pay attention but also to

actively participate and react to information received as well as comply with expectations. Moreover, their willingness to comply is not out of fear of punishment but an emotional satisfaction to do the right thing. At this level therefore, educators are encouraged to adapt teaching techniques that allow trainees to actively participate in experiential learning.

Meanwhile at the valuing level elements amplified were the ability to internalize concepts, identify with, and accept the worth of the training and skill competencies therein. At this level, trainees are able develop an emotional acceptance of what they are taught and begin to appreciate the worth of the soft skills which they openly express. The study concluded that the valuing level, though contributing lowly to perceptions of acquisition of soft skills is a critical level that builds from humanistic theory to elicit intended action among trainees.

At the organizing level, elements amplified were trainees' ability to classify and prioritize the values to enable them conceptualize soft competences acquired. The organizing level is considered a higher order and more complex and hence more difficult to apply. Consequently, it exhibited a low effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills. At this level, trainees are able to synthesize the value system, arrange and prioritize them to form patterns of behaviour. The organizing level is therefore a conceptualization level that allows trainees to classify and prioritize "perceived rights and wrongs" thus classify and prioritize establish a philosophy that harmonizes and orders an acceptable value system.

At the characterizing level which is the highest order level, trainees were able to integrate the values and skills acquired thus consistently developing personal philosophy in their attitudes and beliefs as well as influencing others' behaviour

positively. The characterizing level is the highest order of the affective domain that marks the peak of internalization of values and soft skills. The more the trainees internalize a value system, the more they integrate the value system and develop a consistent behavior that forms a personal philosophy that they boldly advocate for. However, this level was also not very explicitly utilized despite its potential to positively influence perceived acquisition of soft skills. The study therefore concluded that the higher order levels such as organizing and characterizing were under-utilized in the diploma tourism and hospitality programs, perhaps because they require more time being cyclical and hierarchical in nature.

The PLS-SEM results revealed a hierarchical order of application of the levels of the affective domain, with receiving, responding, and valuing being most prevalent, while organizing and characterizing appearing more difficult to employ in the training. Consequently, the PLS-SEM results revealed acquisition of soft skills was more significant at the foundational levels of the affective domain with receiving contributing 99.2%, responding contributing 98.6%, and valuing contributing 50.1%, while the higher order levels of organizing and characterizing contributed 46.7% and 54,3% respectively.

Consistent to other existing research, the study identified three skill sets of communication skills; customer orientation; and teamwork and collaboration as the most emphasized soft skills in the tourism and hospitality diploma programmes. The study concludes that application of the affective domain in the training of tourism and hospitality programmes positively influences acquisition of values, beliefs and attitudes by enabling trainees to listen, respond, and actively participate in the learning process. Further, the approach leads to internalization of concepts and acquisition of the requisite

soft skills and competencies necessary for personal career growth as well as business success.

5.4 Implications of the Findings

5.4.1 Implications for Theory

The implication of these findings to theory lies in their amplification of the humanistic psychology tenets relevant to existential and trans-personal psychology reminiscent of the tourism and hospitality industry. By finding that the affective domain levels manifested receiving, responding, and valuing positively impact perceived acquisition of soft skills, this research underscores the humanistic learning theory principles, notably that tourism and hospitality students should feel engaged and to be self-motivated to learn, requiring that tourism and hospitality educators endeavor to engage students, by encouraging them to be passionate and receptive of what they learn.

Students perceiving themselves as having acquired soft skills is itself humanistic. Arnold and Foncubierta (2021) argue that knowledge and feelings are both complementary to the learning process and should not be separated. Consequently, the study findings compel tourism and hospitality trainers to adopt the humanistic principle of focusing knowledge and feelings hand-in-hand in the learning process. This is particularly necessary given evidence which associates the humanistic tourism paradigm with response to radical changes being witnessed in the tourism industry (Della Lucia et al., 2021). The findings also reinforce contributions made by earlier scholars regarding the centrality of the humanistic approach. By finding that affective domain levels impact perceived acquisition of soft skills, the study resonates with the thinking of Dewey on the one hand and Bruner on the other. According to Dewey, the humanistic approach empowers schools to teach life skills meaningfully and in turn,

influences social outcomes (Starcher & Allen, 2016). In contrast, Bruner, a constructivist learning enthusiast argued for humanistic learning, pointing out that humanistic approaches such as discovery learning and scaffolding would make learning autonomous (Starcher & Allen, 2016).

Therefore, this study adds to existing knowledge by showing that implementing affective learning in tourism and hospitality, albeit at the diploma level, amounts to a humanistic education movement that can endear trainers to focus on technical and soft skills, provide motivation for training tasks, provide trainees with choices on tasks, and create opportunities for group work among peers. By anchoring affective learning in the humanistic education movement, this research contributes to humanistic tourism that is fast emerging as a new disciplinary perspective (Della Lucia et al., 2021). According to Pirson (2017), this is a perspective that prioritizes well-being, ethical working dimensions, meaningful work, and human dignity in the endeavor to address crises and challenges presently experienced in tourism.

Moreover, this study takes on the challenge by scholars requiring hospitality educators to embrace theoretical and managerial frameworks that recognize the transitioning nature of today's world (Pirson et al., 2019). Therefore, by showing that the affective learning domain significantly contributes to perceived acquisition of soft skills, the study confirms that affective levels provide the innovative teaching-learning environment that can enhance knowledge (co-) creation needed to address this transition. Moreover, the study shows that the tourism and hospitality education curricula can be redesigned to allow for autonomy in courses and soft skills required for the industry to remain sustainable. Such a redesign stands to gain from the integration of affective learning levels in tourism and hospitality programs. According

to Della Lucia and Giudici (2021), such an affect-based learning that aligns with the humanistic learning tenets can help alleviate the emotional skills gap in the industry.

Diploma programs like the degree ones are sources of innovative thinking and change. Through a diploma course, students are exposed to pragmatic knowledge-based approaches such as, innovation, idea generation, creativity, innovation management and entrepreneurship. Therefore, institutions offering diploma courses should strive to play a leading role in building the affective capacity of tourism and hospitality students to steer the industry away from the increasing pressures of today's hospitality workplace (Giudici et al. 2020). Furthermore, by focusing training on affective learning and acquisition of soft skills, the redesigned curriculum opens room for students to adopt values-based leadership models that will respect human dignity (Santonino 2021).

Regarding the Social Constructivism Theory, the results of these findings justify the position that affective learning plays in the construction of knowledge, particularly through the elements such as openness to experience, and active listening which engage trainees. This reinforces the key tenets of Vygotsky's conceptualization of cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, learner engagement through social interaction is the key towards knowledge construction and by extension the capacity to develop cognitively. Moreover, by showing that the receiving level through the amplified elements of openness to experience and willingness to hear influenced perceived acquisition of soft skills, the study underscores the social constructivist view that learning is a process attained through social mediation. In this regard, the findings point towards openness to experience and willingness to hear as avenues for social mediation. The same can be said of the elements amplified under the responding, valuing, and characterizing levels of the cognitive domain.

Moreover, in leaning towards the tenets of the humanistic learning theory, the study green-lights the social constructivism principles aligned with the need to support learners to reach and transcend their zone of proximal development (ZPDs). Affective learning strategies such as use of gesticulations, creativity through hands-on experiences, participation in presentations, solution-oriented relationships, and engagement in reflective debates enable trainees to be scaffolded towards their ZPDs where they can actively construct knowledge.

5.4.2 Implications for practice

The findings of this study which focused on training and soft skills development are important because they contribute directly to the discourse showing that in the tourism and hospitality industry, training and development not only enhance chances of success, but also improves service delivery and by consequence, customer satisfaction (Tracey & Swart, 2020). The practice of tourism and hospitality is faced with evolving technologies and trends. Therefore, focusing on affective learning represents practical training that has been attributed to intellectual flexibility and development of problem-solving skills (Saner et al., 2016).

The study also provides an opportunity for advancing tourism and hospitality education and research. Higher education in tourism and hospitality witnessed fundamental shifts and disruptions overtime. For instance, during the COVID-19 era, both students and educators had to get accustomed to modalities of online or hybrid teaching and learning (Park & Jones, 2021). Such disruptions call for transformative curricula that prioritizes experiential and outcome-orientation. This study contributes to the search for alternative instructional formats in tourism and hospitality by showing that besides

promoting diverse affects, affective learning levels also offered opportunities for students to acquire industry-centrist soft skills.

Indeed, this study aligns with the thoughts of scholars who have argued that the future of the tourism and hospitality sector depends on what education in this sector can offer (Shi et al., 2022). Therefore, by showing that affective domain levels in the tourism and hospitality diploma program has potential to enhance trainees' perceptions of acquisition of soft skills, this current research answers the industry concerns that education in the tourism and hospitality industry should focus students towards problem-solving, critical thinking, and analytical skills that can develop them into ethical leaders. Stakeholders in the industry are insistent on innovative teaching and learning, which should impart human skills including intercultural competence, cultural humility, and empathy, which are consistent with guest demands (Bui, 2023; Elfenbein, 2020). Therefore, this study contributes to this discourse by showing that implementing affective domain levels in the tourism and hospitality diploma programs is such an innovative teaching and learning that nurtures affects such as openness to experience, willingness to hear, active participation, reacting to stimuli, identifying with other students, personal philosophy, consistency, and accepting the worth of others which ultimately boost students' chances of acquiring such human skills.

Moreover, by focusing on affective learning which relates to learning through emotional engagement, this study joins other studies which recognize that tourism experiences are loaded with emotions which play a critical role in decision-making, memory retention, and cognitive processes (Godovykh & Tasci, 2020). Tapping on emotional aspects of affective learning in tourism and hospitality learning to develop human skills, positions this study alongside studies which have related emotions with

tourism experiences across several settings, including festivals, shopping, theme parks, holidays, heritage sites, scenic tourist attractions, and adventure tourism (Hosany et al., 2020; Wang & Lyu 2019). By investing in affective learning, tourism and hospitality programs can focus training to evolving market trends and technologies, thus placing the industry in the proper state to maintain a competitive edge. Implementing effective training programs not only empowers employees, but also fosters cultural awareness and responsible tourism practices.

5.5 Recommendations

Given the reported findings made in this study and conclusions drawn thereof, the following recommendations were made.

5.5.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The lukewarm application of the five levels of the affective learning domain in the tourism and hospitality diploma programme in institutions in Nairobi County should be maintained and stepped up to allow further development of soft skills among trainees. Policy makers, educational stakeholders, and hospitality stakeholders should take cognizance of attributes inherent in these levels, including awareness, receptiveness, active engagement, and commitment to craft enabling policy guidelines for affective learning in tourism and hospitality diploma programme. Such guidelines should endeavor to not only emphasize openness to experience and willingness to hear and learn, but must also focus on other affects like active participation, compliance with rules and regulations, internalization of concepts, identifying with other trainees, and appreciating the worth of training to optimize soft skills acquisition.

There is need to rethink the policy around curriculum design, delivery and assessment with a view to integrate soft skills in the training to ensure graduates are adequately

prepared to provide optimal service for guest satisfaction and hence for competitive advantage of the organisations. Industry practitioners are therefore encouraged to collaborate with training institutions to offer opportunities for trainees to get exposure to industry work environment through work-based learning activities, attachment and internships, as these real-life experiences have been shown to significantly contribute to the development of soft skills.

The management of institutions offering the tourism and hospitality diploma programme should capitalize on the high contributions of the receiving level (99.2%) and the responding level (98.6%), and their corresponding positive and significant effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills to align the diploma curriculum with the affects advanced by these two levels. Curriculum designers at this level should emphasize humanistic learning, knowing that such form of learning would steer diploma training in tourism and hospitality towards experiential learning, subsuming open mindedness, hands-on training, and active participation required in tourism and hospitality practice.

The positive and moderate effect of the valuing level begs for policy frameworks that entrench the valuing affects into the tourism and hospitality diploma programme. Stakeholders from Education and Hospitality should liaise with policy makers to design value laden programmes. Such programmes should prioritize the notions of value acceptance and commitment, bearing in mind that tourism and hospitality as an industry thrives on personal service which requires affective response to external stimuli. On reflection, the diploma programme should be designed to include values directed towards responsibility for individual attitude and behaviour.

The management of institutions should take action against the meagre contributions of the higher order levels of the affective learning domain towards perceived acquisition of soft skills among the trainees. They should seek mechanisms through which to prioritize the organizing and characterizing levels in diploma training, possibly allocating more time on tasks associated to them and pursuing a spiral mode of training. By doing so, trainees will not only get time to conceptualize the desired soft skills, but will also integrate them alongside the values they possess, enhancing their personal philosophies towards positive behaviour. Tourism and hospitality educators are encouraged to adapt methodologies that utilize all levels of the affective domain, including organizing and characterizing in training to maximize the acquisition of essential soft skills thus contributing to graduate employability.

5.5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of this study no doubt make concerted efforts to answer the research questions and address the research hypotheses. However, the following suggestions can be used to further improve these findings.

Although this study gives useful insights into the use of affective learning levels in the tourism and hospitality diploma programme and the subsequent effect on perceived acquisition of soft skills, the narrow scope of institutions from Nairobi County constrains the external validity. Future studies should widen the scope to include all counties across the country in order to enhance generalizability of the findings. Moreover, considering the differences in resources across institutions, such studies should seek to control for the effects of these resources either by treating them as control variables or moderating variables.

By focusing on trainee perceptions of acquisition of soft skills, this study falls short in confirming whether entrenching the affective learning domain makes any contribution to acquisition of soft skills. Therefore, future research seeking to establish the effect of affective learning on acquisition of soft skills in the tourism and hospitality diploma programme should consider employing the experimental designs like the pre-test and post-test design or the experimental versus control group design.

The findings pointing to the little influence of the organizing and characterizing levels on perceived acquisition of soft skills points to the limitation of conducting a cross-sectional study on levels that require more time to nurture. Future studies should consider the longitudinal approach that would be spread over some period, allowing trainees time to interact more with organizing level and characterizing level affects.

REFERENCES

Aarif, M., & Alalmai, A. (2019). Importance of effective business communication for promoting and developing hospitality industry in Saudi Arabia. *A Case Study of Gizan (Jazan)*.

Ab Hamid, M. R., Sami, W., &Sidek, M. M. (2017, September). Discriminant validity assessment: Use of Fornell& Larcker criterion versus HTMT criterion. *In Journal of Physics: Conference Series (*Vol. 890, No. 1, p. 012163). IOP Publishing.

Abou-Khalil, V., Helou, S., Khalifé, E., Chen, M. A., Majumdar, R., & Ogata, H. (2021). Emergency Online Learning in Low-Resource Settings: Effective Student Engagement Strategies. *Education Sciences*, *11*(1), 24. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci11010024

Achieng, S. A., & Pepela, A. W. (2023). Influence of Interpersonal Communication on Hotel Performance: A Case of Classified Hotels along the Kenyan Coastal Tourism Hub. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science,* 7(5), 1607-1614.

Acosta-Gonzaga, E., & Ruiz-Ledesma, E. F. (2022). Students' Emotions and Engagement in the Emerging Hybrid Learning Environment during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Sustainability*, *14*(16), 10236. https://doi.org/10.3390/su141610236

Adler, R. H. (2022). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation, 38(4), 598-602.*

Alexakis, G., & Jiang, L. (2019). Industry Competencies and the Optimal Hospitality Management Curriculum: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *31*(4), 210–220. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2019.1575748

Alexakis, G., & Jiang, L. (2019). Industry Competencies and the Optimal Hospitality Management Curriculum: An Empirical Study. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *31*(4), 210–220. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2019.1575748

Amukugo, H. J., Nangombe, J. P., & Karera, A. (2020). Experiences of inadequate interpersonal relationships regarding quality improvement and quality assurance in the Ministry of Health and Social Services in Namibia. *Development Studies Research*, *7*(1), 50–58. https://doi.org/10.1080/21665095.2020.1779598

Andrews, A. (2025). *The Importance of Time Management to Employers*. Www.zandax.com. https://www.zandax.com/blog/the-importance-of-time-management-to-employers

Ansari, A. (2021). The Role of Interpersonal Communication Skills in Human Resource and Management. *International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR)*, *10*(11), 916–922. https://doi.org/10.21275/sr211118020911

Arnold, J., & Foncubierta, J. M. (2021). The humanistic approach. *The Routledge handbook of the psychology of language learning and teaching*, 36-47.

Asif, A. (2023, October 5). The Key to Exceptional Hospitality: Consistency in Service. https://www.linkedin.com

Avdimiotis, S. (2019). Emotional intelligence and tacit knowledge management in hospitality. *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing (JTHSM), 5(2), 3-10.*

Awang-Hashim, R., Kaur, A., & Valdez, N. P. (2019). Strategizing inclusivity in teaching diverse learners in higher education. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction, 16(1), 105-128.*

Aziz, S., Harrizi, M., Loutfi, A., & Zaidoune, S. (2024). Undergraduates' Perspectives on the Significance of Soft Skills for Employment: Gender-Based Differences. *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies, 6(1), 3-31.*

Bamidis, P. D. (2017). Affective learning: principles, technologies, practice. In Brain Function Assessment in Learning: First International Conference, BFAL 2017, Patras, Greece, September 24-25, 2017, Proceedings 1 (pp. 1-13). Springer International Publishing.

Baum, T., Kralj, A., Robinson, R. N., & Solnet, D. J. (2016). Tourism workforce research: A review, taxonomy and agenda. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *60*, 1-22.

Benmoussa, F., Atill, M., & Koriche, H. (2024). Exploring the Influence of a Humanistic Approach in Higher Education on Motivation and Performance of Learner's Case of Master One Didactics and Applied Languages and Literature and Civilization Students (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ain Temouchent).

Bharwani, S., & Jauhari, V. (2017). An exploratory study of competencies required to cocreate memorable customer experiences in the hospitality industry. *In Hospitality marketing and consumer behavior (pp. 159-185).* Apple Academic Press.

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member checking: a tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation. *Qualitative health research,* 26(13), 1802-1811.

Borges, A. P., Vieira, E., & Lopes, J. M. (2022). Emotional intelligence profile of tourists and its impact on tourism. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism,* 23(5), 1276-1297.

Boudreau, , A., Rose, H., Landine, J., Niknazar, G., & Wong, V. (2022, August 8). *Soft Skills in Ontario's Post-Pandemic Hospitality and Food Services Sector - Hospitality Workers Training Centre*. Hospitality Workers Training Centre. https://hwtc.ca/media_posts/soft-skills-in-ontarios-post-pandemic-hospitality-and-food-services-sector/

Brownell, J. (2009). *Fostering service excellence through listening: What hospitality managers need to know.*

Bùi, T. A. (2023). *Intercultural Competence Development: Exploring International Graduate Student Leaders' Journeys through Contemplation and Mindfulness-Based Inquiry.*

Calza, E., Goedhuys, M., & Trifković, N. (2019). Drivers of productivity in Vietnamese SMEs: The role of management standards and innovation. *Economics of Innovation and New Technology*, *28*(1), 23-44.

Carlisle, S., Ivanov, S., & Espeso-Molinero, P. (2023). Delivering the European Skills Agenda: the importance of social skills for a sustainable tourism and hospitality industry. *Tourism & Management Studies*, *19*(3), 23–40. https://doi.org/10.18089/tms.2023.190302

Chau, S., Cheung, C. "Bringing Life to Learning": A Study of Active Learning in Hospitality Education. *Asia-Pacific Edu Res* **26**, 127–136 (2017). https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-017-0333-6

Chaudhari, T. (2022). Soft Skills: Types, Characteristics, and Importance. Journal of Commerce & Trade, 16(2).

Chimutingiza, F., Mwando, M., & Kazembe, C. (2012). *The hospitality and tourism honours degree programme: Stakeholders' perceptions on competencies developed.* https://ir.cut.ac.zw/xmlui/handle/123456789/477

Christou, P. A. (2020). *Philosophies of hospitality and tourism: Giving and receiving* (Vol. 91). Channel View Publications.

Cimatti, B. (2016). Definition, development, assessment of soft skills and their role for the quality of organizations and enterprises. *International Journal for quality research, 10(1), 97.*

Cole, M., & Scribner, S. (1978). Vygotsky, Lev S.(1978): Mind in Society. The Development of Higher Psychological Processes.

Collins, K. M., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Johnson, R. B., & Frels, R. K. (2013). Practice note: Using debriefing interviews to promote authenticity and transparency in mixed research. *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches,* 7(2), 271-284.

Cooper D.R. and Schindler P.S. (2013). *Business Research Methods*. 12th ed. McGraw-Hill/Irwin; New York, NY, USA:

Creswell J, Creswell J. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. SAGE Publication

Creswell J.W. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches.* 5th ed. SAGE Publications, Inc.; Thousand Oaks, CA, USA

Čuić Tanković, A., Kapeš, J., & Kraljić, V. (2021). Importance of Soft Skills And Communication Skills in Tourism: Viewpoint from Tourists and Future Tourism Employees. *Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe*, *6*. https://doi.org/10.20867/tosee.06.12

Cukier W., Hudson J. and Omar A. (2015), Soft Skills Are Hard: A Review of Literature. Ryerson University, Supported by: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)

Cypress, B. S. (2017). Rigor or reliability and validity in qualitative research: Perspectives, strategies, reconceptualization, and recommendations. *Dimensions of critical care nursing*, 36(4), 253-263.

Daher, W., Sabbah, K., & Abuzant, M. (2021). Affective Engagement of Higher Education Students in an Online Course. *Emerging Science Journal*, *5*(4), 545–558. https://doi.org/10.28991/esj-2021-01296

David, E. R., Schroeder, T. M., & Fernandez, J. (2019). Internalized racism: A systematic review of the psychological literature on racism's most insidious consequence. *Journal of Social Issues,* 75(4), 1057-1086.

Davis, E. B., Plante, T. G., Grey, M. J., Kim, C. L., Freeman-Coppadge, D., Lefevor, G. T., ... & Glowiak, K. J. (2021). The role of civility and cultural humility in navigating controversial areas in psychology. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice,* 8(2),

Davras, Ö. (2024). Prioritization of internal marketing practices according to their influence on employee satisfaction by comparing IPA and AIPA. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 122, 103821.*

de la Mora Velasco, E., Huang, A., & Renduchintala, C. (2024). Exploring Instructional Strategies in Tourism and Hospitality Education: A Comprehensive Review of Literature. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 1-12.

de la Nuez, H., Nieves, J., & Osorio, J. (2023). Neuroleadership: Affective experiences in the workplace and their influence on employees' evaluative judgements. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *114*, 103554. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103554

Deale, C. S. (2023). What can hospitality educators learn from students about effective teaching and learning at the beginning of an asynchronous, online class? *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, *23*(4), 425-444.

Deepa, R., & Mansurali, A. (2022). Reflective Journaling to Assure Learning in the Affective Domain. *South Asian Journal of Business and Management Cases*, *11*(2), 227797792211041. https://doi.org/10.1177/22779779221104148

Della Lucia, M. & Giudici, E. (2021a). *Humanistic tourism: Values, norms and dignity.* New York: Routledge.

Della Lucia, M., Dimanche, F., Giudici, E., Camargo, B. A., & Winchenbach, A. (2021). Enhancing tourism education: *The contribution of humanistic management. Humanistic management journal, 6, 429-449.*

Dell'Aquila, E., Marocco, D., Ponticorvo, M., Di Ferdinando, A., Schembri, M., Miglino, O., ... & Miglino, O. (2017). Soft skills. Educational Games for Soft-Skills Training in Digital Environments: *New Perspectives*, 1-18.

Der Foo, M., Anger Elfenbein, H., Hoon Tan, H., & Chuan Aik, V. (2004). Emotional Intelligence And Negotiation: The Tension Between Creating and Claiming Value. *International Journal of Conflict Management*, *15*(4), 411–429. https://doi.org/10.1108/eb022920

Didion, L. A., Toste, J. R., & Wehby, J. H. (2020). Response cards to increase engagement and active participation of middle school students with EBD. *Remedial and Special Education,* 41(2), 111-123.

Djoub, Z. (2023). The Affective Domain of Learning: Taxonomy and Useful Tips. EduLearn2Change. https://edulearn2change.com/

Dogru, T., McGinley, S., & Kim, W. G. (2020). The effect of hotel investments on employment in the tourism, leisure and hospitality industries. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *32*(5), 1941–1965. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-11-2019-0913

Donina, A., & Luka, I. (2014). The compliance of tourism education with industry needs in Latvia. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation*, *5*(3), 91–120.

Dou, X. K., Fan, A., & Cai, L. A. (2023). Affective learning in short-term educational travel abroad: An exploratory mixed-method study. *Tourism Management*, *94*, 104649.

Driskell, J. E., Salas, E., & Driskell, T. (2018). Foundations of teamwork and collaboration. *American Psychologist*, *73*(4), 334–348. Researchgate. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000241

Dubovi, I. (2022). Cognitive and emotional engagement while learning with VR: The perspective of multimodal methodology. *Computers & Education*, *183*, 104495. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2022.104495

Edmonds W.A. & Kennedy T.D. (2017). Explanatory-Sequential Approach. In: Edmonds W.A., Kennedy T.D., editors. *An Applied Guide to Research Designs: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods.* SAGE Publications, Inc.; Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: pp. 196–200.

Elfenbein, J. (2020). Learn First, Then Serve: Re-focusing the International Service-learning Model to Develop Cultural Humility. In Improving Classroom Engagement and International Development Programs: *International Perspectives on Humanizing Higher Education* (pp. 141-158). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Ellis, L. A., Pomare, C., Churruca, K., Carrigan, A., Meulenbroeks, I., Saba, M., & Braithwaite, J. (2022). Predictors of response rates of safety culture questionnaires in healthcare: a systematic review and analysis. *BMJ open,* 12(9), e065320.

Elmi, C. (2020). Integrating Social Emotional Learning Strategies in Higher Education. *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education*, *10*(3), 848–858. https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe10030061

Elzen, M. T. (2019). Match or Mismatch? An exploratory study into the match between talent practices-in-use by the Hospitality Industry and the expectations and characteristics of Generation Z (Master's thesis, University of Twente).

Evinex. (2025, February 4). *Time Management Strategies: Achieve Work-Life Balance*. Evinex Corporation | Staffing Agency. https://www.evinex.com/resources/articles/time-management-strategies-achieve-work-life-balance/

Fantozzi, I. C., Martuscelli, L., Di Luozzo, S., & Schiraldi, M. M. (2024). Soft Skills, Attitudes, and Personality Traits: How Does the Human Factor Matter? A Systematic Review and Taxonomy Proposal through ProKnow-C Methodology. *Businesses*, 4(2), 156-176.

Ferreira, M., Martinsone, B., & Talić, S. (2020). Promoting sustainable social emotional learning at school through relationship-centered learning environment, teaching methods and formative assessment. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, *22*(1), 21–36. https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2020-0003

Findyartini, A., Greviana, N., Felaza, E., Faruqi, M., Zahratul Afifah, T., & Auliya Firdausy, M. (2022). Professional identity formation of medical students: A mixed-methods study in a hierarchical and collectivist culture. *BMC Medical Education*, *22*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03393-9

FKE (2018), Skills Mismatch Survey. Federation of Kenya Employers Report

Fletcher Mercaldo, S., & Blume, J. D. (2020). Missing data and prediction: the pattern submodel. *Biostatistics*, 21(2), 236-252.

Franklin, H., & Harrington, I. (2019). A review into effective classroom management and strategies for student engagement: Teacher and student roles in today's classrooms. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*.

Fulmore, J. A., Olson, J., & Maellaro, R. (2022). Aligning Leadership Education: Linking Interpersonal Skills Development to Business Needs. *Journal of Management Education*, *47*(3), 105256292211333. https://doi.org/10.1177/10525629221133369

Galindo, M. (2024). *Exploring the Connection Between Game-Based Learning, Social and Emotional Learning, and Critical Thinking through Tabletop Role-Playing Games* (pp. 1–81) [Thesis]. https://jewlscholar.mtsu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/684a8bc9-15ae-4770-ac6a-1a79aabc3bd6/content

Gallarza, M. G., Sanchez-Fernandez, R., Arteaga-Moreno, F., & Del Chiappa, G. (2022). Active and reactive value dimensions: A dynamic-based perspective in the hotel sector. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 46(7), 1436-1473.*

Giannotti, F. (2021, March 10). Hospitality skills: Foundation for high emotional intelligence (EQ). https://hospitalityinsights.ehl.edu

Gibbs, L., & Slevitch, L. (2019). Integrating technical and emotional competences in hospitality education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education, 31(2), 99-110.*

Giudici, Ernestina, Angela Dettori, and Federica Caboni. (2020). Challenges of humanistic management education in the digital era. In Virtuous cycles in humanistic management, contributions to management science, ed. Ricardo Aguado and Almudena Eizaguirre, 21–35. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Godovykh, M., & Tasci, A. D. (2020). Customer experience in tourism: A review of definitions, components, and measurements. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 35, 1–10.* https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2020.100694

Goh, E., & Kim, H. J. (2021). Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Academic Performance in Hospitality Higher Education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *33*(2), 140–146. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2020.1791140

Grebin, N., Grabovska, S., Karkovska, R., & Vovk, A. (2020). Applying Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy ideas in adult learning. *Journal of Education Culture and Society, 11(1), 61-72.*

Green Z. A. and Batool S. (2017), Emotionalized Learning Experiences: Tapping into the Affective Domain. *Evaluation and Program Planning, Vol. 62 pp 35-48*

Green, Z. A. (2024). Incorporating Emotionalized Learning Experiences into Blended Learning for Advancing Positive Education. *Advances in Mental Health and Addiction*, 161–177. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-54295-4_11

Greene, J. D. (2017). The rat-a-gorical imperative: Moral intuition and the limits of affective learning. *Cognition,* 167, 66-77.

Hair Jr, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., &Sarstedt, M. (2021). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).* Sage publications.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Hair, J.F. Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis, (7th ed.).* New Jersey: PrenticeHall

Hamad Mohammed, Z. E., Siddig, K., & Grethe, H. (2022). A 2019 Social Accounting Matrix for Kenya including malaria epidemiological and agroecological zones (No. 103/2022). Working paper.

Hammar, T., & Griswold, P. (2023). Online Teaching, Learning, and Assessment: Lessons in Affective Education and Skill Development During the Pandemic. *Education and New Developments*. https://doi.org/10.36315/2023v2end098

Haq, Z. U., Rasheed, R., Rashid, A., & Akhter, S. (2023). Criteria for assessing and ensuring the trustworthiness in qualitative research. *International Journal of Business Reflections*, 4(2).

Harb, A., Khliefat, A., Alazaizeh, M. M., & Eyoun, K. (2024). Do personality traits predict students' interest and intentions toward working in the tourism and hospitality industry? Evidence from a developing country. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *36*(2), 165-181.

Hayes A.F. and Krippendorff K. (2007). Answering the call for a standard reliability measure for coding data. *Commun. Methods Meas.;* 1:77–89. doi: 10.1080/19312450709336664.

Hazra, A. (2017). Using the confidence interval confidently. *Journal of thoracic disease, 9(10), 4125.*

Hiestermann, M. (2022). *Mentoring ss Social Learning Value Creation in Two South African Environmental Organisations: A Social Realist Analysis* (pp. 1–281) [Thesis]. https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/574203994.pdf

Hosany, S., Hunter-Jones, P., & McCabe, S. (2020). Emotions in tourist experiences: Advancing our conceptual, methodological and empirical understanding. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management,* 16, 100444.

Huertas-Valdivia, I. (2021). Role-playing a staffing process: Experiential learning with undergraduate tourism students. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *29*, 100334.

Hussain, S., Soni, G., & Shah, F. A. (2024). Soft Skills and Interpersonal Skills for Tourism and Hospitality Industry. In *International Handbook of Skill, Education, Learning, and Research Development in Tourism and Hospitality* (pp. 119-138). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Ibiamke, A., & Ajekwe, C. C. (2017). On ensuring rigour in accounting research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences,* 7(3), 157-*170.*

Ibrahim, R., Boerhannoeddin, A., & Bakare, K. K. (2017). The effect of soft skills and training methodology on employee performance. *European Journal of Training and Development*, *41*(4), 388–406. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-08-2016-0066

Iqbal, J., Asghar, M. Z., Ashraf, M. A., & Yi, X. (2022). The Impacts of Emotional Intelligence on Students' Study Habits in Blended Learning Environments: The Mediating Role of Cognitive Engagement during COVID-19. *Behavioral Sciences*, *12*(1), 14.

Islam, M. S., & Kirillova, K. (2021). Nonverbal communication in hotels as a medium of experience co-creation. *Tourism Management*, *87*, 104363.

Jamshed, S. (2020). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of Basic and Clinical Pharmacy*, *5*(4), 87–88. NCBI. https://doi.org/10.4103/0976-0105.141942

Jeremy P. (2024, February 8). *Conflict Resolution: Definition, Strategies & More [Complete Guide] - Pollack Peacebuilding Systems*. Pollack Peacebuilding Systems. https://pollackpeacebuilding.com/blog/conflict-resolution/

Jesther, N. A., Dankyle, B., Jairus, G., Justine, C., & Yammie, D. (2024). Gearing Toward Sustainability: Knowledge and Compliance of Local Tourism Business Operators in Southern Philippines on the Mandatory Regulations. In SHS Web of Conferences (Vol. 204, p. 06004). EDP Sciences.

Jiménez, S., Juárez-Ramírez, R., Castillo, V. H., & Ramírez-Noriega, A. (2018). Integrating affective learning into intelligent tutoring systems. *Universal Access in the Information Society,* 17, 679-692.

Johnson, K. R., & Park, S. (2020). Mindfulness training for tourism and hospitality frontline employees. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, *52*(4), 185-193.

Jyoti D. M. & Rabindra, N. (2023, September 29). What is affective learning and how can it foster engagement and critical thinking. Times Higher Education. https://www.timeshighereducation.com

Kabangire, J., & Korir, J. (2023). Innovation and creativity in hospitality management. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 3(3), 20-41.*

Kallou, S., Kikilia, A., & Kalogiannakis, M. (2022). Emotional intelligence development in tourism education and training through digital technologies. In Innovations in Learning and Technology for the Workplace and Higher Education: Proceedings of 'The Learning Ideas Conference'2021 (pp. 149-159). Springer International Publishing.

Kamotho , J. (2024). Influence of Hotel Design on Guest Experience and Satisfaction in Kenya. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, 4*(2), 23–33. https://doi.org/10.47672/jht.2384

Kanjuru, J. W., Moses, M., & Jane, B. (2023). Techniques Applied in Tacit Knowledge Creation for Competitive Advantage in Selected Classified Hotels within Mombasa City County, Kenya. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management,* 6(4), 46-54.

Kasa, M., Kho, J., Yong, D., Hussain, K., & Lau, P. (2020). Competently skilled human capital through education for the hospitality and tourism industry. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, *12*(2), 175–184. https://doi.org/10.1108/WHATT-12-2019-0081

Kennedy, D. M. (2020). Strategic Management Practices and Performance of Selected Travel and Tour Agencies In Nairobi City County, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, Masters Thesis, Kenyatta University).

Khatib, M., Sarem, S. N., & Hamidi, H. (2013). Humanistic education: Concerns, implications and applications. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(1), 45-51.

Kikilia, A., Kallou, S., & Kalogiannakis, M. (2022). *An emotional intelligence training program in the tourism sector.* Hosted by The School of Hospitality and Tourism.

Kim, H., & Qu, H. (2023). Exploring the antecedents and consequences of hospitality employees' organization-based self-esteem. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, *22*(4), 613-634.

Kim, Y. H. (2023). Sustainability in Knowledge, Education, and Industry: A Case of a Hospitality and Tourism Program. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2023.2205144

Kiryakova-Dineva, T., Kyurova, V., & Chankova, Y. (2019). Soft skills for sustainable development in tourism: The Bulgarian experience. *European Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8(2), 57-57.

Kivunja, C. (2015). Teaching Students to Learn and to Work Well with 21st Century Skills: Unpacking the Career and Life Skills Domain of the New Learning Paradigm. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *4*(1), 1–11.

Kluger, A. N., Malloy, T. E., Pery, S., Itzchakov, G., Castro, D. R., Lipetz, L., ... & Borut, L. (2021). Dyadic listening in teams: Social relations model. *Applied Psychology*, *70*(3), 1045-1099.

Köşker, H., Unur, K., & Gursoy, D. (2019). The effect of basic personality traits on service orientation and tendency to work in the hospitality and tourism industry. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, *19*(2), 140-162.

Krathwohl D. R., Bloom B. S. and Masia B. B. (1964), *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook II Affective Domain.* New York: David Mckay Co.

Kumar, A., Singh, P. N., Ansari, S. N., & Pandey, S. (2022). Importance of Soft Skills and Its Improving Factors. *World Journal of English Language*, *12*(3), 220. https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v12n3p220

Kumari, S. (2024). Humanism in Education: Fostering Student-Centered Learning Through Maslow's and Rogers' Theories. *Journal homepage*: www.ijrpr.com ISSN, 2582, 7421.

Kuswanto, E., Mubin, M. N., & Kurniawan, D. S. (2023). Internalizing Islamic moderation: a model approach for educational institutions. IJoReSH: *Indonesian Journal of Religion, Spirituality, and Humanity, 2(1), 93-113.*

Lamri, J., & Lubart, T. (2023). Reconciling Hard Skills and Soft Skills in a Common Framework: the Generic Skills Component Approach. *Journal of Intelligence*, *11*(6), 107. https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11060107

Lanford, M., & Maruco, T. (2018). When job training is not enough: The cultivation of social capital in career academies. *American Educational Research Journal*, *55*(3), 617-648.

Lee, H.-Y., Lin, C.-J., Wang, W.-S., Chang, W.-C., & Huang, Y.-M. (2023). Precision education via timely intervention in K-12 computer programming course to enhance programming skill and affective-domain learning objectives. *International Journal of STEM Education*, *10*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-023-00444-5

Lee, S. H., & Lim, S. E. (2023). Enhancing teamwork in the hospitality industry: The importance of empathy. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 114, 103557.*

Leong, D. C. P. (2022). Emotional stability and motivation of 21st century learners: a comparative review of learning theories. *Quantum Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(6), 68-80.

Leung, Y. F., Spenceley, A., Hvenegaard, G., Buckley, R., & Groves, C. (2018). *Tourism and visitor management in protected areas: Guidelines for sustainability* (Vol. 27). Gland, Switzerland: IuCN.

Li, J., Irina, Y. Y., Yang, M. X., & Chen, S. (2022). How needs for belongingness and justice influence social identity and performances: Evidence from the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 50, 366-374.*

Li, P., Lv, Y., Wang, R., Chen, T., Gao, J., & Huang, Z. (2024). How do illegitimate tasks affect hospitality employees' adaptive performance? An explanation from the perspective of cognitive-affective system theory of personality. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 36(9), 3032-3051.*

Little, R. J., & Rubin, D. B. (2019). *Statistical analysis with missing data (Vol. 793).* John Wiley & Sons.

Liu, C. H. (2017). Creating competitive advantage: Linking perspectives of organization learning, innovation behavior and intellectual capital. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *66*, 13-23.

Liu, L., Muhammad Amir Saeed, Nasser, Goodarz Shakibaei, & Ayman Farid Khafaga. (2022). *Perspectives of EFL learners and teachers on self-efficacy and academic achievement: The role of gender, culture and learning environment*. *13*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.996736

Liu, S., Liu, S., Liu, Z., Peng, X., & Yang, Z. (2022). Automated detection of emotional and cognitive engagement in MOOC discussions to predict learning achievement. *Computers & Education*, *181*, 104461. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2022.104461

Liu-Lastres, B., Wen, H., & Okumus, F. (2023). Examining employees' affective and behavioral responses to internal crisis communication in times of COVID-19. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 111, 103494.*

Lo, N. (2023). Emotional Bridge in Higher Education: Enhancing Self-Efficacy and Achievement through Hybrid Engagement. *ESP REVIEW*, *5*(2), 7–23. https://kiss.kstudy.com/Detail/Ar?key=4060032

Lombardo, E., & Kantola, J. (2021). Social constructivism. In The Routledge handbook of gender and EU politics (pp. 43-55). Routledge.

Losekoot, E., Lasten, E., Lawson, A., & Chen, B. (2018). The development of soft skills during internships: The hospitality student's voice. *Research in Hospitality Management,* 8(2), 155-159.

Lovren, V. O., & Jablanovic, M. M. (2023). Bridging the Gap: The Affective Dimension of Learning Outcomes in Environmental Primary and Secondary Education. *Sustainability*, *15*(8), Article 8. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15086370

Lyu, W., & Liu, J. (2021). Soft skills, hard skills: What matters most? Evidence from job postings. *Applied Energy*, *300*, 117307. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apenergy.2021.117307

Mais-Thompson, E., Brown, B., & Paul, N. (2025). Unique practices in teaching affective learning in a higher education applied curriculum. *The Curriculum Journal*, *36*(1), 180–199. https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.285

Majid, S., Eapen, C. M., Aung, E. M., & Oo, K. T. (2019, December 1). *The Importance of Soft Skills for Employability and Career Development: Students and Employers' Perspectives. | EBSCOhost.* https://openurl.ebsco.com/contentitem/gcd:140446499?sid=ebsco:plink:crawler&id=ebsco:gcd:140446499

Malate, J. J., Garcia, C. E. P., Granados, E. L., Lor, H. K., Nacionales, J., & Claridad, N. (2023). Non-verbal communication in the workplace: Perceptions of hospitality management Filipino student interns in the service encounters. *Journal of Language and Pragmatics Studies*, *2*(3), 216-227.

Manfreda, A., Bisson, A., Lee, C., Scerri, M., Marcial, G. A., & Presbury, R. (2024). The Pedagogy of Hospitableness: A transformative approach for hospitality workforce development. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research, 10963480241302812.*

Marin-Zapata, S. I., Román-Calderón, J. P., Robledo-Ardila, C., & Jaramillo-Serna, M. A. (2022). Soft skills, do we know what we are talking about? *Review of Managerial Science,* 16(4), 969-1000.

Markle R. and O'Banion T. (2014), Assessing Affective Factors to improve Retention and Completion. *Learning Abstracts Vol. 17 (11)*

Marneros, S., Papageorgiou, G., & Efstathiades, A. (2020). Identifying key success competencies for the hospitality industry: The perspectives of professionals. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, *20*(4), 237–261. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313220.2020.1745732

Marneros, S., Papageorgiou, G., & Efstathiades, A. (2021). Examining the core competencies for success in the hotel industry: The case of Cyprus. *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education*, *28*, 100303. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100303

Marques, G. S., & Monteiro, A. (2024). Soft and Interpersonal Skills for Development as Professional in the Service Industry. In *International Handbook of Skill, Education, Learning, and Research Development in Tourism and Hospitality* (pp. 393-413). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.

Martin, D. A. (2020). *Towards a Sociotechnical Reconfiguration of Engineering and an Education for Ethics: A Critical Realist Investigation into the Patterns of Education and Accreditation of Ethics in Engineering Programmes in Ireland*. ARROW@TU Dublin. https://doi.org/10.21427/7M6V-CC71

Matteson, M. L., Anderson, L., & Boyden, C. (2016). "Soft Skills": A Phrase in Search of Meaning. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, *16*(1), 71–88.

Mbagga, S., Malusu, J., & Lyamtane, E. (2021). Implementation of Hospitality Programme to Facilitate Skills Acquisition among Trainees in Arusha Region, Tanzania. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Development, 10(10).*

Meacham, H., Cavanagh, J., Bartram, T., & Laing, J. (2019). Ethical management in the hotel sector: Creating an authentic work experience for workers with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *155*, 823-835.

Merab, A. A. (2023). Compliance to Food Safety Management Systems for Fruits and Vegetable Salads in Fine Dining Hotels in Nairobi County, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

Meza Rios, M. M., Herremans, I. M., Wallace, J. E., Althouse, N., Lansdale, D., & Preusser, M. (2018). Strengthening sustainability leadership competencies through university internships. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, *19*(4), 739-755.

Miller, B. T., Camarda, A., Mercier, M., Burkhardt, J.-M., Morisseau, T., Bourgeois-Bougrine, S., Vinchon, F., El Hayek, S., Augereau-Landais, M., Mourey, F., Feybesse, C., Sundquist, D., & Lubart, T. (2023). Creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration: Assessment, certification, and promotion of 21st century skills for the future of work and education. *Journal of Intelligence*, *11*(3), 54. https://doi.org/10.3390/jintelligence11030054

Min, K. S., Jung, J. M., & Ryu, K. (2021). Listen to their heart: Why does active listening enhance customer satisfaction after a service failure? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *96*, 102956.

Monteiro, P. C. (2025, January 28). *isEazy*. IsEazy. https://www.iseazy.com/blog/workplace-conflict-management/

Moriña, A. (2022). Faculty members who engage in inclusive pedagogy: methodological and affective strategies for teaching. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *27*(3), 371-386.

Mrisho, D. H., & Mseti, S. (2024). Emotional Intelligence: Concept, Theoretical Perspectives and Its Relevance on Job Performance. *East African Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies, 7(1), 28-37.*

Muindi, M. N., & Thinguri, R. (2022). The Efficacy of Communication Skills Curricula and Instruction on Acquisition of Soft Skills for Students in Kenyan Universities: A Critical Analysis. *European Journal of Education Studies*, *9*(1). https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v9i1.4109

Muriithi, R. W., Kyalo, T. N., & Kinyanjui, J. (2019). Effect of Consistency and Entrepreneurial Orientation on Performance of Christian Faith Based Hotels in Kenya. *Asian Academic Research Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities, 6*(4): 49-69.

Murtazoevna, S. Z. (2024). Developing Critical Thinking Through Problem-Based Teaching: A Scientific Exploration. *Science Promotion,* 7(1), 217-226.

Musavengane, R. (2019). Small hotels and responsible tourism practice: Hoteliers' perspectives. *Journal of cleaner production*, *220*, 786-799.

Musembi, J., M. & Ragui, M. (2021). Quality Standards and Competitiveness of Star Rated Hotels in Nairobi City County, Kenya. *Journal of Strategic Management, 5(1), 54-69.*

Muweesi, C., Kintu, G., Mugenyi, D. K., Kaweesi , M., Sserwadda, L., Nabateregga, J., Shizhou, L., Mugagga, A. M., & Taddeo, K. Y. (2024). Experiential and inquiry-based learning approaches; correlated exploration on usage in selected secondary schools in Bugiri District, Eastern Uganda. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2024.2368885

Mwita, K., Mwilongo, N., & Mwamboma, I. (2024). The role of soft skills, technical skills and academic performance on graduate employability. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science (2147- 4478)*, *13*(5), 767–776. https://doi.org/10.20525/ijrbs.v13i5.3457

Nasiche, B. (2024). The Role of Wellness Tourism in the Growth of the Hospitality Industry. *Journal of Modern Hospitality, 3 (1): 53 – 64.*

Ngunyangi, E. W. (2023). Change Management Practices and Corporate Sustainability in the Eco-hotel Industry, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

Nguyen, T. D., Cannata, M., & Miller, J. (2018). Understanding student behavioral engagement: Importance of student interaction with peers and teachers. *The journal of educational research,* 111(2), 163-174.

Nhuta, T., Nhuta, S., Makuyana, T., Makoni, R., & Chauke, A. (2015). *The Disparity between the Tourism Education/Training and the Needs of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Manpower Needs*. *2*, 65–83.

Nix, J. V. (2019). Learning outcomes in emotional context: How much longer will we ignore the affective domain? http://nixhome.com/index.php

Nix, J. V., & Song, M. (2020). Affective Assessment: Incorporating Emotions into our Work for Social Justice. *The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) 2020 Conference Proceedings*. https://www.aalhe.org/assets/docs/AALHE_2020_Conference_Proceedings.pdf

Nix, V., Song, M., & Lindbeck, R. (2021). Affective Learning Outcomes Assessment as a Path to Online Dialogic Student Development. *Journal of Organizational Psychology*, *21*(4). https://doi.org/10.33423/jop.v21i4.4548

Nobukawa, K. (2024). Acquiring process of hospitality competence for employees in the small and medium-sized accommodation industry. *Journal of Global Tourism Research*, *9*(1), 79-85.

Nobutoshi, M. (2023). Metacognition and reflective teaching: a Synergistic Approach to fostering critical thinking skills. *Research and Advances in Education*, 2(9), 1-14.

Nusrat, M., & Sultana, N. (2019). Soft skills for sustainable employment of business graduates of Bangladesh. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, *9*(3), 264–278. https://doi.org/10.1108/HESWBL-01-2018-0002

Nyanjom, J., & Wilkins, H. (2021). Emotional labor and the hospitality and tourism curriculum: The development and integration of emotion skills. *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism*, *20*(4), 611-631.

Nzuva, S. M. (2022). The role of corporate social responsibility in promoting business growth and sustainability in the hospitality industry. *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting, 23(23), 89-103.*

O'Neill, T. A. (2018). Creating high performance teamwork in organizations. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(4), 325–331. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2017.09.001

Okafor, N. B., Okoli, I. E. N., & Ezeoke, C. F. (2024). Effect of Neuroticism and Openness to Experience Personality Traits on Intrapreneurial Performance of Hospitality Firms. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, *1*(2).

Okatta, C. G., Ajayi, A., & Olawale, O. (2024). Enhancing Organizational Performance through Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: a Meta-Analysis. *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences*, *6*(4), 734–758. https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v6i4.1065

Olatunji M. O. (2014), The Affective Domain of Assessment in Colleges and Universities: Issues

Ong Choon Hee, Delanie Ang Hui Qin, Tan Owee Kowang, Maizaitulaidawati Md Husin, Lim Lee Ping (2019), Exploring the Impact of Communication on Employee Performance. *International. Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRTE) ISSN:* 2277-3878, Volume-8 Issue-3S2,

Oriade, A., Osinaike, A., Aduhene, K., & Wang, Y. (2021). Sustainability awareness, management practices and organisational culture in hotels: Evidence from developing countries. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *92*, 102699.

Owen, C. (2017). *Leadership, communication and teamwork in emergency management. In Human Factors Challenges in Emergency Management* (pp. 125-148). CRC Press.

Pany, P., Meier, F. D., Dünser, B., Yanagida, T., Kiehn, M., & Möller, A. (2022). Measuring students' plant awareness: A prerequisite for effective botany education. *Journal of Biological Education*, 1-14.

Paredes-Saavedra, M., Vallejos, M., Huancahuire-Vega, S., Morales-García, W. C., & Geraldo-Campos, L. A. (2024). Work Team Effectiveness: Importance of Organizational Culture, Work Climate, Leadership, Creative Synergy, and Emotional Intelligence in University Employees. *Administrative Sciences*, *14*(11), 280–280. https://www.mdpi.com/2076-3387/14/11/280

Park, M., & Jones, T. (2021). Going virtual: The impact of COVID-19 on internships in tourism, events, and hospitality education. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education,* 33(3), 176-193.

Parks, E. S. C. (2017). *Hope for Sustainable Hospitality: Learning to Listen Ethically through Discourses of Difference and Dialogic Philosophy* (Doctoral dissertation).

Pásková, M., & Zelenka, J. (2024). Social Responsibility in Tourism and Its Specific Features. In *Social Responsibility in Tourism: Applications, Best-Practices, and Case Studies* (pp. 85-135). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.

Phillips, P. P., Phillips, J. J., & Ray, R. (2020). Proving the value of soft skills: Measuring impact and calculating ROI. Association for Talent Development.

Pirson, M. (2017). *Humanistic management: Protecting dignity and promoting well-being.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pirson, M., Vázquez-Maguirre, M., Canan Corus, Erica Steckler, & Andrew Wicks. (2019). Dignity and the process of social innovation: Lessons from social entrepreneurship and transformative services for humanistic management. *Humanistic Management Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41463-019-00071-9.

Plano Clark, V. L. (2017). Mixed methods research. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 12(3), 305-306.*

Pool, E. R., & Sander, D. (2021). Emotional learning: Measuring how affective values are acquired and updated. In EThe Affective Domain of Learning: Taxonomy and Useful Tips

Prabhakar, R. (2023, August 11). The Importance of Consistency Across Touchpoints. The Science of Digital. https://www.xerago.com

Pun, J. (2023). Commentary: A for "The emotional landscape of English medium instruction (EMI) in higher education." *Linguistics and Education*, 101180. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2023.101180

Putra, F. K. K., Saepudin, P., & Utami, N. G. K. M. (2022). Preferred competencies for tourism and hospitality graduates: Evidence from longitudinal tracer studies. *Journal of Technical Education and Training (JTET), 14*(3), 94-104.

Raccanello, D., Balbontín-Alvarado, R., Bezerra, D. da S., Burro, R., Cheraghi, M., Dobrowolska, B., Fagbamigbe, A. F., Faris, M. E., França, T., González-Fernández, B., Hall, R., Inasius, F., Kar, S. K., Keržič, D., Lazányi, K., Lazăr, F., Machin-Mastromatteo, J. D., Marôco, J., Marques, B. P., & Mejía-Rodríguez, O. (2022). Higher education students' achievement emotions and their antecedents in e-learning amid COVID-19 pandemic: A multi-country survey. *Learning and Instruction*, *80*, 101629. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2022.101629

Rahimi, S. (2024). Saturation in qualitative research: An evolutionary concept analysis. *International Journal of Nursing Studies Advances*, 6, 100174.

Raizada, M. (2021). *Performance Management in Hospitality A Review*. AG Volumes, 100-107.

Rampin, R., & Rampin, V. (2021). Taguette: open-source qualitative data analysis. *Journal of Open Source Software*, *6*(68), 3522. https://doi.org/10.21105/joss.03522

Raras, P. N., Oktaria, E. T., A.a, I., Barusman, A. R. P., & Habiburahman, H. (2024). Hospitality Management Competence. *International Journal Of Education, Social Studies, And Management (IJESSM)*, *4*(2), Article 2. *https://doi.org/10.52121/ijessm.v4i2.319*

Rios, J. A., Ling, G., Pugh, R., Becker, D., & Bacall, A. (2020). Identifying Critical 21st-Century Skills for Workplace Success: A Content Analysis of Job Advertisements. *Educational Researcher*, *49*(2), 80–89. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X19890600

Ritter, B. A., Small, E. E., Mortimer, J. W., & Doll, J. L. (2018). Designing Management Curriculum for Workplace Readiness: Developing Students' Soft Skills. *Journal of Management Education*, *42*(1), 80–103. https://doi.org/10.1177/1052562917703679

Rogers, C R., Lyon, H C., & Tausch, R. (2013, August 22). On Becoming an Effective Teacher: Person-centered teaching, psychology, philosophy, and dialogues with Carl R. Rogers and Harold Lyon

Rosen, M. A., DiazGranados, D., Dietz, A. S., Benishek, L. E., Thompson, D., Pronovost, P. J., & Weaver, S. J. (2018). Teamwork in healthcare: Key discoveries enabling safer, high-quality care. *American Psychologist,* 73(4), 433.

Rothers, A., & Cohrs, J. C. (2023). What makes people feel respected? Toward an integrative psychology of social worth. *Psychological Review*, 130(1), 242–259. https://doi.org/10.1037/rev0000393

Rusmin, L., Misrahayu, Y., Pongpalilu, F., Radiansyah, R., & Dwiyanto, D. (2024). Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills in the 21st Century. *Journal of Social Science*, *1*(5), 144–162. https://doi.org/10.59613/svhy3576

Salas, E., Bisbey, T. M., Traylor, A. M., & Rosen, M. A. (2020). Can teamwork promote safety in organizations? *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior,* 7(1), 283-313.

Salas-Pilco, S. Z., Yang, Y., & Zhang, Z. (2022). Student engagement in online learning in Latin American higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review. *ProQuest*, *53*(3), 593–619. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13190

Sallata, Y. N., Siumarlata, V., Tulaktondok, L., & Arrang, J. R. T. (2024). *Bridging Words And Worlds: Teaching English for Tourism Through Real-Life Situations*. Penerbit Adab.

Sánchez-Fernández, R., Gallarza, M. G., & Arteaga, F. (2020). Adding dynamicity to consumer value dimensions: An exploratory approach to intrinsic values and value outcomes in the hotel industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 32(2), 853-870.*

Saner, T., Bahçelerli, N. M., & Eyupoglu, S. Z. (2016). The importance of practical training in tourism education. *Research Gate,* 916-920.

Sannino, C. (2024). Impact of Technological Change on Workers' Skills - Webthesis. *Polito.it*. https://webthesis.biblio.polito.it/secure/33560/1/tesi.pdf

Santonino, M. D. (2021). The humanistic supervisor. In Humanistic tourism: *Values, norms and dignity,* ed. Maria Della Lucia and Ernestina Giudici, 166–190. New York: Routledge.

Schaeffer, N. C., Dykema, J., Coombs, S. M., Schultz, R. K., Holland, L., & Hudson, M. L. (2020). General interviewing techniques: Developing evidence-based practices for standardized interviewing. In *Interviewer effects from a total survey error perspective* (pp. 33-46). Chapman and Hall/CRC.

Shan, Y. (2022). Philosophical foundations of mixed methods research. *Philosophy Compass*, 17(1), e12804.

Shapiro, D. (2017). *Negotiating the nonnegotiable: How to resolve your most emotionally charged conflicts*. Penguin.

Shawkat, J. (2024). The origin of soft skills. Human Resource Management Practice. https://hrmpractice.com

Sherefetdinova, E. R. (2024). In Intercultural Contexts, Social Norms, Beliefs, and Values Play A Significant Role In Shaping Interpretations And Interactions. *Kokand University Research Base*, 112-123.

Shi, J., Cai, L. A., & Wolfe, K. (2022). Advancing hospitality and tourism education and research through global crises. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 22(3), 199-204.

Shmueli, G., Sarstedt, M., Hair, J., Cheah, J., Ting, H., Vaithilingam, S., & Ringle, C. (2019). Predictive model assessment in PLS-SEM: Guidelines for using PLSpredict. *European Journal of Marketing, 53(11), 2322–2347. 10.1108/EJM-02-2019-0189*

Shum, C., Gatling, A., & Shoemaker, S. (2018). A model of hospitality leadership competency for frontline and director-level managers: which competencies matter more? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *74*, 57-66.

Shyaa, H. H. (2019). Challenges faced by HRS in the Tourism and Hospitality management education in Iraq. *Tourism and Leisure*, *8*.

Sibota, B., Omari, S., Momanyi, C. (2024). Effect of employee welfare determinants on organizational performance of Three Star Hotels in Kisii County Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration,* 4(4), 317-341.

Siddiky, M. R. (2020). Does soft skill development vary among the students? A gender perspective. *Turkish Journal of Education*, 9(3), 205-221.

Silvia, P. J., & Christensen, A. P. (2020). Looking up at the curious personality: Individual differences in curiosity and openness to experience. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, *35*, 1-6.

Sindiga I. (1994), Employment and Training in Tourism in Kenya. *The Journal of Tourism Studies Vol. 5 (2)*

Sindiga, I. (2020). Employment and training in tourism in Kenya. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, *5*(2), 45–52. https://doi.org/10.3316/ielapa.950706234

Singh, A., & Jaykumar, P. (2019). On the road to consensus: Key soft skills required for youth employment in the service sector. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism*

Singh, S. (2014). The dilemma of 'good' teaching in tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, *39*(1), 65-79.

Singh, S. V., Ancheary, T., Mondal, A., & Rajauria, S. (2024). Enhancing Service Excellence in the Hospitality Industry Through Effective Service Recovery From Failures. In *Innovative Technologies for Increasing Service Productivity* (pp. 117-133). IGI Global.

Sitati, N., Were, S., Waititu, G. A., & Miringu, A. (2019). Effect of employee recognition on employee retention in hotels in Kenya. *Research Journal of Social Science and Educational Studies*, *6*(8), 108-117.

Sitompul, S.S., Dalimunthe, F.I., and Muhammad, H.I.S. (2019, December), "The importance of the soft skill influence for the tourism community for the satisfaction of tourists at Parbaba beach in Samosir island" In *1st International Conference One Belt, One Road, One Tourism (ICOBOROT 2018)*. Atlantis Press, pp. 68–73

Song, M., Nix, V., & Levy, J. (2021). Assessing Affective Learning Outcomes through a Meaning-Centered Curriculum. *The Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE) 2021 Conference Proceedings,* 15–37. https://www.aalhe.org/assets/docs/AALHE_2021_Proceedings_2021_12_23.pdf#page=15

Spaulding, S. E., Kheng, S., Kapp, S., & Harte, C. (2020). Education in prosthetic and orthotic training. *Prosthetics & Orthotics International*, *44*(6), 416–426. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309364620968644

Stangl, B., Li, Y., Ma, E., Xu, S., & Alsaied, M. (2024). Transferable skills in tourism and hospitality. *Annals of Tourism Research*, *109*, 103854.

Stergiou, G. B. (2023). *Soft skills and management. How it affects the tourism sector* .University of the Aegean.

Stoyanova-Bozhkova, S., Paskova, T., & Buhalis, D. (2022). Emotional intelligence: a competitive advantage for tourism and hospitality managers. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 47(4), 359-371.

Succi, C., & Canovi, M. (2020). Soft skills to enhance graduate employability: Comparing students and employers' perceptions. *Studies in Higher Education*, *45*(9), 1834–1847. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1585420

Sudarso, H., Basri, H., Rohmatillah, N., Pettalongi, S. S., & Darmawan, R. (2024). Empowering Learners: Strategies for Inclusive Education in Diverse Classroom Settings. *Global International Journal of Innovative Research*, *2*(5), 1002-1009.

Sürücü, L., & Maslakci, A. (2020). Validity and reliability in quantitative research. Business & Management Studies: *An International Journal,* 8(3), 2694-2726.

Svavarsdóttir, S. (2014). Having value and being worth valuing. *The Journal of Philosophy, 111(2), 84-109.*

Syaiful, L., Ismail, M., & Abd Aziz, Z. (2019, April). A review of methods to measure affective domain in learning. In 2019 IEEE 9th Symposium on Computer Applications & Industrial Electronics (ISCAIE) (pp. 282-286). IEEE.

Talawanich, S., & Wattanacharoensil, W. (2021). Transforming graduates into successful hotel management trainees: Exploring important management trainee competencies. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, 21(1), 43-71.

Tanković, A. C., Kapeš, J., & Kraljić, V. (2021). Importance of soft skills and communication skills in tourism: Viewpoint from tourists and future tourism employees. *Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe...*, 6, 167-185.

Tarí, J. J., Pereira-Moliner, J., Molina-Azorín, J. F., & López-Gamero, M. D. (2019). Heterogeneous adoption of quality standards in the hotel industry: drivers and effects. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31(3), 1122-1140.*

Temizkan, R., & Yabancı, O. (2020). Towards Qualified Human Resources in the Hospitality Industry: A Review of the Hospitality Management Competencies. *Ege Academic Review*, *20*(3), Article 3. https://doi.org/10.21121/eab.795934

Thapa, B., & Panta, S. K. (2019). Situation Analysis of Tourism and Hospitality Management Education in Nepal. In C. Liu & H. Schänzel (Eds.), *Tourism Education and Asia* (pp. 49–62). Springer Nature. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2613-4_4

Torralba, K. D., & Doo, L. (2020). Active learning strategies to improve progression from knowledge to action. *Rheumatic Disease Clinics*, *46*(1), 1-19.

Tracey, B., & Swart, M. P. (2020). Training and development research in tourism and hospitality: a perspective paper. *Tourism Review,* 75(1), 256-259.

Trendak, O. (2016). Raising strategic awareness as a prerequisite for successful strategy training. *Classroom-Oriented Research: Reconciling Theory and Practice*, 261-274.

Untari, L. (2016). An Epistmological Review on Humanistic Education Theory. *LEKSEMA: Jurnal Bahasa Dan Sastra,* 1(1), 59-72.

Verawati, D. M., & Hartono, B. (2020). Effective Leadership: From The Perspective of Trait Theory and Behavior Theory. *Jurnal Riset Ekonomi Manajemen (REKOMEN)*, *4*(1), 13–23. Researchgate. https://doi.org/10.31002/rn.v4i1.2147

Vermunt, J. D. (2020). Surveys and Retrospective Self-reports to Measure Strategies and Strategic Processing. In D. L. Dinsmore, L. K. Fryer, & M. M. Parkinson (Eds.), *Handbook of Strategies and Strategic Processing* (pp. 1–460). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429423635

Vetráková, M., Šimočková, I., & Pompurová, K. (2019). Age and educational diversification of hotel employees and its impact on turnover. *Sustainability,* 11(19), 5434.

Wandersman, A., Poppen, P. J., & Ricks, D. F. (Eds.). (2016). *Humanism and behaviorism: Dialogue and growth.* Elsevier.

Wang L. & Lyu J. (2019). Inspiring awe through Tourism and Its Consequence. *Annals of Tourism Research 77*:106–16.

Wang, H. (2023, May 17). How People Learn: Cognitive Monitoring. , 6(1), 96-101. https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/6/20220189

Wangechi, E. M., Koome, P., & Gesimba, P. (2020). Effect of talent management on service delivery in the hospitality industry: A critical approach to learning and development process. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science* (2147-4478), 9(5), 91-99.

Washington State University. (2024, October). *Empathy and Active Listening-Essential Skills for the Future of Work – Human Resource Services, Washington State University*. Wsu.edu. https://hrs.wsu.edu/empathy-and-active-listening-essential-skills-for-the-future-of-work/

Wertheim, E. (2020). Negotiations and Resolving Conflicts: an Overview. *BMJ*, *1*(3091), 455–456. https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.1.3091.455-a

Wesley, S. C., Jackson, V. P., & Lee, M. (2017). The perceived importance of core soft skills between retailing and tourism management students, faculty and businesses. *Employee Relations*, *39*(1), 79–99. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-03-2016-0051

Wetsanarat, N. (2021). Soft skill competency development to enhance competitiveness of Thai incentive travel industry. *RICE Journal of Creative Entrepreneurship and Management Www. Ricejournal. Net*, *2*(1), 53–65.

White, K. L. (2020). Soft Skills for the Hospitality Industry: Perspectives of Industry Recruiters. A Project work presented to the Faculty of California State Polytechnic University, Pomona In partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree Master of Science in Hospitality Management.

Wibowo, S., Wangid, M. N., & Firdaus, F. M. (2025). The Relevance of Vygotsky's Constructivism Learning Theory with the Differentiated Learning Primary Schools. *Journal of education and learning (EduLearn), 19*(1), 431-440.

Wiegerink, K. (2018). *Value creation through hospitality: A case study on the effect of hospitality trainings. Innovation in Hospitality Education: Anticipating the Educational Needs of a Changing Profession,* 215-230.

Wood, R., & Shirazi, S. (2020). A systematic review of audience response systems for teaching and learning in higher education: The student experience. *Computers & Education*, *153*, 103896. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2020.103896

World Tourism Organization (2024), *World Tourism Barometer, volume 22, issue 3*, UN Tourism, Madrid, DOI: https://doi.org/10.18111/wtobarometereng

World Travel and Tourism Council (2024), Travel and Tourism Economic Impact: Regional Report (EIR)

WTO. (2016). *WTO | 2016 News items - Tourism sector highlighted as important contributor to trade and development.* Www.wto.org. https://www.wto.org/english/news_e/news16_e/bus_13jul16_e.htm

Wu, W. H., Kao, H. Y., Wu, S. H., & Wei, C. W. (2019). Development and evaluation of affective domain using student's feedback in entrepreneurial Massive Open Online Courses. *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*, 1109.

Xu, J. (Bill), Tavitiyaman, P., Kim, H. J., & Lo, S. J. (2022). Hospitality and Tourism Higher Education in the Post-COVID Era: Is It Time to Change? *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, *34*(4), 278–290. https://doi.org/10.1080/10963758.2022.2056044

Yang, M., Luu, T. T., & Qian, D. (2022). Group diversity and employee service innovative behavior in the hospitality industry: a multilevel model. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *34*(2), 808-835.

Yeswa, L. S. & Ombui, K. (2019). Influence of talent management strategies on employee retention in hotel industry in Kenya. *International Academic Journal of Human Resource and Business Administration, 3(7), 83-103*

Zamiri, M., & Esmaeili, A. (2024). Strategies, methods, and supports for developing skills within learning communities: A systematic review of the literature. *Administrative Sciences*, *14*(9), 1–33. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci14090231

Zedelius, C. M., Gross, M. E., & Schooler, J. W. (2022). Inquisitive but not discerning: Deprivation curiosity is associated with excessive openness to inaccurate information. *Journal of Research in Personality,* 98, 104227.

Zhang, L. N. (2018, April). Importance of interpersonal skills at work towards managing people in an educational context. In 2018 5th International Conference on Management Science and Management Innovation (MSMI 2018) (pp. 29-34).

Zimmerman, B. J., & Phillips, C. Y. (2000). Affective learning: Stimulus to critical thinking and caring practice. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 39(9), 422-425.

Zittoun, T., & Gillespie, A. (2015). Internalization: How culture becomes mind. *Culture & Psychology*, 21(4), 477-491.

Zwozdiak-Myers, P. N. (2023). *The Teacher's Reflective Practice Handbook*. Taylor & Francis.

APPENDICES

Appendix A Trainers' Interview Guide

Instructions

The following factors were considered for the success of the interview: -

The moderator: -

i)   Informed participants of the aims and methods of the study and their consent to participate.

ii)   Confidentiality of information gathered will be assured.

iii)   With consent from participants, used an audio or video recorder to aid clarifying whatever has been missed in the notes.

iv)   Remained neutral

v)   Acknowledged all opinion without bias.

vi)   **Paraphrase or summarize** long, unclear comments by participants.

vii)   **Act spontaneously** if needed. If the conversation goes in an unexpected, but productive direction, go with it and ask questions that were not on the initial questionnaire. Probe deeper into new topics and ideas, as long as the information being gained is valuable

PRQ: What levels of the affective learning domain are emphasized in the tourism and hospitality diploma training program offered in educational institutions in Nairobi County?

SRQ1: For each of the levels identified, what elements does the program amplify?

SRQ2: Which soft skills does the tourism and hospitality program emphasize among trainees?

Conclusion

Ask for any general comment(s) or question (s) in regard to the course?

Give a thank you note

****The end. Thank you****

Appendix B Trainees' Questionnaire

Request to fill questionnaire

My name is Nelly Marete, a student at Moi University, undertaking a PhD in Tourism Management. As part of the requirements for the award of the degree is the completion of a research paper in my area of specialization. I am therefore undertaking a study entitled "Affective Learning Levels and Perceived Soft Skills Acquisition in Tourism and Hospitality Training in Nairobi County – Kenya"

To enable me complete the study, I am requesting you to fill the attached questionnaire. The information you give will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be used only for the purposes of this study.

Thank you

Nelly Marete.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS
Please answer the following questions (Tick as appropriate)
  i)   Gender: Male [ ]   Female [ ]
  ii)   Age:
  iii) Course/program of
        study_____

SECTION B: Receiving leves of Affective Learning
The following statements apply to elements amplified in the receiving level during the course. Kindly show your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement by ticking any one of the 5 scales where **1** = Strongly Disagree, **2**= Disagree, **3** = Moderately Agree, **4** = Agree and **5** = Strongly Agree.

Receiving Level Likert Scale

Elements amplified	SD	D	MA	A	SA
Openness to experience					
1. The training fosters an environment that promotes open-mindedness and a willingness to explore new ideas.					
2. The training provides a practical orientation towards creativity through hands-on experiences.					
3. The training encourages new ideas and experiences.					
4. The training prompts me to become more inquisitive and curious.					
Willingness to hear					
5. The training necessitates me to actively listen and show respect to the contributions of other trainees.					
6. The training encourages the use of gestures as a means of acknowledging the efforts of other trainees.					
7. The training necessitates active participation in training discussions.					

SECTION C: Responding level of Affective learning　　1　2　3　4　5

The following statements apply to elements amplified in the responding level during the course. Kindly show your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement by ticking any one of the 5 scales where **1** = Strongly Disagree, **2**= Disagree, **3** = Moderately Agree, **4** = Agree and **5** = Strongly Agree.

Responding Level Likert Scale

Elements Amplified	SD	D	MA	A	SA
Active participation					
1. The training offers ample opportunities for responding and participation in presentations.					
2. The training allows use of non-verbal cues in responding to contributions by other trainees.					
3.The training fosters trust and engagement through feedback					

Complying with					
4. The training necessitates adherence to rules, standards, and regulations.					
5. The training nurtures compliance ethos.					
6. The training provides specific deadlines to complete assigned tasks.					
8. The training promotes positive, energizing, and solution-oriented relationships.					
Reacting to					
8.The training encourages making suggestions to others to improve their contributions					
9. The training encourages positive proposals to improve discussions.					
10. The training recommends provision of verbal encouragement to others.					

SECTION D: Valuing level of Affective learning

The following statements apply to elements amplified in the valuing level during the course. Kindly show your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement by ticking any one of the 5 scales where **1** = Strongly Disagree, **2**= Disagree, **3** = Moderately Agree, **4** = Agree and **5** = Strongly Agree.

Valuing Level Likert Scale

Elements Amplified	SD	D	MA	A	SA
Idea internalization					
1. The training has enabled me to behave and act consistently.					
2. The support I receive during training motivates and upholds my values and beliefs.					
3. The training enables me to engage in reflective debate.					
Identification with					
4. The training nurtures a sense of alignment with the program's values and beliefs.					
5. The training has exposed me to the inherent significance of demonstrating commitment to others.					
Accepting the worth of					
6. The training has fostered a positive perception of my colleagues.					
7. The training has helped me regain a sense of self-worth.					

8. During training, I often appreciate the diverse perspectives that individuals bring to the table.					
9. The training offers interactive modules that enhance trainee engagement.					

SECTION E: Organizing level of Affective learning

The following statements apply to elements amplified in the organizing level during the course. Kindly show your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement by ticking any one of the 5 scales where **1** = Strongly Disagree, **2**= Disagree, **3** = Moderately Agree, **4** = Agree and **5** = Strongly Agree.

Organizing Level Likert Scale

Elements Amplified	SD	D	MA	A	SA
Value classification					
1. The training supports my personal, social, and professional growth.					
2. The training enables me to assess and make decisions about my future course of action.					
3. The program aligns my courses with the expectations of the hospitality industry.					
4. The practical nature of the training provides a clear vision of my progress.					
Value prioritization					
5. The training prioritizes the brand of comfort and luxury expected in the hospitality industry.					
6.The training raises awareness on environmental sustainability and budgetary constraints					
7. The training has taught me to balance my needs with those of other trainees.					
8. The training has enabled me to connect customer concerns with service quality.					

SECTION F: Characterizing level of Affective learning

The following statements apply to elements amplified in the characterizing level during the course. Kindly show your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement by ticking any one of the 5 scales where **1** = Strongly Disagree, **2**= Disagree, **3** = Moderately Agree, **4** = Agree and **5** = Strongly Agree.

Characterizing Level Likert Scale

Elements Amplified	SD	D	MA	A	SA
Value integration					
1.The training encourages the use of own initiatives to identify and resolve issues					
2. The training promotes a teamwork ethos and encourages openness towards task sharing.					
3. The training emphasizes the importance of objectivity in addressing issues.					
4. The training has instilled in me the values of trust and conflict resolution.					
Consistency					
5. The training has helped me to maintain consistency in my words and actions.					
6. The training enables me to enhance my beliefs and previous experiences in performing tasks.					
7. The training has enhanced my frequent adherence to the fundamental principle of guest satisfaction.					
Personal philosophy					
8. The training has enabled me to approach situations based on a clear set of values.					
9. The training encourages me to gradually improve my behavior.					
10. The training encourages me to utilize fear and failure as opportunities for personal growth.					

SECTION: G Perceived Acquisation of Soft Skills

The following statements apply to perceived acquisition of soft skills during the course. Kindly show your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement by ticking any one of the 5 scales where **1** = Strongly Disagree, **2**= Disagree, **3** = Moderately Agree, **4** = Agree and **5** = Strongly Agree.

Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills Scale

Perceived Acquisition of Soft Skills	SD	D	MA	A	SA
Communication Skills					
1.We are able to interact highly with trainers.					
2.We are able to demonstrate clarity in conveying the desired information.					
3.We are able to interact effectively with guests and peers.					
4.We are able to adapt verbal communication tones to suit different situations and individuals.					
Customer Service Orientation					
5.We are able to handle customer complaints effectively					
6.We have developed strong rapport as would be expected in the industry.					
7.We are able to anticipate customer needs and provide enjoyable interactions.					
8.We are able to uphold professionalism and exhibit empathy towards customers.					
9.We have been equipped with the ability to perform multiple tasks to meet customer needs effectively.					
Teamwork and Collaboration					
10.We are able to work effectively in teams					
11.We collaborate in consistently delivering quality service.					
12.We are able to collaborate, share tasks and to support each other to realize our goals					
13.We adapt to our roles to optimize outputs.					
14.We uphold strong work ethics as expected in teamwork.					
15.We have strong connections with our seniors.					
16.We are capable of resolving our conflicts					

****The end. Thank you****

Appendix C Participant Consent Form

Consent to take part in a PhD Research Study

Thesis Title:

Affective Learning Levels and Perceived Soft Skills Acquisition in Tourism and Hospitality Training in Nairobi County – Kenya

I……………………………………………. voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent to participate at any time or decline to answer any questions without consequences of any kind. I understand that all information provided for this study will be used purely for the purposes of this study, treated with strict confidentiality and that my identity will remain anonymous.
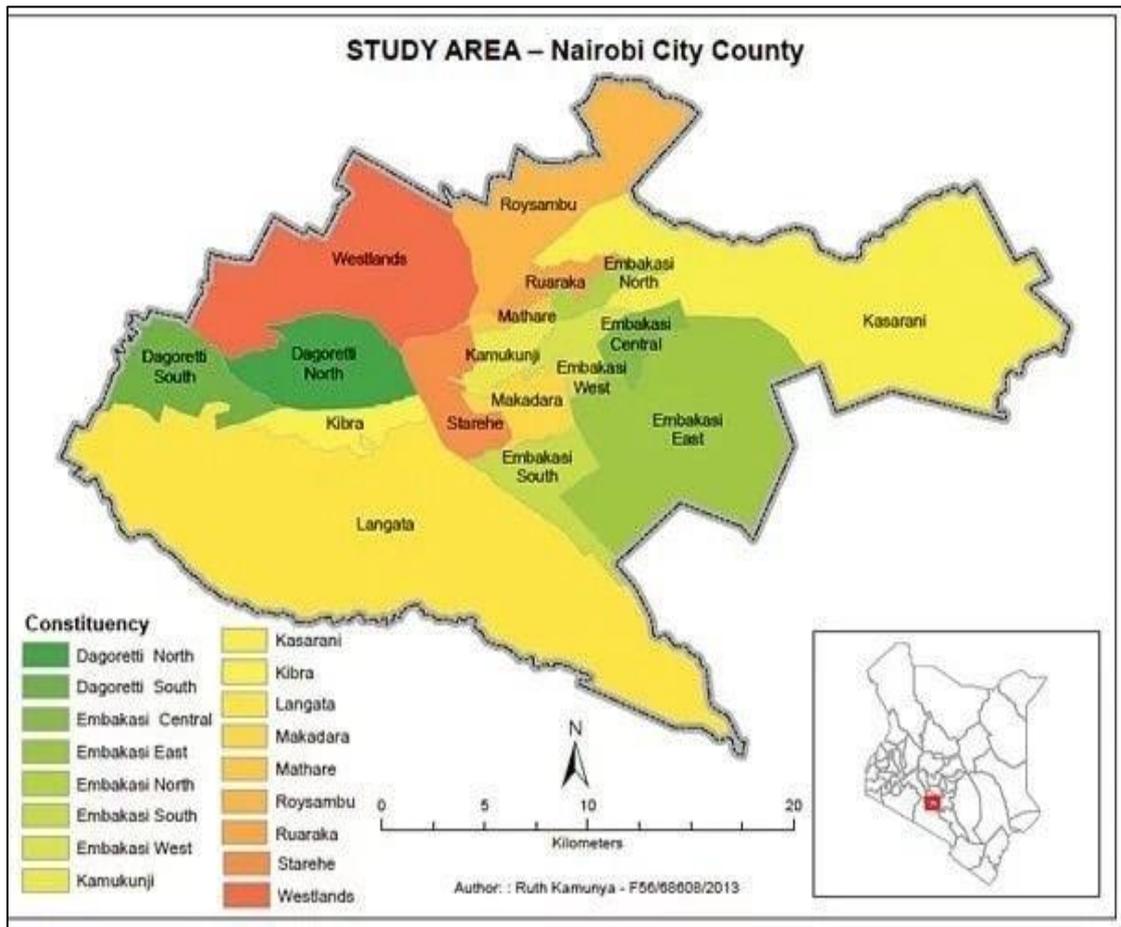
Participant's Signature

 Sign ……………………………………… Date …………………

Researcher

I believe that the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Researcher's Signature

Sign ……………………………. Date ………………………….

Appendix D: Map of Kenya

Appendix E: Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 878424

Date of Issue: 03/August/2020

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Ms.. Nelly Nkirote Marete of Moi University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: Application of the Affective Domain and its Perceived acquisition of soft skills in Tourism and Hospitality Diploma Training Programs in Nairobi County, Kenya for the period ending : 03/August/2021.

License No: NACOSTI/P/20/6044

878424

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

NOTE: This is a computer generated License, To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

Appendix F: Plagiarism Report

SR894

<u>ISO 9001:2019 Certified Institution</u>

THESIS WRITING COURSE

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

This certificate is awarded to

NELLY MARETE

STHE/DPHIL/06/15

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for Thesis **entitled: AFFECTIVE LEARNING LEVELS AND PERCEIVED SOFT SKILLS ACQUISITION IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY TRAINING IN NAIROBI COUNTY – KENYA with** similarity index of 5% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Word count:52575

Awarded by

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu
CERM-ESA Project Leader   Date: 30/06/2025