

UDC 378.14, 004.94

OPTIMIZING HOTEL MANAGEMENT PROFICIENCY THROUGH A STRATEGIC LEARNING APPROACH WITH BUSINESS GAMIFICATION USING HOTS

Dr. David Graham & Dr. Ian Elsmore, professors
Sheffield Hallam University, UK

Oleg Shevchenko, PhD., associate professor
Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design

Key words: gamification, learning approach, simulation platform, innovative educational technology.

In the contemporary landscape of international education, there is a growing integration of innovative educational technologies. Western universities, positioned at the forefront of this transformative wave, have adeptly assessed the myriad advantages and opportunities inherent in novel educational modalities. Leveraging these technological advancements, these institutions strategically augment their return on investment in human capital, recognizing it as the paramount competitive advantage in the contemporary market dynamics that define the educational sector.

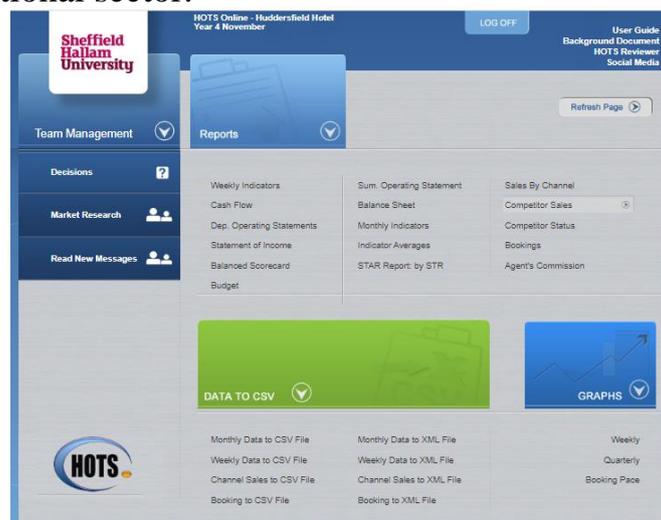


Figure 1 – Interface of HOTS simulation platform

An illustrative embodiment of this progressive paradigm is encapsulated in the deployment of cutting-edge programs such as the Hotel Operations Tactics and Strategy (HOTS) simulation platform (Fig.1). Centered around a realistic computer simulation, HOTS immerses participants in the management of a service business, fostering the development of skills in business strategy, marketing, sales, finance, operations, and personnel. This experiential learning involves creating and implementing a business plan through a series of decisions over a simulated five-year period.

The incorporation of HOTS at SHU exemplifies the integration of avant-garde educational technologies into the pedagogical framework. This simulation platform operates as a strategic educational tool, fostering a dynamic and immersive learning environment. Through the simulation of hotel operations, students are afforded a comprehensive understanding of tactical and strategic maneuvers within the realm of international hospitality management.

By embracing such innovative educational technologies, institutions like SHU position themselves at the vanguard of pedagogical evolution. The HOTS simulation platform serves as a testament to the commitment of these institutions to harness the transformative power of technology, thereby sculpting a generation of students equipped with the nuanced skills and strategic acumen required to navigate the complexities of the globalized educational landscape. In essence, the utilization of cutting-edge educational technologies becomes emblematic of a forward-looking paradigm that not only enhances the educational experience but also fortifies the competitive prowess of universities in the contemporary educational milieu.

In the landscape of education, the integration of gamification has emerged as a potent force for delivering practical, real-world learning experiences. In this context, takes root in a collaborative initiative between the academic faculties of Sheffield Hallam University and Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design (KNUTD) in Ukraine. Focused on enriching the learning journey, collaboration employed the HOTS, introducing a unique twist by conducting the learning experience through Zoom [1].

Building upon the proven effectiveness of gamified learning, the collaborative venture aimed to provide Ukrainian students with a distinctive opportunity. This involved immersing them in team-based strategic decision-making, with a specific emphasis on unraveling the complexities inherent in managerial choices. What sets this training apart is not solely the theoretical understanding but the practical application of these principles in a professional context. For the Ukrainian students, this marked a new frontier—an experiential journey into the intricacies of managerial decision-making facilitated by direct collaboration with students and staff in the United Kingdom. Practice-based learning provided students with the opportunity to become active participants in the learning process, engage in real-life hotel management situations, and gain valuable experience and practical skills.

Successful practice on the HOTS platform is based on several principles:

(1) *Independence.* Students have the opportunity to independently find answers to questions, solve tasks through scientific research and research, and reflect on their experience. (2) *Freedom.* Students can freely choose educational materials and convenient methods of assimilation and forms of educational activities. (3) *Cooperation.* Students and teachers are equal and active partners in the educational process, sharing their experiences and feedback. (4) *Interdisciplinarity.* When solving a practical task, students use knowledge and skills from different subject areas. (5) *Result orientation.* Practice formats are tailored to specific planned results, and not vice versa. (6) *Unpredictability.* The results of decisions made by students are cause-and-effect in nature and a positive financial result depends on the multifactorial nature of the correct choice from a large number of variables.

Following the 12-hour simulation spread across three weeks, a quantitative "Post Delivery Evaluation" survey involving 72 Ukrainian participants was implemented. The questionnaire, comprising 20 questions (including 5 open-ended), was crafted based on the standard modular assessment questionnaire used at SHU, utilizing Google Forms. The results, illustrated in Fig. 2, elucidate a significant understanding of the impact on their financial

decision-making, interactions with colleagues, and anticipated challenges in preparing for economically sound decision-making.

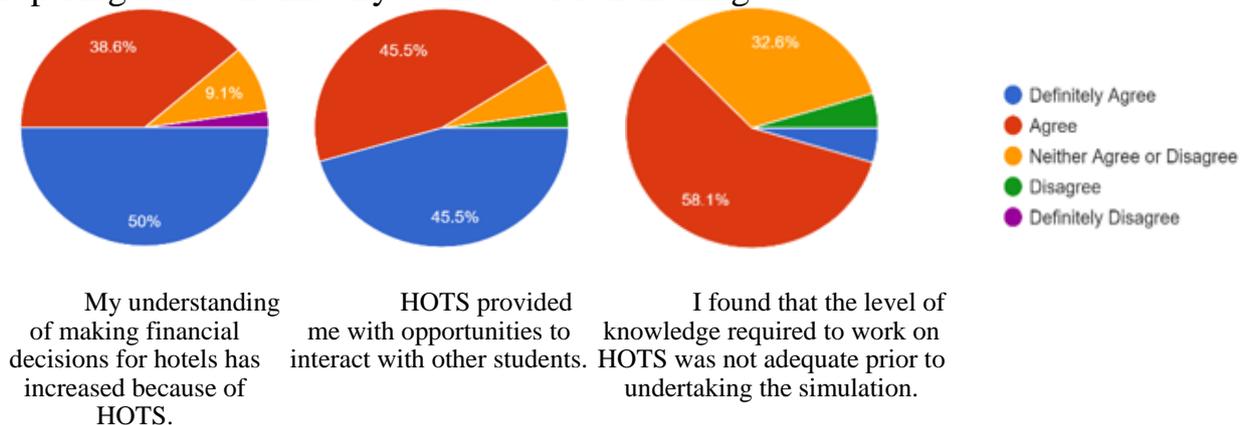


Figure 2 – Post Delivery Evaluation

Delving into the core of the "Post Delivery Evaluation" the comprehensive findings underscore the intricate advantages and challenges encountered by students, thereby accentuating the significance of the evaluation in comprehending the intricacies associated with the educational application of HOTS.

Prior to implementing the training program, it is crucial to provide a comprehensive understanding of HOTS Software to participants. This clarity facilitates informed decision-making, as participants gain a thorough grasp of the tool's functionality and its contribution to organizational growth [2]. Clearly defining the training's purpose ensures participants are aware of the objectives and the intended outcomes, fostering a more focused and effective learning experience.

In conclusion, despite the criticism of simulations for potentially not aligning perfectly with traditional assessment methods, the HOTS simulation in this study stands out as a success when considered as a standalone activity. The positive feedback and enjoyment expressed by students, coupled with the identified knowledge gap in business acumen that was effectively addressed through SHU student facilitation, underscore the success of this approach. The online delivery, despite challenges, proved effective in fostering engagement and overcoming difficulties in the Ukrainian context.

The intent to sustain and broaden the international collaboration between KNUTD and SHU underscores the potential of HOTS as a foundation for the existing educational partnership. Moreover, it signifies an endeavor to promote this educational tool within Ukrainian educational institutions.

References

1. Graham D., Elsmore I., and Shevchenko O. (2023) Hope Through 'HOTS': Providing International Support to a Ukraine University using the Hotel Operations Tactics and Strategy (HOTS) Simulation Platform. *EuroCHRIE. Changing Realities. New Opportunities*. ID 178.
2. Tapilouw, M. C., Firman, H., Redjeki, S., & Chandra, D. T. (2017). The Importance of Training Needs' Questionnaire in order to Arrange Science Teacher Training Program. *Jurnal Pendidikan IPA Indonesia*, 6(1).