Over qualified and under experienced
Turning graduates into hospitality managers

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Introduction
Introduction

- Vocational degree programs, including those in hotel and hospitality management, are intended to satisfy an industry need for skilled future employees and, as a result, there is a need to ensure the academic curriculum not only meets educational expectations but also industry and student expectations regarding the skill sets needed in the workplace.

- Students enrolling in degree programs in hotel or hospitality management are motivated by anticipated vocational and career outcomes (O’Mahony et al., 2001; Purcell and Quinn, 1996).

This research investigated hospitality manager’s expectations of graduate skills and compared these with student perceptions of the skills that hospitality managers valued. The results of this research are valuable in curriculum development and in planning internal and external communications strategies for faculty offering similar courses.

Tertiary educators in hospitality have long recognised the importance of matching program outcomes with industry needs and there have been a number of studies of hospitality employer expectations of graduates in the USA (for recent examples see Perdue et al., 2000; Nelson and Dopson, 1999; Kay and Russette, 2000) and in the UK (Baum, 1991).
Literature review

Changing needs of industry

- The hospitality industry, in common with many other industries, has shown increasing levels of competition and complexity over recent decades (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000).

- The skills needed by managers in the industry reflect these changes (Chung, 2000).
Literature review

Graduate skills

- Research in graduate skills has focused on management expectations and has been criticised for adopting a one-sided perspective that ignores graduate perceptions (Christou, 2000).

- Studies of management expectations have generally shown that industry believes management skills are more important in the academic curriculum than technical skills (Baum, 1990; Okeiyi et al., 1994; Tas, 1988; Umbriet, 1993).

- The studies that have included graduates (Knutson and Patton, 1992; Okeiyi et al., 1994) found graduates rated human resource skills and liaising with guests as most important.

- As many of the studies of management expectations have also identified interpersonal skills as a key area of importance (for examples see O’Halloran, 1992; Nelson and Dopson, 1999; Tas et al., 1996).
The generic skills framework

- The generic skills framework was developed in an educational context and has been used widely in the UK, USA and Australia in curriculum analysis and design (Australian National Training Authority, 2003).

- Generic skills have also been referred to as “core skills”, “key competencies” and recently as “employability skills” (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Business Council of Australia, 2002).

The focus of the generic skills approach is on broad learning outcomes for students rather than on the narrower management activities or competencies identified by Sandwith (1993).
Method

There were two major aims of the study:

1. To apply a generic skills framework to hospitality managers’ expectations of graduate students entering a management traineeship program.

2. To identify differences between hospitality managers’ expectations of graduate students and undergraduate students’ perceptions of what managers look for in graduate recruits.

3. The skill ratings in each group were then compared in order to develop a form of expectations-perceptions “gap analysis”.
Method

Instrument design

- The main instrument consisted of 52 descriptions of hospitality based activities covering the following nine generic skill areas

1. oral communication
2. written communication
3. problem solving
4. conceptual and analytical
5. information management
6. teamwork and leadership
7. interpersonal
8. adaptability and learning
9. self management
Method

Instrument design

- Following this description industry managers were asked to:

  Please imagine that you are part of an interview panel involved in recruiting a university graduate to fill a graduate traineeship. How important do you think each of the following skills or qualities would be in a new recruit?

Instrument design

- The student version of the survey instrument was almost identical to that used with industry managers.

  Imagine that you are applying for a graduate traineeship. How important do you think each of the following skills or qualities would be to hospitality managers assessing your application?
Method

Instrument design

- They were then asked to rate the importance of each skill description on a five-point scale that was labelled = 0 “not very important” to +4 “critically important”.
- A “don’t know” category was also provided so that respondent’s were not forced to rate skill descriptions that they did not understand.

Sampling and administration

- The sample-frame for the industry survey comprised 850 general managers, human resource managers and operations managers.
- Student perceptions were measured in a sample of 211 undergraduate students enrolled in a Bachelor of Hotel Management program.
Results

Usable responses were received from 371 industry managers (43.6 % response rate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>F&amp;B</th>
<th>Rooms</th>
<th>HRM</th>
<th>S&amp;M</th>
<th>GM</th>
<th>Other</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (mean)</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years in hospitality</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>13.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Years with current employer</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage with university degree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I. Profile of industry respondents
## Results

### Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Generic skill group</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Gap (a)</th>
<th>T-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apply knowledge to different contexts</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>−0.11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>−0.40</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use standard office applications, e.g. word processor, spreadsheets, databases</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>−0.04</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt creatively to change</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>−0.04</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify facts relevant to particular issues or problems</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>−0.20</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide one-on-one staff counseling</td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>−0.24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>−0.40</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop a personal career plan</td>
<td>SM</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>−0.16</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan an employee roster</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>−0.08</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>−0.25</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a standard operating procedure (SOP)</td>
<td>WC</td>
<td>−0.11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>−0.20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff</td>
<td>IP</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate listening skills</td>
<td>IP</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give and receive feedback on performance</td>
<td>IP</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a simple business report</td>
<td>WC</td>
<td>−0.02</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>−0.20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(continued)
**Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Generic skill group</th>
<th>Managers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate appropriately with other members of a working group</td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret and summarise a business or industry report</td>
<td>WC</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivate and encourage employees</td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure compliance with health and safety, hygiene</td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing and other regulations</td>
<td>OC</td>
<td>-0.73</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop business unit goals that are congruent with the organisation’s goals</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct and facilitate interviews</td>
<td>OC</td>
<td>-0.73</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delegate responsibility and authority</td>
<td>TL</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**T-test**

| Gap (a b) | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 0.05      | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 | 0.05 |

Notes: Sig. p < 0.05 (two-tailed test) Generic skill groups: OC = oral communication, WC = written communication, PS = problem solving, CA = conceptual and analytical, IM = information management, TL = teamwork and leadership, IP = interpersonal skills, AL = adaptability and learning, SM = self-management

**Discussion & Conclusion**
Discussion

Expectations:

- Whilst it is to be expected there will be changes in curriculum content and industry needs over time.
- Them to apply the conceptual and analytical skills that have been emphasised in their courses.
- Yet industry focuses on graduates’ lack of practical experience.

Experience:

- Graduates perceive themselves to have already served an “apprenticeship” for management through three or four years of university study combined with the associated practical and work experience requirements of most hospitality degree programs.
Discussion

Experience:

- A more co-operative and patient approach to the learning experience by universities, industry and the students themselves may be more fruitful.

- Work experience of all types and particularly exposure to management decision making assists students to make sense of the theoretical material that forms the bulk of their university course.

Conclusion

- Re-focusing hospitality curriculum, ensuring better learning outcomes for students of hospitality management, and maximising retention of graduates once they are in industry.
References


References


References


References


Other Literatures
吳聰賢等（1983）進行研究調查，職業興趣、工作價值與職業選擇三者之間關係顯示。

學生工讀時，選擇餐飲相關工作時，之後繼續從事餐飲工作的意願比工讀時選擇非餐飲相關性高。

未有工讀經驗之在學學生較重視內在工作價值觀之人興趣和個人專長

相反的，有工作經驗之非在學青年，較注重要在工作價值觀之收入高低、昇遷機會及名望等

經由台灣許順旺等（2012）學者的研究發現，經驗並非短時間內累積而成，而是需要透過長期之訓練與學習集結，因此每位員工所擁有之工作經驗皆不盡相同，且個體差異對於解讀工作經驗之過程會有落差，擁有不同經驗層次之員工對於回饋給組織的行為表現與感受亦會有所不同。
References

- 吳聰賢、蕭崑杉、呂淑清(1983)。農村青人職業興趣 工作價值與職業選擇之關係研究。台北：行政院青年輔導委員會。

- 許順旺、蘇紅文、蕭君安(2012)。國際觀光旅館主管工作控制及要求、工作滿足、組織承諾與離職傾向之相關研究—以工作經驗為干擾變項。餐旅暨觀光，9(2)，91-111。
Thanks for your attention