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## HOTEL MANAGERS PERSPECTIVE OF MANAGERIAL COMPETENCY AMONG GRADUATING STUDENTS OF HOTEL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

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**Abstract:-** The tourism potential of our country, especially in a global context, remains far from realized. Towards realization of this potential, the Ministry of Tourism envisages a target of 12% growth rate in inbound as well as domestic tourists for the 12th Five year Plan period. It is projected that with this growth rate, the sector will generate 2.5 crore additional jobs. ( Angappapillai, A B; Shanmugasundram, N). India's travel market is projected to grow 18% in 2013 to reach \$23.2 billion, faster than last year's 11% pace, helped by increased train fares, fleet expansion by airlines and new supply of hotel rooms, according to travel research firm PhocusWright Inc.(mint, 2013) Therefore, in response to the needs of the industry, training providers have established a number of hotel, leisure, travel and tourism degrees (O'Mahony & Sillitoe, 2001).But past references have identified that hotel courses lack the rigor to provide quality manpower (Harkison, 2004a, 2004b; Steele; 2003). Hotel management students seem to rate the value of their degrees higher than do employees in the industry (Dawson Mary, 2008). As such there always seem to be bridge between what the hotel management students and the assumption of the hotel Industry.

**This study has taken steps to identify:** 1) Industry Perception 2) Identify Managerial employment competency components and 3) Managerial Employability opportunities

For undertaking the study, a detailed literature review was examined in addition to questionnaires being circulated to 45 hotel managers in the Hotel Industry. The analysis of data helped to examine and compare results based on the study of the literature review.

**Keywords:** Hotel Managers ,managerial competency , Management programme, global context.

### INTRODUCTION:

The Indian hotel Industry is likely to witness only a marginal revenue growth of about seven per cent in 2012-13 with uncertain economy impacting demand, according to a study by rating agency ICRA. "Visibility on the immediate term growth remains clouded with an uncertain economy impacting demand even as lumpy supply additions occur. ICRA revises downwards the revenue growth estimates to 5-7 per cent, with a seasonally stronger second-half partly compensating for the low operating margins in the first half," says the report. It further says that the hotel Industry hit new lows during the second quarter of 2012-13 with falling revenue per available room (RevPARs) and escalating power costs eroding the operating margins, which coupled with increase in fixed costs (interest and depreciation) resulted in many players posting net losses. World Tourism Organisation UNWTO projects a moderate 2-4 per cent growth in international tourist volumes this year in view of the continued global uncertainties in Europe, it says. (Businessline, Chennai, 2013).

With the present economic scenario, the study - Hotel Managers perspective of managerial competency required among graduating students of Hotel Management programme in South India encompasses the quantitative and qualitative academic and industry interface to improve professional competence of the students and faculties. The above study will benchmark effective teaching techniques (theory and practical) to empower students to be managers in the Hotel Industry on successful graduation in a very competitive but stifled recruitment policy.

The hotel staff market fluctuates between the skills shortage on one hand and inadequate training at Institutional level on the other side.

Professional education as in Hotel requires contemporary thought process and hands on approach to reach higher levels of proficiency in the organization. The study will help in identifying key touch points of hotel industry requirements of

selecting students as managers (including culinary students who join the same rank but with a different designation) during interview. An important aspect considered here is that many students joining the hotel management programme do not opt for placement interviews if it is not for a managerial position. In addition insightful discussion with hotel recruiters (general Managers, Training Managers, and Learning and development managers) will assist to establish a more structured teaching pedagogy to enhance professionalism.

## METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter specifies the methodology and procedures utilized in this study. The statistical procedures chosen for data analysis, as well as the logic, are included. The chapter is classified into the following sections: Introduction, Participants, Research methodology (questionnaire design, survey process, analysis of data), Limitations, and Summary.

### Industry Participants

The Indian Hotel Industry holds a huge potential due to the positive impact of demand-supply scenario, growth drivers, investments and government initiatives for tourism sector. To develop a better understanding of the industry, Cygnus has come out with a comprehensive industry insight – Indian Hotel Industry, which brings out the past performance, trends and future prospects keeping in mind the various factors.

By 2015, the Indian Hotel Industry is expected to reach Rs 230 billion, growing at a robust CAGR of 12.2%. India will be investing approx Rs 448 billion in the hotel industry ([Investment Weekly News](#),2012) in the next five years. Staffing these hotels is a constant challenge for hoteliers. India's government-run and private sector hotel management institutes each year graduate more than 10,000 students. But the supply can hardly keep pace with the demand. Industry analysts estimate that by 2013, just the premium slice of the hotel industry in India will require more than 50,000 trained employees. "The bright and educated younger generation of the country has never considered [the] hotel industry as a future employment option,"(US fed news service)

Therefore, the study decided to identify hotel managers in hotel industry for the employees' sample in this study, as employees in the accommodation industry represent a large portion of the total number of employees in the hotel industry. Hotel managers were selected from 8-10 hotel chains in South India. The initial aim was to obtain 150 employees from 10 South India hotels as employee participants. In this study, each hotel had more than 100 rooms of a 3-4 star hotel rating operating in India. On average, each hotel had fifteen hotel managers. However, the number of employees at management level was lower in some hotels, with many senior management positions, such as human resources, served by other hotels within the chain. Only seven hotels were approached, and six responded. The total number of hotel managers in the six hotels was 45. The six hotels were from Bangalore (number of respondents: n=24), Chennai (n=10),Mumbai(n=5) and Hyderabad(n=06)

**Table 1: Hotel managers' sample**

Regions		Bangalore	Chen	Mumbai	Hyd	Total
<b>Sample</b>	Count	24	10	05	06	<b>45</b>
	%	53.3%	22.2%	11.1%	13.3	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total number of responses</b>	Count	24	10	05	06	<b>45</b>
	%	53.3%	22.2%	11.1%	13.3	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of usable responses</b>	Count	24	10	05	06	<b>45</b>
	%	53.3%	22.2%	11.1%	13.3	<b>100%</b>

Out of 45 employees approached, all of them responded. This represents a great response rate, despite the fact that the survey was executed over a short period (from August 22, 2012 to November, 2012). Response rates and usable responses of the Bangalore region were higher than for the other regions. It seems that the Bangalore region is a very significant destination for tourists and business people. Consequently, Bangalore had many employees, which generated higher numbers of usable responses.

**Table 2: Frequency analysis of job positions with working department of employee respondents**

Job Position levels	Department Managers		Top Management		
	Count	%	Count	%	%
<b>Working field</b>					
FO/ Reservation	4	9.5	12	0	<b>35.1</b>
F&B House Keeping	3	9.5	13	0	<b>17.6</b>
Admin & General	2	8.1	4	0	<b>18.9</b>
Executive	1	4.1	6	0	<b>21.6</b>
Office	0	0	0	4.1	<b>6.8</b>
<b>Count</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>100</b>

The highest response rate from employees came mid-department manager's respondents. The lowest response rate came from Top Management level (GM, n=3). This was because there is only one GM Position in each hotel and only three out of six GMs responded. The highest department response rate was from the Front Office and Food and Beverage service department, where many of the alumni are working as managers. Department (35.1%). The Front Office Departments have more hotel managers (e.g. a number of assistant managers, night duty managers and one department manager) than other departments. The housekeeping departments also employed one department manager and several supervisors. Therefore, it was difficult to find low management level employees in the Housekeeping departments.

**QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN**

Both the student and employee questionnaire surveys were created after an extensive review of the literature relating to hotel and hotel management, travel and tourism students' career expectations, and assumptions and perceptions of employees in the hotel industry Gersh, I. (2011) The questionnaire surveys were mainly adapted from a study by Petrova and Mason (2004), which was designed to identify “the value of tourism degrees, comparing students' career expectations and aspirations with industry needs and perceptions of travel and tourism degrees and graduates” (P.153). The study by Petrova and Mason (2004) focused on tourism degree students. The authors were to identify the value of the tourism degrees in relation to what tourism students needed to enter the industry, in comparison to what people in the industry expected of tourism graduates. This study focused on undergraduates in hotel management in the India hotel industry, with a goal of identifying students' expectations and assumptions of their future working careers post graduation and the value of the hotel management degree. In addition, the focus was to identify the background of managerial employee respondents working careers and their expectations and assumptions of a new employee with a Bachelor of Hotel Management degree. Both the student and employee questionnaires were designed with those goals in mind.

**Questionnaire for hotel managers**

The employees' questionnaire included the same 27 questions based on the following key questions:

1. What are the employees' working history, educational background, and career experiences?
2. What do employers expect from graduate hotel management students, during their time of employment at the hotel?
3. What do hotel industry employers believe to be the essential characteristics for graduates entering the hotel industry?
4. Do you recognize that there are different expectations or gaps between hotel management educators and employees in the hotel industry, and that an internship or a cooperative education programme will help students' careers in the hotel industry?

Survey for hotel managers

Before sending the survey forms to hotel managers, a personal interaction was held, and then e-mails were sent to explain the purpose of the study and why the respondents had to participate. It also explained the benefits of the study and dealt with possible participant concerns. E-mail responses were received. And then questionnaires were then sent to employees. The sending of a questionnaire to employees began from the month of August 2012. The 45 responses included 24 from Bangalore, 10 from Chennai, 06 from Hyderabad, 05 from Bombay.

Analysis of data

The researcher completed analysis of the collected data once the completed student and questionnaires have been collated and checked. The completed student questionnaires were classified by study years and employee questionnaires were divided by workplaces. For data entry the statistical computer programme, 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences' (SPSS), Version 16 (SPSS 16) was used. SPSS is a statistics package particularly suitable to social science survey data. Therefore, it seems to be amongst the most widely used programs for statistical analysis in social sciences.

Summary

The methodology used self-completion quantitative questionnaires, created by the researcher, based on a study by Petrova and Mason (2004). The surveys were conducted by 60 students from the Bachelor of Hotel management programme in Christ University, 45 alumni students working as managers in the Hotel Industry, and management level employees from six international hotels in India. Before conducting the survey, pre-test surveys were conducted. 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences', Version 16 (SPSS 16). The use of a quantitative approach provides the ability to quantify determinants identified by previous research. This research provides a quantitative link between the students and employees' career expectations, assumptions and requirements. The next chapter will highlight the findings of this study.

FINDINGS

Manager's survey

The employee data was analysed following the five main questions for hotel managers. When analyzing these questions, some answering scales were merged in order to obtain more accurate results.

Profile of hotel managers

- What is your department?
- How long have you been working in the hotel industry?
- In which department did you start your career in the hotel industry?
- What qualifications do you have?

Table:3

Job position Levels		Mid Management	Top Management	Total %
<b>Years in the industry</b> Chi-square (Sig.) .002				
Less than 5	Observed	2	1	32.4%
	Expected	8	1	
5 to 10	Observed	11	0	39.2%
	Expected	10	1	
11+	Observed	13	2	28.4%
	Expected	7	1	
<b>Count</b>		<b>45</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>100% 74</b>

**Hotel Managers Perspective Of Managerial Competency Among Graduating Students Of Hotel Management Programme**

Note. The Chi-square result indicates the level of association is significant. A total of 32.4 percent (n=10) of managerial employee respondents had been working in the hotel industry less than five years. This group includes one Top Management level employee, which is a surprising finding. Achieving a Top Management level position generally requires considerable operational and managerial experience in the hotel industry. However, the aforementioned employee had been working as a top management level employee, although he had worked less than five years in the industry. Responses show that employees who have been working from five to ten years account for 39.2 percent (n=21) of all employee respondents. However, no one in this group had worked as a management employee. Employees who had been working more than 11 years made up 28.4 percent (n=20) of employee respondents. Of these employees, 13 have been working as Mid Management level (Department Manager) employees. Out of three Top Management employees (GMs), two had worked in the hotel industry for more than 11 years. The table shows that the 'observed' frequencies are significantly different from the 'expected' frequencies consequently; these two variables are related. Therefore, the Chi-square analysis shows that there is a relationship between the statement on employees' job position levels and the statement of years of work. The employee responses showed:

Just under half of the employees of the Department Supervisors (n=10 out of 23 or 47.8%) had been working in the hotel industry for less than five years.

More than half of Low Management level (n=12 out of 22 or 54.5%) had been working in the hotel industry for five to ten years or more than 11 years.

Half employees of Mid Management level (n=13 out of 26 or 50%) had been working in the hotel industry for over 11 years.

Two out of three employees (66.7%) of Top Management level had been working in the hotel industry for more than 11 years.

These show that in order to achieve higher positions, employees need long term working careers in the hotel industry.

**Table:4 Cross-tabulation analysis of Profiles of hotel managers**

Job Position levels	Department Supervisor		Low Management		Mid Management		Top Management		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Front Office	3	4.1	6	8.1	5	6.8	2	2.7	16	21.7
F&B	12	16.2	8	10.8	12	16.2	1	1.4	33	44.6
Management Trainee	1	1.4	1	1.4	1	1.4	0	0	3	4.1
House Keeping	5	6.8	4	5.4	6	8.1	0	0	15	20.2
Administer General	2	2.7	3	4.1	2	2.7	0	0	7	9.4
<b>Count</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>
Note: Chi-square result is, 893, which is not statistically significant										
Qualification	Department Supervisor		Low Management		Mid Management		Top Management		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Secondary	1	6.8	0	1.4		9.5	0	1.4	1	18.9
Diploma	3	13.5	9	17.6	7	13.5	0	1.4	19	45.9
Bachelor Degree	1	5.4	3	8.1	12	5.4	2	1.4	18	20.3
Postgraduate	2	1.4	1	2.7	1	2.7	1	0	5	6.8
No qualification		4.1	2	0	0	4.1	0	0	2	8.1
<b>Count</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>31.1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>35.1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

**Hotel Managers Perspective Of Managerial Competency Among Graduating Students Of Hotel Management Programme**

Note. Chi-square result is .627, which is not statistically significant nearly half the employees (n=23 or 44.6%) started their career in the F&B department. The Front Office department (n=3 or 21.7%) ranked second. Only one employee (n=1 or 4.1%) started their working career at Management Trainee level. Also, the table shows an interesting finding: three Top Management managers started their careers in the Front Office department (n=3) and the F&B department (n=12). The data shows that front of house operational experience is more common for starting work in a hotel than back of house experience, such as Sales and Marketing, Finance and Human Resource Management, for those who go on to become a Top Management manager. The responses show that employees have various qualifications. Certificate or Diploma qualifications (n=11 or 45.9%) were the predominant qualifications. The three Top Management employees, who responded to the survey, had varying levels of qualification. One held a secondary school qualification, one held a certification/diploma, and another held a degree. The table also shows some interesting findings: three Department Supervisors and three Mid Management employees had no qualifications at all, although their positions were at managerial level. These findings suggest that qualification is not an absolute necessity for employees' career progression.

**Table:5**

Qualification of employees		Secondary	Certification/Diploma	Bachelor Degree	Post Graduate	No Qualification	Total
<b>Working field / department</b>							
Chi-square.000							
Front Office	Observed	6	14	6	0	0	<b>35.1%</b>
	Expected	5	20	5	2	2	
F&B	Observed	3	6	3	1	0	<b>17.6%</b>
	Expected	3	6	3	1	1	
Housekeeping	Observed	2	6	0	0	6	<b>18.9%</b>
	Expected	3	6	3	1	1	
Admin/ General	Observed	1	6	5	4	0	<b>21.6%</b>
	Expected	3	7	3	1	1	
Executive Office	Observed	2	2	1	0	0	<b>6.8%</b>
	Expected	1	2	1	0	0	
<b>Count</b>		<b>01</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>45</b> <b>100</b>

Note. The Chi-square result indicates the level of association is significant Employees who work in the Administration/General department (n=16 or 21.6%) tended to have higher qualifications than employees in the other working fields/departments. Out of 21.6 percent (n=16) Administration or General Department (Human Resources, Finance, Sales and Marketing) employees, five held a Postgraduate qualification, 18 had a Bachelor's Degree, 19 had a Certificate or Diploma and one had just a Secondary School qualification. This finding suggests that hotel managers in housekeeping may not need tertiary educational qualifications. In addition, Executive Officers did not have higher qualifications than Low Management or Mid Management level employees did. Of the five (6.8%) of respondents who were Managers two had a secondary qualification and two held a Certificate and Diploma qualification. Only one manager had a Bachelor degree. This phenomenon might be due to current Low and Mid Management employees having more opportunities for educational advancement than current Top Management employees (generational gap) do. The history of undergraduate degrees for hotel management programmes in India is short. The first diploma programme was introduced in 1969 by National Council of Hotel Management under the Ministry of Tourism. Therefore, current Top Management employees did not have the opportunities for educational advance that students do today. The table shows that the 'observed' frequencies are sufficiently different from the 'expected' frequencies. Consequently, these two variables are related. Therefore, Chisquare analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between the qualifications of hotel managers and their working field or department. This seems to suggest that certain hotel managers may need a higher qualification (e.g. Front Office and Sales &Marketing department).

Expectations of hotel managers as graduate hotel management students during their time of employment at the hotel  
What do you expect of hotel management graduates during their employment at the hotel?

Table:6

	Count	Percent
Individual attributes	9	20
Achieves high levels of task	6	13.3
Willing to perform	7	15.5
Good general knowledge	9	20
Work performance effective	6	13.3
Works effectively in team work	8	17.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

This shows three equal rates for employee responses: 'willing to perform' (n=7 or 15.5%), 'good general knowledge of the hotel industry' (20%) and 'works effectively in team work' (17.7%). Ranked second, 18.9 percent of employee respondents expected hotel management graduates to have individual attributes during their employment at the hotel. Six employees (8.1%) expected working units to achieve high levels of task accomplishment and another six employees expected an effective working performance from the graduates during their employment at the hotel.

Therefore, these findings showed that hotel managers might expect that hotel management graduates will be more willing to perform, have a good general knowledge, and work effectively in teamwork during their employment at the hotel.

The hotel industry needs and the requirements for employees

Which characteristic is the most important for a graduate?

What do you consider the most important factor for a new graduate?

Which of the following factors is the most important to possess as an employee in the hotel industry?

Which skill do you think was the most important for career development?

Criteria for a new employee	Knowledge & Experience		Specific Skill		Personality		Qualification		Total		
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
<b>Total</b>	12	18.9	13	13.5	08	62.2	12	5.4	45	100	
Characteristic for an employee	Enthusiasm		Commitment		Willing to learn		Specific Skills		Total		
	13	17.6	13	31	7	27.0	12	8.1	45	100	
<b>Total</b>											
To possess as an employee	Knowledge & Experience		Specific Skill		Personality		Qualification		Total		
	09	16.2	06	17.6	21	64.9	09	1.4	45	100	
<b>Total</b>											
For career development	Communication		Using initiative		Human relation		Problem solving		Self management		Total
	09	20.3	07	28.4	08	18.9	08	16.2	13	16.2	45
<b>Total</b>											

Hotel managers tended to think that personality is the most important factor for a new employee. On the other hand, qualifications were not rated highly by hotel managers (n=9 or 5.4%). Furthermore, hotel managers believed that commitment was the most important characteristic for an employee (n=13 or 31 %). Willingness to learn had 7 employees (16.1) of responses. However, many employees did not consider specific skills as the most important characteristic for an employee.

A total of 64.9 percent (n= 32) of the hotel managers also indicated that personality is the most important factor to possess as an employee in the hotel industry. Only 1.4 percent of employee respondents suggested qualifications are the most important factor. Table also shows that 28.4 percent (n=21) of employee respondents indicated using initiative is the most important skill for their career development.

The data suggest that employees consider commitment to be the most important characteristic for an employee, and that personality is the most important criterion for a new employee and an important factor to possess as an employee. On the other hand, qualifications were not rated as an important characteristic for an employee, or an important factor to possess as an employee in the hotel industry.

Hotel management education and existing gaps between educators and the hotel industry

Do you think that hotel management educators know the industry well?  
 Do you think that an internship or a cooperative education programme may help students' careers in the hotel industry?  
 Do you think that a different understanding of career expectation exists between educators and managers in the hotel industry?

Cross-tabulation analysis of educators know the industry well with internship/career in the hotel industry.					
Internship will help a student career in the hotel industry		Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Total
<b>Educators know the industry well</b>					
Chi-square (Sig.) .000					
Certain	Observed	31	0	1	<b>78.4</b>
	Expected	28	2	2	
Uncertain	Observed	13	2	0	<b>17.6</b>
	Expected	12	0	1	
No	Observed	1	0	2	<b>4.0</b>
	Expected	3	0	0	
<b>Count</b>		45	2	3	45 100%

Note. Chi-square result indicates the level of association is significant Most hotel managers believed that the study of hotel management is beneficial to the industry and they respected their education providers. A total of 31 (78.4%) hotel managers felt that hotel management educators know the hotel industry well and 40 (93.2%) of hotel managers believed that an internship may help students' careers in the hotel industry. A total of 77 percent (n=35) of those believed that students' educators knew the industry well and an internship/ could assist students' career development. Only a minority of employees indicated they had no opinion or answered this question negatively.

The Chi-square analysis indicates that there is a strong relationship between the statement on what educators know and the statement relating to an internship (sig. to the .000 level). The 'observed' frequencies are significantly different from the 'expected' frequencies. Consequently, these two variables are related. This seems to be very positive sign for recognizing the nature of hotel management education.

Frequency analysis of different career expectations between educators and managers in the hotel industry								
Different career Expectations	Agree		No opinion		Disagree		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>68.9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

Value of a hotel management degree to employers  
 Do you consider a degree qualification an important criterion when you are selecting a new employee?  
 Do you think work experience is more important than a degree qualification for a prospective employee?  
 Do you think that a hotel management degree will contribute more to the hotel business than three years of experience in the hotel industry?  
 Do you believe there are any benefits for a hotel company if an employee has a hotel management degree?  
 Do you think graduates with a bachelor's degree in hotel should receive higher starting salaries than people who do not hold a degree?  
 Do you think that jobs in the hotel industry need a bachelor's degree in hotel management for promotion purposes

Degree qualification for a new employee with current job position								
A degree qualification as an important criteria for a new employee	Certain		Uncertain		NO		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Current job position levels								
Department Supervisor	0	16.2	5	6.8	1	8.1	6	31.1
Low Management	07	16.2	4	5.4	6	8.1	17	29.7
Mid Management	8	9.5	4	5.4	7	20.3	19	35.1
Top Management	3	4.1	0	0	0	0	3	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Note: Chi-square result is .094 which is not statistically significant								
Experience with degree contribution								
Experience is more important than degree qualification	Agree		No opinion		Disagree		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Degree will contribute more to the hotel business than three years of experience								
Agree	5	18.9	4	4.1	6	8.1	23	31.1
No opinion	2	12.2	1	2.7	4	5.4	15	20.3
Disagree	14	39.2	5	5.4	3	4.1	36	48.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>70.3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Note. Chi-square result is .340 which is not statistically significant Less than half of the hotel managers (n=21 or 45.9%) suggested a degree qualification is an important criterion when they are selecting a new employee. On the other hand, more than half of employee respondents (54.1%) answered 'Uncertain' (17.6%) or 'No' (36.5%) for this question. There are some interesting findings: 15 out of 26 Mid Management employees believed that a degree qualification is not a significant criterion for selecting a new employee. This finding may be related to the qualifications of Mid Management employees: the findings of question 6 (Table 15) shows that only four Mid Management employees had a Bachelor's degree, and two Mid Management employees had a Postgraduate qualification. A total of 27 (36.5%) of hotel managers did not believe that a degree qualification is an important criterion for a new employee. However, Top Management employees agreed that a degree qualification is an important criterion when they are selecting a new employee.

Hotel managers (n=52 or 70.3%) considered that work experience is more important than a degree qualification for a prospective employee. Furthermore, nearly half of hotel managers (n=36 or 48.6%) believed that a hotel management degree will not contribute more to the hotel business than having three years' experience in the hotel industry. However, only 23 of employee respondents agreed that a degree qualification would contribute more to the hotel business than having three years' experience in the hotel industry. These findings indicate that a large majority of hotel managers believed that three years of experience is more valuable than a hotel management degree for their company.

Cross-tabulation analysis of degree qualified employee will receive higher salaries with a degree qualified employee gives benefits to employer and a degree effects and employee's promotion					
Degree qualified employee will receive higher salaries		Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Total %
Degree qualified employee give benefits to a company					
*Chi-square(Sig) .534					
Agree	Observed	22	9	30	82.4
	Expected	21	8	31	
No opinion	Observed	4	1	5	13.5
	Expected	4	1	5	
Disagree	Observed	0	0	3	4.1
	Expected	1	0	2	
Bachelor of hotel degree affects an employee's promotion					
**Chi-square (Sig) .000					
Agree	Observed	10	3	2	20.3
	Expected	5	2	8	
No opinion	Observed	5	4	3	16.2
	Expected	4	2	6	
Disagree	Observed	11	3	33	63.5
	Expected	17	6	24	
<b>Count</b>		<b>21</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0%</b> <b>45</b>

Note. \*Chi-square result indicates the level of association is not significant \*\*Chi-square result indicates the level of association is significant Hotel managers believed that a degree-qualified employee gives benefits to their company, but salaries of a degree-qualified employee will not be different to an employee who does not hold a degree qualification. This study suggests that most hotel managers (n=21 or 47.4%) believed a qualified employee gives benefit to a hotel company. Only three (4.1%) employees disagreed. Though hotel managers believed three years of experience would contribute more to the hotel business than a hotel management degree. Despite this fact, hotel managers recognised that degree qualified employees can deliver benefits to a company. The responses also show that 38 (51.4%) of employee respondents disagreed that degree qualified employees should receive higher starting salaries than employees not holding a degree should. On the other hand, 26 hotel managers agreed that graduates with a bachelor's degree in hotel should receive higher starting salaries than employees who do not hold a degree.

However, the table demonstrates that 21 (47.4%) employee respondents believed a degree-qualified employee offers some benefit to a hotel company, and degree qualified employees should receive higher salaries than employee who does not hold a degree. The findings from these questions indicate hotel managers tended to believe that a degree-qualified employee offers benefits to company but their salaries should not be higher than an employee without a degree. Furthermore, the responses show that 31 (63.5%) employee respondents disagreed that jobs in the hotel industry need a bachelor's degree in hotel management for promotion purposes, although 15 (20.3%) of employee respondents agreed that a bachelor's degree in hotel management is important for promotion purposes.

The Chi-square analysis in table shows no relationship between the statement that 'a degree-qualified employee will receive higher starting salaries than people who do not hold a degree', and the statement that 'a degree qualified employee gives benefits to a company'. The 'observed' frequencies are not significantly different from the 'expected' frequencies. Consequently, these two variables are not related. On the other hand, there are strong relationships between graduates with a bachelor's degree in hotel management being entitled to receive higher starting salaries than people who do not hold a degree

and jobs in the hotel industry requiring a bachelor's degree in hotel management for promotion purpose (sig. to the .000 level). The 'observed' frequencies are significantly different from the 'expected' frequencies. Consequently, these two variables are related.

#### SUMMARY

Employee organisational commitment (35.8%) was indicated the most important character trait for an employee and knowledge and experience of the industry (40.1%) was indicated the most important factor for a new employee.

Personality (48.2%) was indicated the most important factor to possess as an employee and communication skills (43.1%) were pointed to as the most important skills for employees' career development. However, qualifications were considered a less important factor for a new employee and possessing as an employee.

The findings of hotel managers are following as:

In order to achieve senior positions, employees need long-term working careers in the hotel industry.

A total of 44.6 percent of hotel managers started their career in the F&B department. Only 4.1 percent of employees started as a management trainee.

Hotel managers have various qualifications however; Certification or Diploma qualifications (45.8%) were the predominant qualifications. 8.1 percent of employees have no qualifications. Therefore, this study identified that qualification is not an absolute necessity for employees' career progression.

Hotel managers hope to see the following characteristics in hotel management graduates: 'willing to perform' (21.6%), 'good general knowledge of the hotel industry' (21.6%) and 'works effectively in teamwork' (21.6%).

Employee organisational commitment was identified the most important character trait for an employee by 47.3 percent of hotel managers.

Personality was identified as the most important factor for a new employee (62.2%) and it was the most important factor to possess as an employee (64.9%).

Using initiative skills (28.4%) was considered as the most important skill for employees' career development.

Hotel managers (78.4%) believed that an internship programme is valuable to the hotel industry and hotel educators know the industry well. Although, a total of 68.9 percent employee respondents thought that different understanding of career expectations exist between educators and hotel managers.

The value of a degree of hotel management was identified as being very low. For example, 70.3 percent of employees believed that industry experience is more important than a degree in hotel management. Furthermore, they thought three years of industry experience would contribute more to the hotel business than a hotel degree. More than half (51.1) of employee.

Respondents disagreed that a degree qualified employee would receive higher salaries than an employee who does not hold a degree of hotel management. In addition, 63.5 percent of employees thought that a bachelor of hotel degree would not affect an employee's promotional opportunities. However, many employees (82.4%) suggested that a degree-qualified employee offers greater value to their company.

#### Needs and requirements of the hotel industry – view points of students and employees

##### Needs and requirement for an employee in the hotel industry

The employees' views of the most important characteristic for an employee are very important to undergraduates of hotel management. Students and employees had the same opinions of the most important characteristic for an employee. Commitment (employees: 47.3%) was identified as the most important factor for an employee in the hotel industry, followed by willingness to learn (employees: 27%). A previous study stated that the hotel industry seeks employee commitment because organisational commitment will be negatively related to employee turnover (Kazlauskaitė, Buciuniene, & Turauskas, 2006). This applies not only to the hotel industry, but also to all kinds of industries because "employees with high-level commitment are more likely to willingly contribute to the organisational performance and even do more than is expected from them" (Kazlauskaitė et al, 2006, p.301). However, a high level of employee commitment seems to be quite difficult to expect, particularly from employees in the hotel industry, because many people consider jobs in the hotel industry to be simply work experience for other future jobs (Kazlauskaitė, Buciuniene, & Turauskas, 2006).

Specific skills are not seen as such an important factor for an employee. Few respondents from employees (9.5%) indicated that specific skills were an important factor for an employee, although many previous studies stressed that specific skills would be very important for developing a career (Baum, 2002; Christou, 1999; Kay & Russette, 2000; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Sigala, 2001; Stutts, 1995). Christou (1999) asserted that skills should be given priority when recruiting new staff. However, current hotel managers may believe specific skills will come from training, but commitment should come from employees' hearts. Therefore, hotel companies should make an effort to enhance employee commitment and find solutions to generate employee commitment. For example,

Empowerment may lead to a higher level of employee organisational commitment (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1998). If companies allow some degree of employee empowerment, employees may feel that they are valued company members. This may improve employee motivation and high level of employee organizational commitment. Employees (n=27 or 64.9%) consider personality to be the most important factor to possess as an employee in the hotel industry. Prospective hotel employees should consider their personalities and decide whether they are suited to the hotel industry. If they think their personality is suitable for hotel work and they have good positive attitudes to work well, hotel industry knowledge and experience, the hotel industry will be a suitable work place for them.

This study also explored managerial employee expectations of hotel management graduates during their employment at a hotel (this question was asked only of hotel managers). The data indicated that the responses for three different answers to this question were equal. The three equal responses were:

graduates of hotel management work effort related to a willingness to perform  
good general knowledge of the hotel industry  
the ability to work effectively in teams during their employment at the hotel These results may be very important information to students and education providers of hotel management courses due to provide students' future working career in the hotel industry.

#### **Needs and requirements for a new employee in the industry**

There is a gap between what hotel managers and students believe human resources departments consider the most important factor for a new employee. A total of 46 (62.2%) employee respondents in this study indicated that personality is considered the most important criterion for a new employee, followed by knowledge and experience (18.9%). Hotel managers also identified employees' personality as one very important factor for a new employee in the hotel industry. Hotel work may be stressful for employees because such work normally involves working with people and working in a complex environment (Ross, 1995). Work stress can affect performance of all levels of employees but people have different feelings of intensity of stress depending in their personalities (Ross, 1995). Harkison (2004a) found that the hotel industry, particularly in India, considers work experience more important than a degree in hotel management.

This study suggests that a bachelor's qualification is not the most important factor for employment in the hotel industry. The reason for these findings might be related to the employee respondents' qualifications. Hotel managers might think that their qualification did not affect their career paths. Therefore, they might ignore a qualification as an important characteristic for employment and an important factor to possess as an employee in the hotel industry. Harkison (2004a) also found that many managers in the hotel industry believe that the hotel degree qualification is not important for the hotel industry in India (Harkison, 2004b).

#### **Value and benefits of a Bachelor of Hotel Management Degree**

Hotel employers prefer industry work experience to a degree in hotel management. This study matches the results of a number of previous studies (Harkison, 2004b) (Harkison, 2004a; Steele, 2003).

However, 15 (35.1%) employee respondents agree that graduates with a bachelor's degree in hotel management should receive higher starting salaries than people without this qualification. There may be a movement towards a higher percentage of managers believing that qualifications warrant higher starting salaries. Young hotel managers tend to be higher educated than older hotel managers.

Therefore, it is conceivable that over time there will be higher education levels amongst managers, as the old make way for the young, and therefore a greater likelihood that managers will support higher starting salaries for educated graduates.

Furthermore, hotel managers without a hotel management qualification may have limited vision and most of their learning would occur through trial and error in the workplace (Jauhari, 2006). Their findings support a view of how important a degree in hotel industry can be. Therefore, student respondents in this study might believe that their degree would help to get a better salary and they expected that they would have faster promotion than other employees without a Bachelor of Hotel management degree.

#### **Contribution of a degree in hotel management in the industry**

Nearly half of employee respondents (n=36 or 48.6%) indicated that having three years' experience in the hotel industry would contribute more to the hotel business than a hotel management degree while 23 (31%) hotel managers indicated the opposite.

These results show that perceptions of hotel managers in the hotel industry do not appear to have changed regarding the abilities of graduates of hotel management degrees, compared to findings of previous studies (Collins, 2002; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Therefore, hotel managers in the industry tended to have a bias against hotel students. For example, managers in the hotel industry thought that students were over qualified but lacked experience, even for entry-level management positions. As a result, managers in the hotel industry tended to disregard students' formal qualifications in hotel management

(Raybould & Wilkins, 2005), which is a risk to hotel students and education providers. Educators and students need solutions to change the perceptions of hotel managers in the hotel industry.

#### Summary

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusion

The hotel industry does not believe a hotel management degree should entitle graduates to enter at this level in the industry without a certain amount of work experience (Harkison, 2004a). Furthermore, the hotel educators and the industry hotel managers did not know exactly what they need and want from each other (Harkison, 2004a).

The aim of this research was to examine issues related to career expectations, assumptions and requirements of undergraduates of hotel management and the hotel industry. The study sought to identify any differences in career expectations and thoughts on job requirements between undergraduates of hotel management and hotel managers in the hotel industry. In addition, the study was also designed to establish the perceived value of hotel management degrees amongst hotel management undergraduate students and hotel managers in the hotel industry.

Hotel managers argued that using initiative skills was the most important skill for an employee's career development. The likelihood is that graduates will soon become despondent as they learn that the reality of working life in the industry differs from the expectations they held as students. The following key points emerged from the research.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Needs and requirements of the hotel industry

Hotel managers have different viewpoints about the demands of the hotel industry.

Hotel educators teach hotel knowledge and skills to students so students' expectations and assumptions of needs and requirements of the industry might come from their education. However, employees' seemed to be thinking more of their companies' goals than the goals of the students. As a result, there are gaps of perception between students and hotel managers. Empowerment may lead to an advanced level of employee organisation commitment which relates to offering discretion especially to front-line employees when dealing with customers (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1998). If organisations allow some degree of employee empowerment, this may improve employee motivation, productivity and improve service for the customers (Rafiq & Ahmed, 1998). Therefore, Rafiq and Ahmed state that service by employees who have been empowered will meet customers' wants, and both employees and customers will be satisfied, which may affect employees' organisational commitment and improve company profits.

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