THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR

SUCCESSFUL MANAGERS IN THE

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Karl Atlow, a college recruiter for Marriott International recently stated during a campus presentation, that "most hospitality companies really don't care if you have a graduate degree in hospitality" (K. Atlow, class presentation North Carolina Central University, February 16, 2009). However, companies including Marriott expect an undergraduate degree to provide adequate preparation for entrance into the hospitality industry (Williams, 1998).   These statements may be what college hospitality program directors have heard. Or have they? There is a long-standing debate about whether higher education increases the career potential and success of managers in the hospitality industry. Research has long acknowledged that in general, persons with a college education are better prepared for higher level vocations that lead to advancements (Williams, 2003). Compensation, performance and promotions are three key benefits that are often considered to be the result of a college education (Williams, 2003).   However, earnings are also influenced by many other socioeconomic factors such as age, sex, race, family size, religion, community size and occupational opportunities

(Pascharopoulos, 1987). Positive relationships have also been documented between higher

education, social status and career potential (Blank & Stigler 1957;

Folger & Nam, 1964)

The human capital theory introduced in the 1960's resulted in a wave of young people

choosing to attend college. The human capital theory proposed that young people who invest

in college can expect positive returns (Menon, 1997). Denison's study (as cited in

Mansfield, 1972) estimated that university graduates earn 60-67% more than high school

graduates. Education generally provides the skills necessary for better occupational

opportunities, subsequently, resulting in a steady increase in college enrollment since the

1960's. The obvious expected increase in income following a college education was

confirmed again in the 1980s from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicating a sharp rise in

income for college graduates compared to high school graduates (Hecker, 1992). On average

those with a college degree earned approximately $500 more each week than those without a

college education (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005).

While the demands for higher education on an individual level are mainly driven by

economics, the financial return theory adds that the economic benefits are far more than just

paychecks (Menon, 2007). Those economic benefits extend to other rewards including

increased opportunities, professional networking, community visibility, and personal growth

and development constituting a wiser individual for the workplace. Individuals that proceed

through higher education programs, especially in service fields such as hospitality

undoubtedly finish with additional skill sets not obtained by those who choose not to proceed

with their education beyond the secondary level (Kay & Russette, 2000). Those skill sets

include, but are not limited to, leadership skills, communication skills, work experience,

ability to prioritize work, ethics, business, nutrition and food safety knowledge (Kay & Russette, 2000).

Although many college students go to college with the expectation to enhance their career potential, they also aim to acquire the necessary skills deemed important by workforce employers in the 21st century (Edventures, 2006).   College educated workers have higher salaries and savings leading to more productivity overall (Brown, 1985; as cited Koslowski, 1993).   In general, college students tend to have better personal lives including their health and longevity (Baum & Payea, 2005).

There are also social benefits experienced by college graduates that include higher voting rates, charitable giving and volunteering (Merisotis, 2008). In addition to social status, education contributes to job placement, higher salaries and job satisfaction (Brown, 1985; as cited Koslowski, 1993). Further implications for the value of higher education impacts policy making, including funding resources made available to those students wishing to go to college (Merisotis, 2008). Utilizing research studies and the perceived economic rewards, future predictions can be made about the value of higher education.

Despite the many benefits of higher education, successful employment can also be achieved through vocational training (Boyd, 2004). In fact, there are some people who achieve success without a college education. For example, Microsoft's founder Bill Gates very unique road to success demonstrates that all successful people do not receive traditional education. Ironically, Gates still recognizes the value of a college education as he stresses the importance of higher education in reducing inequities (Boyd, 2004).

While the benefits of higher education for many disciplines are clearly recognized, there seems to be some ambiguity among hospitality industry professionals regarding the

value of higher education for hospitality students. While, college education including vocational degree programs' are believed to provide students with a general knowledge base and supply the industry with skilled employees (Kay & Russette, 2000), many workers in the industry do not participate in formal training or obtain college degrees.

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) reported that hospitality industry professionals expect degree programs to equip students with the skill sets to transition smoothly into the workplace. According to the Bureau of Labor students in hospitality and lodging who have a college degree can expect better job opportunities (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Also hospitality industry workers with a college degree can expect advancement to better positions than those without a college degree (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). However, some research studies indicate that the skills leading to career success of new managers in the hospitality industry are not always acquired through a formal education program, sometimes resulting in the de-valuing of hospitality education programs (Alexander, 2007). Other research indicates that there is a need for higher education because it provides students with the necessary information technology skills that the industry thrives on today (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). While industry professionals consistently express concern that higher education programs may not provide students with the requisite skill set to be successful in the industry and recent research shows a fluctuation in the perception of the value of a college degree, a college education is often used as a pre-selection technique for potential employees, (Sadlak, 1978).

Employers in the hospitality industry have expressed a concern over the number of students that enter the workplace as management trainees who fail to make a smooth transition from school to the workplace (Ricci, 2005). In many cases these new management

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trainees are initially enthusiastic, but often lack the necessary skills to become successful managers. Thus, many of the management trainees remain in the industry or food service for less than five years resulting in a loss for both the individual and the company (Kay & Moncarz, 2004).   Hospitality industry leaders indicate that knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) are necessary tools of success for individuals entering the lodging segment of hospitality industry. Kay and Moncarz (2004) defined hospitality industry leaders as managers, owners, supervisors and human resource officials that control businesses that service people away from home.   Although some of the KSAs have changed throughout the years, they remain paramount to industry leaders whose goal is to hire well prepared individuals as managers. Assessing college hospitality programs is complicated because college programs offer different curricula for the various hospitality segments that drive each program (Williams, 2003). Furthermore, each program's curriculum may vary greatly depending on the type of degree offered, college in which it is located within the educational setting and the program's driving focus. Stark and Latucca (1996) indicated college politics often drive the programs, including funding in ways that may be contrary to industry desires. Program variation and focus has caused confusion among hospitality industry leaders, sometime causing a reduction in the value of a college education.

The ambiguity of the value of higher education regarding it's relevancy to the production of public goods has been questioned in a general sense (Bertolin & Leite, 2008). There is a disparity in the beliefs of students not planning to attend college and those who do as it relates directly to earnings. Students not intending to go to college believed they could potentially earn as much as any other managers with hard work and longevity. Contra wise, higher education students believed there to be a definite relationship between their college

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education and a "significant" amount of expected higher earnings" (Menon, 1997). Thus

human capital theory from general education can be applied to hospitality education. The

hospitality industry employs a large number of individuals at many service levels. But

hospitality industry leaders often complain that college educated students are over qualified

and under experienced. That is, recent graduates have difficulty executing tasks in entry

level positions (Way, 2006). Perdue, Woods, & Ninemeier (2001); Nelson and Dobson

(1999) attributed this concern of unprepared management trainees to the courses hospitality

programs offer. Managers are expected to enter the workplace with knowledge and skill sets

that will allow the transition from college to work to be brief and the productivity to progress

positively. Although successful managers are selected from in-house candidates eligible for

promotion or a pool of college graduates entering the field, there is still some uncertainty

over which group is better prepared. Some of the existing ambiguity fostered by the debate

over whether higher education prepares entry level managers to be more successful when

making the adjustments required for success than non-college educated managers creates

doubts on the actual value of a college education for hospitality students.

Statement of the Problem

Historically research studies have shown that a college degree is important for overall

success, however it is uncertain if this is true for the hospitality industry.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to: (1) ascertain the degree to which the general

benefits of a college education transfer and contribute to the success of managers in the

hospitality industry; (2) determine the perceived value of a college education in the

hospitality industry from the perspective of hospitality industry leaders; and (3) assess

whether individuals who have a college degree are more successful in the hospitality industry

than those individuals who do not have a college degree.

Research Questions

1. Do the benefits of having a college degree transfer to managers in the hospitality industry?

2. Are leaders in the hospitality industry more likely to hire individuals with college degrees than individuals who do not have degrees into management positions?

   $H2_0$: The hospitality industry is not more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

   $H2_a$: The hospitality industry is more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

3. Are salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree more likely to be higher than salaries for managers who do not have college degrees?

   $H3_0$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are not more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

   $H3_a$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

4. Are hospitality managers with college degrees more likely to be promoted to higher level management positions than those who do not have college degrees?

   $H4_0$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are not more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

   $H4_a$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

5. Are the turnover rates for managers in the hospitality industry who have college degrees more likely to be lower than the turnover rates for managers who do not have college degrees?

$H5_0$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is not likely to be lower than for those managers who do not have college degrees.

$H5_a$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is likely to be lower than the turnover rate for those managers who do not have college degrees.

6. Does a hospitality manager with a college degree have greater technical skills?

   $H6_0$: There is no difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

   $H6_a$: There is a difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

7. Does a college degree provide a hospitality manager with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to be successful managers in the hospitality industry?

   $H7_0$: There is no difference in the knowledge, skills and abilities of managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

   $H7_a$: There is a difference in the knowledge, skills and abilities of managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

Definition of Terms

AH&LA- American Hotel and Lodging Association.

Conceptual Skills - the abilities to work with ideas and concepts.

Curriculum- A detailed set of courses with organized instructional outline, course of study, syllabus or teaching guide showing specific objectives, subject matter, teaching method of courses.

Education- Instruction, edification, teaching and learning.

Food Service - A business specializing in providing food and beverages to clientele.

Hospitality-A term derived from the Latin work hospitare, meaning, "to receive as a guest." This phrase implies that a host is prepared to meet a guest's basic requirements, food, beverages, and lodging, while that guest is away from home.

Hospitality Educator- A current member of the faculty of a program, department, school or college that grants a baccalaureate degree in the hospitality management field.

Hospitality Entry Level Manager- an individual employed at the beginning management level in a hospitality organization.

Hospitality Industry- A business that services people, who are away from home, businesses including food and beverage services, such as restaurants, lounges, commercial and institutional services, and catering services: lodging services, casinos, recreation services, theme parks, and campgrounds.

Hospitality industry leaders - Managers, owners, supervisors and human resource officials that control businesses that service people away from home.

Human skills- also known as interpersonal skills, refers to having knowledge about people and being able to work with them (Katz, 1955).

KSAs- Knowledge, skills and abilities potential employees possess and are deemed important by hiring managers.

Key skills- those skills that are basic and generic in nature, but very valuable in assisting every person entering the workforce. Also referred to as "core skills," transferable skills," "general skills," "non-technical skills," and/or "soft skills" (Hofstrand, 1996.)

Lodging- A room or rooms available for rental by the public.

NRA- An acronym for The National Restaurant Association.
Recruiter - An individual who recruits graduates of post secondary hospitality education programs for entry level management positions in the hospitality industry.

Restaurant - An establishment where refreshments or meals are served

Restaurant Performance Index - Statistical barometer that measures the overall health of the U.S. Restaurant Industry. This monthly composite index is based on the responses to the National Restaurant Association's monthly Restaurant Industry Tracking Survey, which is fielded among restaurant operators nationwide on a variety of indicators including sales, traffic, labor and capital expenditures.

Skill- A present, observable competence to perform a learned behavior regarding the relationship between mental activity and bodily movements (Maxine, 1997).

Success- Accomplishment, achievement, triumph based on pre-established standards.

Technical skills- the ability to work with objects and/or things such as accounting, finance, marketing and business law, and are important to entry-level managers. (Northouse, 2004; Yukl, 1989).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is an abundance of research and literature documenting the value of higher education for many industries and professions. The need for higher education continues to be researched and documented indicating its long stance on positive contributions and returns (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). However, there is a great deal of ambivalence regarding whether the value of higher education transfers to the hospitality industry. This review of literature discusses the importance and value of a college education in general. It also establishes an ambivalent attitude toward the value of a college education for entry level managers in the hospitality industry (Williams & Gordon, 1981).

The value of higher education to the common good has long been established. Higher education contributes not only to the benefit of the individual, but to the communities in which they live and work, as well as society in general (Pascharopoulos, 1987). As stated previously, research has long acknowledged that in general, persons with a college education are better prepared for higher level vocations that lead to advancement. Compensation, performance and promotions are three key benefits of a college education (Williams & Gordon, 1981). However, earnings are also influenced by many other socioeconomic factors such as age, sex, race, family size, religion, community size and occupational opportunities (Pascharopoulos, 1987). Positive relationships have also

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been documented between higher education, social status and career potential (Blank & Stigler 1957; Folger &Nam, 1964). Social benefits include causal or consequential relationships resulting from the college years. One such relationship could mean meeting a spouse that is more likely to earn a better salary or from an affluent family (Kim, 2002). Additional social benefits of higher education include poverty reduction, better health, lower incarceration rate, school readiness, increased volunteerism, voting and blood donation, and social programming (College Board, 2003). In summary higher education is credited with the following long term benefits: (1) monetary investments that return later as financial gain; (2) non-monetary benefits that return as social status, networks and relationships; (3) consumption benefits that may be realized from the college years until retirement; and (4) protection benefits that may reduce or eliminate the disadvantages of not matriculating in college and having higher education (Kim, 2002).

Social Values of Higher Education

Higher education has played a major role in the last century participating in the shaping of leaders in modern American society. Lee (1992) stated that higher education provides non-monetary social benefits and social values as well as those that are directly related to finances. Kim (2002) study of higher education in Korea reported that education is directly related to ones social status. Non-monetary social values such as meeting and associating with other college educated individuals provide discussions that could promote better child rearing techniques. The child rearing benefit can be passed along to future generations by imparting in their children the value of higher education (Kim, 2002).   Another example of a non-monetary benefit is obtaining a career position offering exceptional fringe benefits with travel for personal and professional development

and growth. Further, Koreans believe that social status gained from higher education is worth the demands required to obtain a higher education (Kim, 2002). In the United States of America, leaders in almost every field including government, businesses, science, medicine, law and clergy have emerged from colleges and universities (Astin & Astin, 2000).

Scott (2000) credits colleges and universities with being the leading knowledge producers in the 20th century. (Fisher, 2006) reported higher education as a public good that provides private benefits for both individuals and the organizations that they work for. The benefits of higher education begin with the overall well-being of the individual and promote "heightened individualism" and "increased social stratification" (Johnathan, 2001). Johnathan (2001) describes the private benefits for individuals to be a complex relationship that results in a social good:

> We are each affected by the education, or lack of it, of others: this we experience collectively. But we are each also powerfully – and differentially – affected by our own education, or lack of it: this we experience privately. This together with other unique features of education as a social practice make this "good" neither "public" nor 'private' but social. (p. 28).

Thus higher education raises the level of individual consciousness that produce good citizens (Nussbaum, 1997). In addition to social change and citizenship production, the benefits of higher education also extend to businesses. Thus, the individual benefits of a college education are also diffused to society in general (Jonathan, 2001).

Human Capital and Economic Values of Higher Education

The human capital theory introduced in the 1960's by economists describes higher education as a mechanism for increasing the overall human value (Johnson, 1960). Woodhall, (1995) described human capital as the investment individuals make in education, training and other activities expecting their lifetime earnings to be increased as a result of their investments. In the early 1960's the human capital theory postulated that an individual and society as a whole profits as a result of an investment in higher education. He further explains that human capital investments in education increases a worker's productivity thus leading to increased output, similar to that of a machine in a factory. Menon (1997) further developed this human capital theory as a great way for the young people who choose to invest and attend college to reap valuable outcomes.

Economically higher education increases an individual's capital. There is economic remuneration from higher education on the businesswise success of individuals that go to college (Gumport, 2000). Economic professionals postulate human capital investment is due to the perceived return on the investments (Menon, 1977). Subsequently, many studies have explored the potential economic impact and its relationship between college educated individuals and those who have not attended college. European countries have also studied economic benefits based on the expected positive outcomes (Wong, 1989). Williams and Gordon (1981) conducted studies on the expected economic benefits of education in the United Kingdom. This research looked at the educational qualifications and the average earnings following individuals' compulsory education. The William and Gordon Model was repeated in Hong Kong where individual students tended to be realistic about their earning potential.

Additionally, the William and Gordon model reported there to be a strong correlation between the amount of education and the amount they expected to earn (Wong, 1989). Individuals not attending college were also questioned on their perceived economic return on investing in higher education. Both students who planned to attend college and those who did not agreed that the expected earnings for college graduates in higher education would earn more (Menon, 2008).

Kim (2002) researched the expectations of higher education in South Korea. South Korean students believed college graduates can expect to earn at least $20,000 per year more than those students who do not attend college (Kim, 2002). Cosby (2000) confirms that college graduates earn more than those who do not attend college because they qualify for higher paying jobs. Further, college graduates earn more in positions that did not require a college degree.

The United States Department of Labor (1999) reports the skills required by many jobs have increased and now requires an individual worker to have complex skills that are similar to those obtained by college graduates. Therefore, in 1998 college graduates earned approximately $15,000 per year more than person without a college degree (USDL, 1999).

Table 1

Median Earnings of Full-time Workers by Education Level, 1998

	Median earnings	Earnings premium over	
Educational Level	1998	High School graduates with no college	
	(dollars)/year	(percent)/year	
High school diploma	$25,062		
Bachelor's Degree	40,387	$ 15,325	61
Master's Degree	48,772	23,710	95
Doctoral Degree	60,729	35,667	1

Source: www.bls.gov/data.

While the single most convincing value of higher education is evidenced by the amount individuals earn, the economic benefits of attending college are not limited to financial earnings (Kim, 2002). The actual rewards include increased opportunities, professional networking, community visibility, and personal growth and development constituting a wiser individual for the workplace (Kim, 2002). More recent data on labor and education correlation is noted in Table 2. Miranda (1999) reported those who possess a college degree continue to earn more than those who do not.

Table 2

Median Earnings of Full-time Workers by Education Level, 2009

	Median earnings
Educational Level	2009
	(dollars)/year
High school diploma	$32,552
Bachelor's Degree	53,300
Master's Degree	63,364
Doctoral Degree	79,664

Source: www.bls.gov/data.

Value of Higher Education in Hospitality

Crosby (2008) stated no matter the level of college education or age, occupation is the main factor determining the financial rewards of a college degree. Across all occupations, college degrees appear to provide additional advantages and benefits. Crosby also lists the industries, careers and occupations with the greatest income (in descending order): physician, dentists, lawyer, marketing, pharmacy, electronic engineer, mechanical engineer, computer systems, financial managers and civic engineers (Crosby, 2008).

Colleges have existed as the environment providing education for work professions and or public service. Hospitality can be included in that broad understanding of academia (Symes & McIntyre, 2000). While many believe that hospitality industry professionals enjoy many of the same benefits as graduates in other professions, there are few studies that have documented the specific benefits of a college

degree in the hospitality industry. The studies that have been conducted show ambiguity

in the value of higher education for hospitality employees (Wolfe, 1997). Miranda

(1999) lists average earnings of college graduates by occupations.   His work shows that

hospitality managers with college degrees earn an average of 45% more than high school

graduates with no college degree in the same position. Figure 1 lists the annual earnings

by degree and age categories for managers in the hospitality industry.

Figure 1

Annual Earnings for Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral Degrees by Age Categories
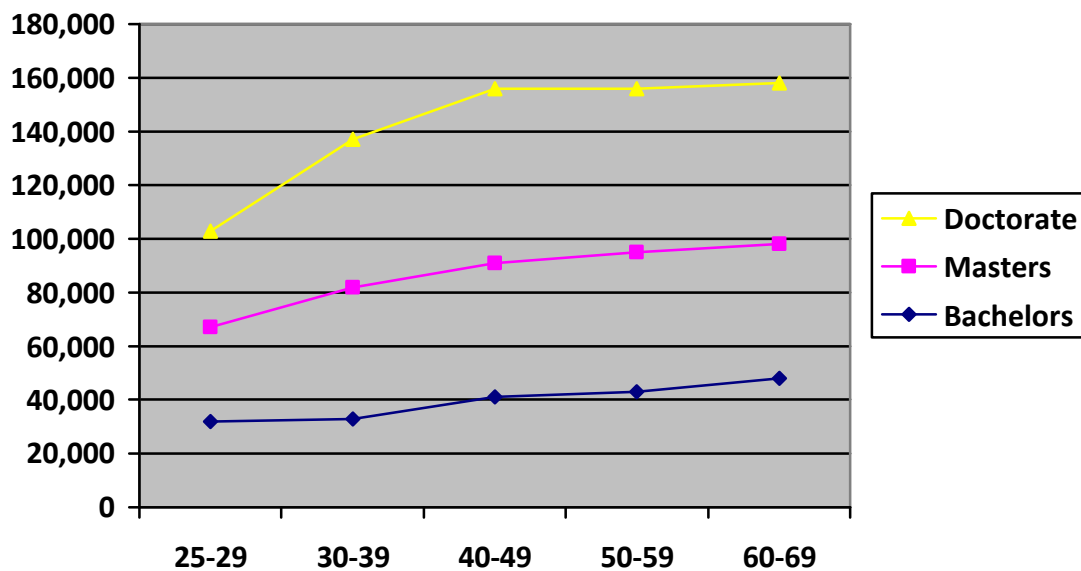
Figure 1 Annual Earnings for Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral Degrees by Age
Categories. Adapted from www.bls.gov/data.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

College is considered the leading producer of individual knowledge (Scott, 2000). Higher education has prided itself on providing knowledge and then supplying the workforce and society with more knowledgeable individuals. Over the years the number of knowledge producers has increased significantly, causing a greater number of disciplines (Fisher, 2006). However, the type of knowledge and information obtained while in college is of great importance (Bell, 1971; Drucker, 1993).

In addition to being a leading producer of knowledge, many colleges help students to gain valuable skills that prepare them for success in the workplace. Unfortunately, colleges do not always teach the necessary skills required for many occupations such as electricians and machinists (Crosby, 2000). Hospitality is sometimes included as one of the occupations where the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) are not obtained in college. According to Kay and Montraz (2007), the hospitality industry could benefit from knowing the knowledge, skills and abilities that contribute to the success of entry level managers. Higher education's potential contribution to skills attainment dates back to the 1960's in Ireland when it gained prominence for supplying qualified individuals to the workforce (Fisher, 2006). Skill based education has been defining their niche by reducing the time it takes for individuals to be prepared for full-time positions in the workplace. Meanwhile, administrators and faculty in academia are becoming more nervous about the creeping vocationalism into higher education (Fisher, 2006).

The argument is that:

Academic identity is particularly threatened by work-based earning when

academic knowledge has to be tested in the workplace and where it can be made

to look venerable and non-viable. In such a scenario, academics find their

academic and professional identities challenged. Their perceived capacity to be

useful is reduced when supervising a work-based student who is often more in

command of the knowledge environment of work than an academic can ever hope

to be. (Boud & Symes, 2000. p, 25)

Industry employers are increasing their requests for students equipped with the skills and

abilities necessary for the workplace (Ricci, 2005). As a result, there are additional

workplace learning sites and organizations being developed and enrolling individuals

with the sole purpose of training and providing them with the (KSAs) that result in

immediate entrance into workplace (Fisher, 2000). These organizations possibly threaten

the established value of higher education (Fisher, 2000). Historically higher education

has enjoyed the reputation that college is the place where great minds are developed and

successful workers are prepared. Marginson, (2002) described this as mass higher

education which is the foundation to "nation-building."

Hospitality Education has grown out of a desire to educate and prepare

individuals in an academic setting for work in the multi-billion dollar hospitality industry

(Sigala & Baum 2003). Sigala and Baum (2003) further describe the hospitality industry

as different from other industries because of its direct relationship and consequences for

delivering both education and training. The hospitality industry is projected to grow by

17% between 2004 and 2014 (Bureau of Labor, 2000). The food service and lodging

segments of the hospitality industry is expected to make up 8% of the national

employment (Bureau of Labor, 2000). Given these growth projections, the availability of workers with the requisite KSAs will be even more crucial to the success of the hospitality industry. In research conducted by Staton-Reynolds, Ryan, and Scott-Halsell (2009) hospitality recruiters look for general, less-tangible skills such as emotional intelligence, integrity, enthusiasm and the ability to learn. Some examples of the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities, including technical skills, and emotional intelligence deemed important to the hospitality industry professionals such as recruiters included: maintain professional standards, committed, hard-working, communication skills, focuses on service quality as well as guest services (Staton-Reynolds, et al., 2009).

Because of the continuous and sometimes rapid changes in the hospitality industry, hospitality education is time sensitive Rudolph (1977). The sensitivity and awareness of the hospitality industry's needs, students and individual graduates' expectations should change to reflect the evolving industry needs, incorporating findings from recent research. Therefore individuals graduating from college programs in hospitality are expected to have the KSAs to successfully transition into entry level positions in the hospitality industry (Eichorst, 2004). However, the hospitality industry does not have a consistent way of training and providing the necessary skills for entry level employees (U. S. Bureau of Labor, 2006-2007). The constant change in industry requirements coupled with an increasing demand for entry level managers has caused hospitality industry leaders to become increasingly frustrated with the pool of eligible applicants (Eichorst, 2004).

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) reported that the expectations that hospitality industry leaders have for graduates of hospitality education programs are not being met.

Miranda (1999) suggests hospitality educators evaluate and adjust curriculum to assure

their students are not only receiving the necessary KSAs but additionally provided with

the technical concepts to prepare them for successful entry into the industry. The skill

deemed most important to hotel, restaurants and resorts in the hospitality industry is

quality customer service. Other high rankings skills were employee relations, motivating

employees, problem solving, communication, sanitation and planning and conducting

meetings (Eichorst, 2004).   Although some skills are best learned on the job such as

facilities management, housekeeping management, employee relations and customer

service, higher education with its classroom setting is best noted for providing knowledge

on technology and computer skills, writing, law, math, and public speaking (Eichorst,

2004). DeFries (2001) further asserts that planning and conducting meetings, problem

solving and assessing industry trends are a combination of knowledge and skills that are

learned in the classroom and on-the-job training.

Kay and Russette (2002) added leadership as a major skill individuals should

possess when entering into the management ranks in the hospitality industry. Their

findings contradicted previous research indicating interpersonal skills as the most

important for hospitality entry level managers (Kay & Russette, 2002). The U.S.

Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook has also provided some general

expectations for individuals when they graduate and move into management positions in

lodging and restaurant management. The technical skills identified important for lodging

were housekeeping, maintenance, catering and food service administration. For

restaurants, the technical skills identified were culinary, sanitation and nutrition planning

(Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2000). A National Restaurant Association (NRA)

study reported the educational priorities had changed by the year 2000 focusing more on non-technical skills such as communication, leadership, customer relations, training and motivation (National Restaurant Association, 2000). Further, Kay and Russette (2001) supported the NRA study indicating that non-technical skills, including interpersonal and leadership are the most important skills that graduates can possess for entrance into the hospitality industry management positions. In comparison, recent research findings from Staton-Reynolds, et. al (2009) indicated emotional intelligence skills such as integrity and commitment to be ranked high among the preferred skills by recruiters. Additionally, Staton-Reynolds, et al. (2009) found that attention to detail, organizational skills and professional standards maintenance were among the top KSAs deemed higher in importance by hospitality industry recruiters.

There is limited published research on how well college prepares individuals for entrance into the hospitality industry (Tas, 1988). Recently several studies have reviewed hospitality education programs' curricula seeking to identify educational competencies, work experience training, skill sets and industry expectation (Staton-Reynolds et. al, 2009). The constant changing of hospitality industry needs make it difficult to identify what is needed. Additionally, the hospitality industry has become increasingly complex in recent decades (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000) due to the skill sets needed as the industry adapts to changes in food patterns, preferences and the economy (Chung, 2000). Changes in the hospitality industry reflect a shift from an emphasis on management to leadership which suggests a decrease in the importance of operational and technical skills, and an increase in the importance of strategic and corporate skills (Tas, LaBrecque, & Clayton, 1996; Gilbert & Gueirrier, 1997). Therefore, hospitality and tourism

educators could benefit greatly by assessing the hospitality industry leaders expectations for entry level managers (Tesone & Ricci, 2006).

Hospitality education programs have increased tremendously in the past 90 years since the opening of the first hotel administration program at Cornell University (Guide to College Programs, 2004). Although European hospitality institutions have a long standing industry preparation tradition, there is still some nebulous thoughts relating to the value of a college education (Cooper, Scales, & Westlake, 1992; Dale & Robinson, 2001; Formica, 1996).

One of the biggest questions that continue to plague the hospitality industry is whether or not an individual should go to school prior to working in the industry. In particular, culinary school and chefs are still undecided whether a degree is necessary for success (StarChefs, 2009). In fact, some industry leaders as chefs prefer to have work experience over a college education further reporting those individuals with externships or work experience earned slightly more than those who just completed college. Also individuals having completed unpaid work experiences earned slightly more (approximately $2,000 annually) than those who did not complete unpaid work experiences (StarChefs, 2009).

The food service segment of the hospitality industry often employs untrained individuals as preparation workers (Tas et al., 1996). Later the combination of time and experience often leads to an excellent long-term worker that is eventually promoted to management. Many entry level managers attribute their success to hard work and on the job training as opposed to a college education (Tas et al., 1996; Gilbert & Gueirrier, 1997). Although many individuals do well through on-the-job training, post secondary

education has become more important as the years have passed and industry leaders increasingly prefer degrees for promotion to management. The type of degree industry leaders prefer for entry level managers is non-specific because they believe students completing a degree are more mature and motivated to work in the fast paced industry. Additionally, there are increasingly more master's programs in hospitality offering additional, in-depth preparation for its graduates. However, hospitality industry leaders are not confident that this level of education is necessary for success of entry level managers (StarChefs, 2009)

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) reported that there are more academically qualified individuals applying for entry level management positions. And this increased number of qualified students is attributed to their motivation of their anticipated career outcomes (Purcell & Quinn, 1996). However, they do not all possess the necessary skills needed to be successful managers. Despite the economic outlook, job opportunities in the hospitality industry remain fairly strong. In fact, hospitality, including tourism is the fastest growing industry in the world accounting for approximately ten per cent of global employment (Baum, 2002). Because of the continued growth in the hospitality industry, the demand for qualified hospitality managers is increasing "exponentially" (World Tourism and Travel Council, 2003) and will continue to grow.

The growth in the hospitality industry resulting in the need for more qualified managers coupled with the growing number of hospitality education programs and thus graduates, will exacerbate the dilemma associated with how to determine which individuals are best suited for management positions in the industry—i.e. whether

individuals with college degrees are likely to be more successful than those who do not complete a college degree (Nelson, 2003).

Another factor that complicate the challenge of providing qualified individuals is the changing demographics and new attitudes about work and careers that today's generation of workers possess. Changes in demographics and attitudes are issues that neither the hospitality industry nor educators can afford to ignore. The "new generation" of workers has a very different approach to thinking when it comes to education, career choices and the impact of each on the potential income of their investment (Kearns, 2001). Although studies have looked at the relationship between the hospitality industry, hospitality educators and the student, a final consensus has yet to be arrived at. The common theme of these studies is that providing the hospitality industry with graduates that are attitudinal prepared and possesses the necessary skills for success in the industry is extremely challenging (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). There also seems to be a gap between what hospitality educators are providing and what hospitality industry professionals expect.

Kearns' (2001) research on industry preparation identified skills as "key competencies" necessary for success as managers. The key competencies in the past have not included technological skills as a high priority (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). However technology is so important to the overall hospitality management operations at present that it is considered one of the key skills needed by management trainee candidates. Barron (2008) suggests that superior talent is necessary for success in the hospitality industry. However, understanding how individuals obtain and how industry leaders assess "superior talent?" and skills can be very hard to pinpoint. Thus, leaders in

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the hospitality industry are finding it increasingly difficult to identify, find and recruit individuals who are qualified, motivated and properly trained (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000). To fill this void hospitality education programs have grown tremendously for several decades with anticipation of providing the hospitality industry with well qualified individuals. However, hospitality education programs need to better understand the KSAs that industry professionals are looking for and continuously modify their curriculum to ensure that their graduates are obtaining these KSAs in order to be able to effectively supply the industry with qualified graduates in today's fast paced, constantly changing and technologically driven environment.

Thus, there is a need for administrators and faculty members in the hospitality education program to engage in on-going research that helps them to stay abreast of industry requirements so that they can adapt their curriculum and instruction in a manner that provides their graduates with the requisite KSAs to become successful managers. In essence, educational organizations that teach, train, develop and prepare individuals to work in hospitality must research, listen and adjust to the changing industry needs if they want to fulfill a viable and "pivotal" role (Barron, 2008). Otherwise, hospitality industry leaders will look to other methods and sources of identifying individuals who are qualified to make the transition from education and training to industry as successful managers.

To date, very few studies have focused specifically on the relationship of hospitality education programs and the hospitality industry needs. There has been considerable research and attention to the business aspect and literature, but hospitality has not been the exclusive topic for much of the research (Barron, 2008). Given the lack

of research on hospitality education and its relevance and contribution to successful

management in the industry, educators and industry leaders alike should consider all of

the variables necessary for success. Some of the variables include students' perceptions

of the industry, educational components, technical skills and work experience. Way

(2006) indicated there is not a standardized model available to use for a baseline for

determining how education programs should be structured. Hospitality programs

structure curriculums by reviewing similar programs' structure, courses and credit hour

requirements (Pavesic, 1993). According to Pavesic (1993) this model will not meet the

main objective of hospitality education programs, which is to supply the industry with

individuals prepared to work successfully as managers. A study conducted by Casado

(1992), reported American hospitality education programs focuses more on the

management aspects when preparing students for the industry. Contra wise, most

European schools focus on the craft and how students should prepare to work in the

industry as successful managers. Casado adds the disadvantage to the craft orientation is

when the opportunity for advancement arises, these management trainees are passed over

because although they are strong in the hands-on process, they lack the necessary

communication, interpersonal and business skills (Casado, 1992). Hospitality education

programs should provide a distinct assessment of what their programs impart to their

students, the KSAs that industry professionals desire in graduates and then tailor their

curriculums to ensure that the education that they are providing match industry

expectations. This will ensure that knowledge and preparation will translate into

immediate transferable qualities desired by hospitality industry leaders for entry level

management trainees and their eventual success. In Casado's study he recommended

college and university hospitality education offer programs that are uniquely different from trade schools, hotel and restaurant management programs and business oriented programs. He advocates that the three major components should include: 1) technical subjects from a managerial perspective; 2) Liberal studies emphasizing communication and interpersonal skills and 3) Business courses applicable to hospitality-related topics. In his conclusion, Casado (1992) stated a well-balanced four year program would include equal courses representing the three areas.

Criticisms of Hospitality Education

According to Gilbert and Guerrier (1997), the KSAs required by hospitality industry professionals are in sharp contrast to the priorities of college programs. College programs are often criticized for emphasizing the theoretical concepts during their matriculation at the expense of practical skills. Hospitality programs administrators and educators must seek to provide each student with what the industry requires of entry level managers by providing a realistic view of the work that is expected of them upon graduation. Hospitality industry leaders agree it has become increasingly difficult to attract and retain managers; it is incumbent on them to participate in the solution. One reason for the less-than-stellar attraction is that some individuals do not see hospitality management as a career (McCaulay & Woods, 1989). In 1988, Dr. Patrick Moreo stated: It may well turn out that each HRI (hotel, restaurant, and institutional) program that survives a probable future shakeout of quality programs will provide its special offering to the marketplace of industry, students, and faculty. One program may be highly oriented to research, another to financial management, another to community-college

instructor education, another toward human resource management. "The key will be to make certain there is a good fit among the expectations of the program, its market, and its host institution." (Moreo, 1988, p.85)

In a study conducted by Barron and Maxwell (1993) hospitality management students understood they could possibly have great career opportunities in the hospitality industry. However, those students indicated they did not anticipate they would have a long-term career in hospitality management and therefore selected other industry options upon graduation. As early as 1995, hospitality education programs reported fifty per cent attrition as hospitality education majors chose careers outside of the industry (Johns & McKechnie, 1995). Such attrition constitutes a tremendous loss of educated individuals who for some reason after studying the curriculum chose to forgo the hospitality management training following graduation and opt for another career (Lefever & Withiam, 1998). Additionally, Stutts (1995) stated that one of the biggest concerns hospitality industry leaders have with hospitality education programs is that educators do not take seriously nor fully accept the responsibility for equipping and preparing the graduates psychologically to transition into the industry. While theoretical concepts and history is of importance to hospitality education, it is not the priority when hiring graduates of programs for industry management positions (Johns & McKechnie, 1995). Hospitality industry leaders use KSAs and not technical skills such as knowledge, ability, attitudes and service capabilities when employing college graduates (Perdue, et al., 2001). Further, if hospitality education programs do not successfully close the gap between the KSAs that they are providing their graduates and what industry professionals expect in a manner that equip students with demonstrative KSAs that enable them to

successfully transition into and remain in the workplace over long periods of time, many existing programs may not survive, particularly given today's challenging economic times.

Other studies have shown the opposite in that students in secondary schools perceive hospitality and tourism careers in a very positive light (Lewis & Airey, 2001). More recent research has proved Dr. Moreo's assessment to be valid. This "shakeout" that results in the attrition of hospitality education programs could become even more pronounced given the lack of coordination between hospitality education programs and the industry and the fact that hospitality and tourism education programs also are experiencing a reduction in the number of students enrolling and are finding it increasingly difficult to retain them (Mage, 2003). Eisner, (2005) concluded that the hospitality industry needs to improve its perceived competence and positive, long-term career outlook if they expect to attract qualified, skilled and educated management trainees to select entry level positions in the industry. Unless the hospitality industry takes a closer, more introspective look at the image and model it is projecting, the attrition rate will possibly continue to rise. Westerman and Yamamura, (2006) reported hospitality education students also indicated that a deterrent was their low perceptions of hospitality industry's management competence.

Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, and Ogden (2007) conducted a study to examine the attitudes of students who worked in the hospitality industry and how the industry measured up to their pre-conceived expectations. In this study, Barron reported that students looked forward to their careers in hospitality positively while studying in college. Barron, et al. (2007) further accepted and anticipated the work would be

difficult sometimes and the schedule would be demanding. However, students reported

their disappointments with poor rewards and limited growth experience in managerial

positions. The group of students placed a great emphasis on growing as a manager

(Barron, et, al. 2007). As a result, the hospitality industry experiences high turnover of

managers.   According to Barron (2008) the decision by hospitality education students to

choose another career is made during the education period.

Considerations for Hospitality Curriculum

Research has indicated that current students prefer a different approach to

hospitality education programs. Instead of the traditional programs, students are

gravitating toward hospitality education programs that are more vocationally oriented

(Barron, 2008). According to Barron (2008) there may be evidence that college students

are actually dissuaded by programs with less practical experience and find other

programs to meet their practical needs such as certificate and other interactive and skills

based programs.   Current hospitality students thrive in more interactive educational

settings (Tribe, 2005). Therefore today's students may not find the traditional hospitality

education program as attractive and thus opt for non-traditional programs that provide

more practical experiential learning opportunities as their path to success. Perhaps to

their own detriment, some hospitality educators have focused on the students' attitude

toward programs and as a result have reduced or removed most of the food service or

food production courses from their curriculum. This program void is filled with

additional theoretical courses with very little practical training. Further, some hospitality

educators promote a masters degree in hospitality administration or management with

even less focus on practical training (Barron, 2008). Barron (2008) suggests the outcome of such decisions by hospitality educators could lead to either student's dissatisfaction or boredom with the heavy theoretical model and abandon that program altogether choosing a curriculum with more activities, laboratories and practical applications. Other students complete the theoretical based curriculum with disdain, then abandon the hospitality industry and pursue a career in another industry upon graduation (Barron, 2008). When the latter occurs, the hospitality industry lose the opportunity to gain an educated, qualified manager and hospitality education programs receive further criticism for their inability to provide industry with qualified managers as well as lose its educational investment. Jenkins, (2001) concluded "many hospitality students, through exposure to the subject and industry, become considerably less interested in selecting hospitality as their career of first choice." (p. 20). The studies that showed a significant number of students changing careers were from programs that required work experience as a component of their curriculum. Alexander (2007) suggests hospitality educators broaden the program curriculum to promote students' competencies. In particular, college educated individuals need to be managers that can think in a reflective manner. Also managers need to be able to apply the theoretical knowledge they have obtained to the workplace (Airey & Tribe, 2000).

Additional research has compared programs with significant work hour requirements and those with little to none and found some students prefer alternative means to gaining experience. Barron and Anastasiadou (2007) studied programs that required a work experiences and students who received hospitality experience in other ways and reported the majority worked part time to earn money. Other reasons

hospitality students work in the industry part time is to develop their skills and knowledge so they will be successful once they transition into management positions (Lucas & Lamont, 1998). Jenkins (2001) added that students who worked for other reasons than just to satisfy the college curriculum tended to have more positive impressions of their futures in the hospitality industry. Negative impression of the hospitality education programs coupled with alternative education or preparation routes are cause for more research in whether the traditional college education is necessary for success in the hospitality industry. Hospitality education programs must address the issue and concerns to not only adequately prepare students to enter the hospitality industry management ranks, but provide positive experiences for them that will cause them to make it their life long career.

Summary

The general benefits of higher education have been substantiated by research and the literature. Although a degree in hospitality allows individuals to share many of those general benefits, there is uncertainty on whether some of the specific benefits accrue to the hospitality. There seems to be some ambiguity among hospitality industry professionals regarding the value of college degrees for their managers. Researchers have shown that there are inconsistencies in the perceived value of hospitality education programs, particularly with respect to their ability to produce successful managers. While attempts to demonstrate that hospitality education provides long term value that leads to professional success abound, some researchers and industry professionals question whether the same success can be obtained without a college

education. Many of these researchers and industry professionals also question whether hospitality educators know how and are willing to tailor their curricula to provide graduates with the requisite KSAs to meet the needs of the industry (Meyer, Koppel, & Tas, 1990). Further, hospitality industry leaders state that many education programs designed to prepare students for the industry are not in touch with what the industry needs or prefers (Ashley et al., 1995).

Therefore there is a persistent and growing lack of confidence among hospitality industry professionals that hospitality education graduates possess the ability to successfully transfer from college to the workplace as mangers. Hospitality education programs' credibility is at risk of being diminished unless they continue to strive for academic excellence while providing a product that is valuable to hospitality industry leaders (Pavesic, 1993).

Drawing upon previous research, this study explored the perception and most current relationships between the hospitality educators and hospitality industry leaders. The literature review suggested that soliciting feedback from hospitality industry leaders and hospitality educators to determine the perceived value of a college education for a successful career in the hospitality industry is needed. Essential to this study is the acknowledgement that there are other routes individuals can use to become a successful hospitality manager. However, this research focuses on the relevance of a college degree for success in the hospitality industry.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to: (1) ascertain the degree to which the general

benefits of a college education transfer and contribute to the success of managers in the

hospitality industry; (2) determine the perceived value of a college education in the

hospitality industry from the perspective of hospitality industry leaders; and (3) assess

whether individuals who have a college degree are more successful in the hospitality

industry than those individuals who do not have a college degree. The results of this

research are divided into two sections. Section One discusses the demographics of the

hospitality industry leaders who participated in this study.   Section Two discuss the

degree to which higher education contributes to the success of food service managers

from the perspective of industry leaders who responded to this study.

To achieve this purpose, the study collected and analyzed quantitative data that

assessed the relationship between obtaining a college degree and being a successful

manager in the hospitality industry. The study also explored the benefits of a college

education in hospitality in comparison to the benefits from other industries. Specifically,

this study: (1) researched the perceived value of a college education in the hospitality

industry from the perspective of hospitality industry leaders; and (2) assessed whether

college educated individuals are more successful in the hospitality industry than those individuals who are not college educated.

Design of Study

This research study was a non-experimental descriptive, quantitative study (Way, 2006; Gay & Airasian, 2003). The study collected survey data from hospitality industry leaders in order to determine their perception of the benefits to hiring managers with college degrees. Hospitality industry leaders are those managers, owners, supervisors and human resource officials that control businesses that provide service to people when they are away from home.

The planning of the research began in summer of 2009 and continued through spring 2011. The collection of data for this research project was conducted during the summer and fall of 2010. Additional compilations and analyzing of the data and research continued through Spring, 2011. A questionnaire (Appendix C: Supplemental file) was designed based upon the literature review and the specific objectives of the study. The questionnaire was adapted from existing survey instruments that have sought to ascertain similar information. Following the completion of the questionnaire development, the proper approval documentation was completed and submitted to the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB granted approval on June 23, 2010. (Appendix A)

Population and Sampling

The sampling process for this research consisted of the following steps: (1) defining the target population, (2) choosing the sampling frame, (3) sampling method, (4) determining the sample size, and (5) implementing the sampling plan (Hair, Babin, Money & Samouel, 2003). The target population for this study was managers, owners, supervisors and human resource officials in the hospitality industry. It would be impossible to collect information from such a large amount of people, therefore a convenience sample was used to target and obtain information from current members of the two largest hospitality industry associations.

This research used a convenience, purposive or judgment sampling methodology. The use of a convenience purposive sampling strategy benefited this study because it allowed the researcher to complete a large number of contacts quickly and cost effectively (Hair, et al., 2003). As stated previously, the sheer size of the hospitality industry and the large number of potential persons that could be interviewed for this study made it difficult to use other sampling methodologies. Utilizing the mailing list of the two largest professional associations in the hospitality industry provided access to the greatest number of hospitality education and industry professionals in an efficient manner.

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling that enables a researcher to randomly select units from within the targeted population that have the most information on the characteristic of interest. Thus, a purposive sampling method was selected for this study because it addressed questions to hospitality industry leaders who have knowledge about the industry and its professional needs that are consistent with the

study goals (Guarte & Barrios, 2006.) In essence, the use of a purposive sampling method enhanced the study by taking advantage of the convenience sampling technique, increasing the speed in which data were collected and, reduced the costs of conducting the study while simultaneously obtaining information from a subset of the target population who possessed in-depth knowledge about the variables of interest.

The original convenience sampling frame for this research study was a compilation of members of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) and the National Restaurant Association (NRA). These two associations were selected because they contain the largest representation of managers in the hospitality industry. These two organizations bring together hospitality educators, industry professionals and executives to improve the quality of education, research, service and industry business operations.

The NRA represents restaurateurs, managers and human resource managers of various food establishments. These organizations were selected because they were deemed most representative of the hospitality industry. Also, the target population is believed to have an interest in how hospitality educators develop and deliver curricula and programs because many of the graduates from these programs will be a part of their workforce.

The NRA is the leading business organization for the restaurant industry segment. The NRA represents restaurants, promote the restaurant industry as well as provide leadership in the training and education of the restaurant industry workforce. The NRA also provides information regarding the restaurant industry and serves as a networking resource for its members. The NRA's educational component includes training restaurant

and food service professionals. The NRA has a database with more than seven thousand members. The members are food service professionals responsible for recruiting, hiring, training and supervising entry and middle level managers.

The NRA was organized in 1919 by a group of Kansas City restaurateurs. The organization is comprised of restaurant and hospitality employees. The NRA's members belong to fifty-three different state restaurant associations. In addition to restaurant employees, the NRA is associated with suppliers, consultants and distributors who serve the hospitality industry. The organization's focuses on profitability and entrepreneurship, jobs and careers, food and healthy living as well as sustainability and social responsibility. The membership mailing list consisted of approximately 7,000 members. The NRA has a research department and regularly surveys its 7,000 plus members using on-line surveys.

The AH&LA is a national organization that represents all sectors of the lodging industry, including individual hotel property members, hotel companies, student and faculty members, and industry suppliers. Although the AH&LA has members throughout America, the organization has established forty-three state associations to offer local representation for its members. The AH&LA is the only organization that focuses on all of the lodging segments of the hospitality industry. It boasts a nationwide membership of over 11,000. Its members are comprised of hoteliers and representatives from all levels of service. The organization's mission includes networking, advocacy, and accelerate business and building results.

The NRA has a Research and Insights division responsible for the organization's research, discussed briefly previously. Following several weeks of communication they

agreed to participate in this project. The specific process used to collect data form NRA

members is described later in this chapter. As with the NRA the AH&LA was contacted

seeking permission to partner in the research project by delivering the surveys

electronically to their membership. The researcher and faculty advisor contacted multiple

administrators at AH&LA, sent them the questionnaire and requested their participation

on the study. However, the AH&LA did not grant the researcher permission to use their

membership for the purpose of data collection. Therefore, data were collected solely

from members of the NRA. The decision by AH&LA administrators significantly and

negatively impacted this study. The entire planning process and research methodology

was established on the premise of collecting information from an industry wide

perspective. The inability to access AH&LA members caused the data to be collected

from only the food and beverage segment. This meant that the data collected could not be

used to fulfill the original purpose of the study and statistically address the research

questions which were based on an industry wide perspective.

Changing the purpose, research questions, or hypotheses in the middle of a

research project based on data returned or other factors causes several types of bias. In

this case the decision was made to move forward with the project and collect information

that could be used on a future study that was organized to focus on different research

questions. It was understood that based on this decision that only descriptive

information would be used to gain an understanding of the responses related to each

research question and hypotheses would not be able to be tested statistically.

Data Collection Techniques

Survey data collection techniques have evolved from traditional mail delivered questionnaires to include the use of electronic mail (e-mail) surveys. Electronic delivered mail surveys use the World Wide Web (web-based) as its vehicle, thus expediting the delivery and the return of the surveys while simultaneously reducing costs (Thach, 1995). According to Pride and Ferrell (2010), web-based surveys web provides promising responses over traditional mail, telephone and fax responses.

In a study conducted by Cobanoglu et al. (2001) web-based surveys yielded higher return rates (44.21%) than traditional mailed surveys (26.27%) and faxed surveys (17%) Similarly, Opperman (1995) found that e-mail surveys yielded higher return rates than faxed and mailed surveys. The Opperman study (1995) also found electronic survey responses to be higher during the first few days of delivery with the rate of responses decreasing significantly after one week. In fact, the response rates were not significantly higher than other data collection methods following the initial days of delivery (Opperman, 1995).

In addition to a higher yield rates and reduced costs, e-mail surveys are more straightforward for editing, easier to transfer into the statistical packages for analysis, facilitate ease of usage, more concise data collection and reduce the possibility of data entry errors, create more flexibility and provide a greater perception of anonymity to the respondents (Hair, et al. 2003).

Although outweighed by the advantages, there are some disadvantages to using web based surveys. Some of the disadvantages include limited demographics, limited introduction to the research, lower levels of confidentiality, end users may not clearly

understand instructions, the layout of the document may not display as intended, and other potential technical difficulties associated with hardware and software usage (Thach, 1995).

As a result of the aforementioned advantages and the fact that more people are computer savvy, the use of web-based surveys has increased tremendously in recent years (Pride & Ferrell, 2010). Because of the increase in computer friendly surveys and on-line communities, businesses have also increased the utilization of their websites to collect survey data. Some of the specific uses for the on-line surveys include chat rooms, web-based forums, specific groups and blogs based on the groups' interests, demographics and consumption patterns (Pride & Ferrell, 2010).

The documented advantages of using web-based surveys coupled with the NRA's preferences for doing so, data for this study were collected using e-mail surveys allowing the respondents to complete the questionnaire in a manner that reduced the need for recoding and entering data as the electronic response option allowed data to be submitted directly into the survey database.

As previously mentioned the NRA has a research department and regularly surveys its 7,000 plus members using on-line surveys. The regular use of online surveys by the NRA membership may have also contributed to the researcher's ability to gain approval to survey NRA members.

A descriptive research sampling method was employed in this study because the study assessed the perceptions, opinions, hiring practices and demographics of hospitality industry professionals (Way, 2006; Gay & Airasian, 2003). The sampling frame comprised different size operations representing over 750,000 establishments from food

service segment of the hospitality industry (National Restaurant Association, 2009). A convenience sample of 3,965 NRA members was randomly selected by the NRA's research department.

Generally, the NRA does not allow individuals or groups outside of the organization's research division to survey its members. Thus, the researcher obtained special permission from the research division to survey its members for the sole purpose of this research study. In order to gain approval, the NRA division reviewed the survey instrument, recommended changes which were implemented and delivered the cover letters to their members via e-mail. Upon approval from the academic advisor, and the chairperson of the NRA's research and knowledge group, the cover letter and questionnaire with logos from Oklahoma State University and the NRA was emailed to the 3,965 NRA members selected to participate in the study on August 5, 2010. The cover letter which had the electronic survey link embedded, gave the research topic, summarized the research project, introduced the researcher and institution involved. The link connected the respondents directly to the SurveyMonkey tool allowing them to complete the survey online.

A copy of the letter is included as Appendix B. In an attempt to encourage members to complete the survey in a timely fashion and not forget about it, participants were initially asked to complete the survey within two weeks (Opperman, 1995). The electronic messages were sent using blind copies to protect the anonymity of the respondents. Following the two week time period, the NRA sent a follow-up e-mail of the cover letter from the researcher with the survey link in the body of the letter as a reminder to complete the survey on September 2, 2010. The surveys were located in

SurveyMonkey for the duration of the data collection period. On September 15, 2010 the survey was closed.

The NRA's electronic mail processor automatically identified and removed any e-mail addresses that were not delivered and provided a report to the chairperson of the NRA's research and knowledge group. The email processor report indicated that less than 1% (n = 55) of the original messages sent were returned. Returned messages, called bounce backs were categorized as hard and soft bounces. Hard bounces were messages that could not be delivered because the destination mailbox could not be located. It is possible that electronic mail address no longer exists on the specific attempted server or the server itself may not be responding at the time of the delivery attempt. Soft bounces are messages that were sent to a valid mailbox that was not accepting incoming mail at the time of the delivery attempt, perhaps due to that mailbox being full. Of the 3,965 messages that were sent, 3,910 (98.6 %) were successfully delivered.

Collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS) 16.0. Univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistics were used for data analyses in order to answer the research questions. Results of the analysis were explained using descriptive statistics, percentages and frequencies.

Survey Instrument

For this study, a questionnaire that measures the opinions, preferences and demographics of hospitality industry leaders regarding the value of a college degree was

adapted and distributed to the target population utilizing electronic mail (e-mail.)
According to Cobanoglu et al. (2001), e-mail surveys are recommended to increase the
response rate and speed of return. The questionnaire was adapted from existing survey
instruments that have sought to ascertain similar information.

The survey questionnaire contained two sections. Section One of the survey
collected data on the demographics of the hospitality industry leaders who participated in
the study. The demographics section also included an area for additional comments. The
second section included the items for addressing the research questions from the
perspective of hospitality industry leaders including hospitality industry leaders'
perceptions of the value of a college degree to managers and demographics. The
instrument was reviewed for content validity by the researcher's chair, who is an
experienced hospitality educator, and four industry leaders who are members of the NRA.
The questionnaire was sent to the NRA to test for content validity as well as approval for
using their population for this research study. Following the receipt and reading of the
questionnaire content, a conference call was conducted between the researcher and
individuals from the NRA's research division. The NRA's research group consisted of
former managers and hospitality industry leaders with over fifty-five years of experience.
The conference call with this focus group was scheduled and initiated by the NRA two
weeks following the transmission of the documents by the researcher. The survey was
discussed in detail for clarification of the research intent and plans. The group discussed
the instrument and questions in depth.

During the conference call, questions of concern were raised by the focus group.
Concerns included terminology biases, length of questionnaire, question extensions and

separate terminology applicable to the restaurant segment from the lodging segment of the hospitality industry. The following changes were made as a result of the discussion. (1) The originally proposed title of the survey was changed from the Necessity of Higher Education for Successful Managers in the Hospitality Industry to the Role of Higher Education for Successful Managers in the Hospitality Industry. This change was made to reduce subject bias. (2) The questionnaire was shortened by collapsing questions that only referred to a group change to follow-up questions within the same section. This suggestion was made to make the questionnaire more concise, easier to read and easier to complete. (3) Vocabulary terms used in the survey were changed to terms that were specific to the restaurant segment of the hospitality industry. (4) The group recommended food establishment specific terms and titles to reduce possible respondents' confusion. For example, the term unit manager replaced general manager because general manager is a term that is more specific to the lodging segment of the hospitality industry. Following the conference call, the questionnaire was modified based on the suggestions and returned to the researcher's chair for final approval.

The questionnaire was constructed allowing for responses to the perception questions using a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale's response choices were: 5 for strongly agree; 4 for agree; 3 for neutral; 2 for disagree; and 1 for strongly disagree. According to Cobanoglu et al. (2002), data collected using the Likert scale simplifies the questioning and answering process while possibly contributing to the response quality. The survey sections and questions collected data designed to help answer the following research questions that were originally proposed:

1. Do the benefits of having a college degree transfer to managers in the hospitality industry?

2. Are leaders in the hospitality industry more likely to hire individuals with college degrees than individuals who do not have degrees into management positions?

   $H2_0$: The hospitality industry is not more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

   $H2_a$: The hospitality industry is more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

3. Are salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree more likely to be higher than salaries for managers who do not have college degrees?

   $H3_0$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are not more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

   $H3_a$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

4. Are hospitality managers with college degrees more likely to be promoted to higher level management positions than those who do not have college degrees?

   $H4_0$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are not more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

   $H4_a$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

5. Are the turnover rates for managers in the hospitality industry who have college degrees more likely to be lower than the turnover rates for managers who do not have college degrees?

   $H5_0$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is not likely to be lower than for those managers who do not have college degrees.

   $H5_a$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is likely to be lower than the turnover rate for those managers who do not have college degrees.

6. Does a hospitality manager with a college degree have greater technical skills?

H6$_0$: There is no difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

H6$_a$: There is a difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

7. Does a college degree provide a hospitality manager with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to be successful managers in the hospitality industry?

H7$_0$: There is no difference in the knowledge, skills and abilities of managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

H7$_a$: There is a difference in the knowledge, skills and abilities of managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

Figure 1. Theoretical Model of Value of College Education to Hospitality Industry Leaders
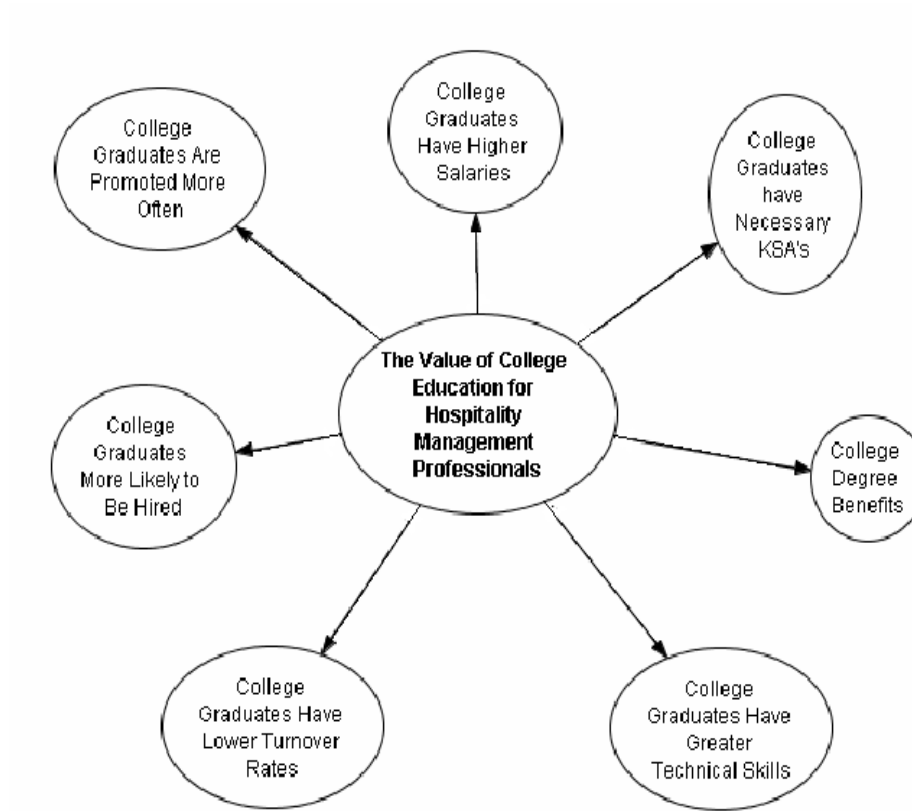
Figure 2. Theoretical Model of Value of College Education to Hospitality Industry Leaders

Validity and Reliability

According to Hair, et al. (2003) scientific research studies must use valid and reliable data collection methods and instruments. Validity refers to how accurately the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Construct validity refers to what the developed scale is measuring. The adapted questionnaire used in this study was constructed to account for convergent and discriminate validity. Therefore, the design and questions were correlated with necessary measurements while avoiding correlating with those measures that are different (Hair, et al. 2003). Ideally, a measurement scale "generate a score that reflects true differences in the characteristic one is attempting to measure, without interference from irrelevant factors" (Churchill, 1996, p. 402). Content validity refers to the consistency of the research instrument (Hair, et al. 2003). Content validity for the instrument used in this study was established by ensuring that the questions accurately measured the variables of interest to hospitality practitioners and educators. Also the questionnaire was constructed using operational variables that are proven to be relative to hospitality industry professionals. The instrument used in this study was reviewed by an experienced hospitality educator along with four experienced leaders from the hospitality industry to establish construct and content validity.

Reliability is attained in a survey tool if it yields consistent scores across administrations (Green & Salkind, 2008). In other words, reliability is the process when repeatedly tested, the same respondents or groups measured using the same conditions and devices will yield similar results. Green and Salkind (2008) state that reliability is estimated using various tests to determine a reliability coefficient. Basic reliability is a test for accuracy. The reliability coefficient is the proportion of the variance or degree of

consistency in the measurement used (Huck, 2008). Huck (2008) adds that the reliability

correlation efficient is called the test-retest reliability coefficient. The test-retest

reliability coefficient is a test of the instrument's stability over a period of time. Huck

(2008) further states that there are different approaches to reliability and the safest test-

retest of the coefficient comes from the Pearson's correlation. The goal of the testing and

re-testing is to determine the correlation (r) scores obtained from at least two occasions

(Green & Salkind, 2008).

The test for reliability for this research tool was the Cronbach's alpha. A

Cronbach's alpha test was conducted to determine the internal consistency reliability of

the response scale used on the survey. Cronbach's alpha is a type of reliability test that

determines the internal consistency or average of the items that composes the scale (Hair,

et al. 2003). Cronbach's alpha was used to determine if when the five point Likert scale

is combined into a single index, it captures the respondents' information in a consistent

manner. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate Cronbach's

alpha test of reliability. The results of the Cronbach's test for this research were .937.

According to Hair et al. (2003), an alpha coefficient range of .9 is considered excellent

for strength of association.

Data Analysis

Data for this research project were collected using a Web based survey. This

research selected SurveyMonkey as the software platform for collecting and managing

the information via the web. While data for this study were collected using

SurveyMonkey, the data were then downloaded into a Microsoft Excel file and exported

into SPSS (SPSS, Inc. 2007) for analysis.

Demographic data were analyzed and tabulated based upon percentages and

frequency statistics.   The initial data manipulation included an analysis of the

respondent's profiles. Demographic data from the respondents was tabulated using

frequencies and percentages.

Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions were accepted by the researcher. The first major

assumption is that the respondents have the knowledge to complete the questionnaire.

However, it is virtually impossible to know for sure if the intended persons actually

completed the questionnaire themselves. The second assumption is that the respondents

were current members of the NRA and thus hospitality industry leaders. With respect to

the assumption that the respondents were hospitality industry leaders, the NRA assured

the researcher that their data base of members were hospitality industry leaders.

Additionally, the researcher assumed that respondents would complete the questions to

the best of their abilities with the foundational and proficient knowledge they have as

hospitality industry professionals. Lastly, it was understood that the respondents

completed the questionnaires in the formatted, sequential order in which it was received

and within the requested response timeframe.

While the aforementioned assumptions are inherent in survey research, the

researcher for this study did make an effort to reduce response bias. Response bias refers

to bias that occurs when the intended recipient allows someone else to complete the questionnaire, does not answer the questions in proper sequence and/or receives input from others while doing so. The researcher carefully explained the directions for completing the questionnaire in the instructions (Hair, et al., 2003) and invited recipients to call or email with any specific questions or concerns regarding the study or the questionnaire. Additionally, the researcher's contact information was listed in the cover letter along with the advisor and a representative from the NRA research division.

Members of the NRA were selected as the sampling population for this research because of their knowledge and expertise within the hospitality industry. Additionally, the NRA industry leaders were selected due to their need to select, hire, train and retain successful food service managers for their operations. As revealed in the review of literature on this topic, the aforementioned factors suggest that NRA members could potentially benefit from providing information that could be used by educators to help better prepare college graduates to become successful managers in the food service segment of the hospitality industry. This factor also contributed to the decision to use the NRA members as the sample population. The impending benefits would result from the researcher sharing information on the study outcomes with hospitality educators in a manner that could result in curricula modification.

In summary, the scope of this research is limited to:

- The use of a convenience sample selected by the NRA computer system. The convenience sample was comprised of leaders from the food service segment of the hospitality industry that are current members of the NRA. Initially, the study sought to survey members of the NRA and the

AH&LA as these two organizations are the two largest hospitality

organizations. Unfortunately, the AH&LA did not grant the researcher

permission to utilize their membership data base. This further contributed

to the low sample and response size limiting the type and number of

statistical manipulation of the data.

- Information developed through this study cannot be generalized to the

  population originally described or any other group.

- The survey was delivered via email. Thus the researcher does not have a

  way of determining if the recipients received the surveys in their

  incoming electronic mailboxes. Sometimes batched e-mails are

  electronically isolated and deposited into "spam" mailboxes.

- The survey yielded a low response rate. However, the researcher is unable

  to ascertain if the length of survey was a determining factor on the

  response rate. Additionally, the low response rated limited analysis and

  complicated inferences from the collected data.

- Response integrity. There is no way for the researcher to determine if

  survey allowed the respondents to express their true opinions.

- The instrument was constructed to address the established research

  questions.

- The inability to access AH&LA members caused the data to be collected

  from only the food and beverage segment. This meant that the data

  collected could not be used to fulfill the original purpose of the study and

statistically address the research questions which were based on an industry wide perspective.

- Changing the purpose, research questions, or hypotheses in the middle of a research project based on data returned or other factors causes several types of bias. In this case the decision was made to move forward with the project and collect information that could be used on a future study that was organized to focus on different research questions.   It was understood that based on this decision that only descriptive information would be used to gain an understanding of the responses related to each research question and hypotheses would not be able to be tested statistically.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The goals of this research study were to investigate: (1) the role that higher education plays in the success of food service managers, (2) to explore the value of a college education as perceived by the hospitality industry leaders and (3) to determine whether those who receive a college education are more successful in the hospitality industry than those who work their way to management positions through loyalty and longevity.   The study sought to collect data from industry leaders who are members of the two largest organizations in the industry. As stated previously, this research was divided into two sections. Section One discusses the demographics of the hospitality industry leaders who participated in this study. Section Two discuss the degree to which higher education contributes to the success of food service managers from the perspective of industry leaders who responded to this study.

The NRA was the first organization selected for this study because its membership is comprised of restaurant managers, owners and supervisors. The second organization was the AH&LA whose membership is comprised of hospitality industry managers, supervisors and human resource officers. As reported in Chapter III, the

AH&LA did not allow the researcher electronic access to its membership. Therefore, data were collected and analyzed from members of the NRA only.

The data collection for this research was processed electronically. The NRA electronically delivered the cover letters introducing the study. The cover letter contained an embedded link to the survey. SurveyMonkey was used to post the survey and collect data for this research. Data were downloaded from the SurveyMonkey files into an Excel file. Data were transferred from the Excel file into SPSS for statistical analysis. Due to low response rates, descriptive statistics including frequency distribution and bar charts are used to analyze the collected data. The use of descriptive statistics enabled the isolation of variables and accounting for the missing data in each individual variable. Specifically, frequency distributions and bar charts allowed the data to be examined one variable at a time (Hair, et al. 2003). Hair et al. (2003) further explains that frequency distribution allows for the evaluation of each variable's responses by displaying a valid percent column in addition to the response column. The valid percent column displays the actual responses to the question, removing the missing data. The valid percent is different from the total respondents' count because its calculations are based on actual responses after the missing data are removed. Further, each frequency distribution variable output provides a summary of the valid percents. The use of frequency distributions is a common practice among business researchers because is isolates each variable of interest by displaying the frequency and percentages of the responses allowing for the adjustment for non-responses or missing data (Hair, et al. 2003). Additional statistical tests could have been run but the low response rate made the results of those impractical to use or create meaningful statistical results.

As stated in Chapter III, the survey design consisted of two sections. Section One of the survey collected data on the demographics of the hospitality industry leaders who participated in the study. Section Two included the items for addressing the research questions. Respondents were asked to answer each question by indicating their level of agreement with each question using a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale used was strongly agree, agree, neither agree or disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. The survey arrangement listed a series of survey items for the respondents to rank using the Likert scale. The statements corresponding to each research question were developed from the review of literature and established questionnaires. Data were analyzed based on how the survey responses related to the research questions.

Response Rates

Three thousand nine hundred sixty-five questionnaires were mailed electronically to members of the NRA. The cover letters and surveys were first delivered through electronic mail on August 5, 2010. Of the 3,965 e-mails that were sent, 3,910 (98%) were successfully delivered. Seventy-nine of the respondents completed the survey after the initial letter. The follow-up letter was sent on September 2, 2010 containing a reminder to complete the survey. An additional 18 people completed the survey between September 2, 2010 and September 15, 2010 when the survey was closed. The respondents received a cover letter with the survey link embedded into its contents. The respondents were asked to complete the survey by clicking the embedded link (www.surveymonkey.com/s/SKNQGBC) that opened the questionnaire. The link took the respondents directly to the survey, eliminating additional pages and/or mouse clicks.

In an attempt to encourage responses, the email indicated that it would only take a small amount of time to complete the questionnaire. Of the 3,910 letters sent inviting hospitality leaders to complete the survey, 97 (2.48%) people responded to the questionnaire.   Given the limited number of responses, the researcher acknowledges that the small sample size presents limitations on the statistical analyses that can be conducted. The total responses were 97, of which all responses were usable.

Section One: Participant Demographics

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section One discusses the demographics of the hospitality industry leaders who participated in this study. Seventy-one (73%) of the 97 respondents answered the demographic questions. Demographic data explored the participants age, how long they worked in the hospitality industry, the segment of the hospitality industry in which they were employed, their highest degree earned, college major, whether they had a master's degree and major, whether they hired managers, and if they offered incentives to college graduates during the hiring process. The remaining demographics asked respondents about their skills and work in the industry with entry-level managers.

There were 39 (54.9%) male and 32 (45%) female respondents. The majority (20.6%) of the industry leaders responding to the survey were males (54%) between the ages of 50 and 55. Eighteen (24%) had worked in the industry between 26 and 35 years, 12.4% for 26-30 years and 12.4% between 31-35 and 11.3% of had worked between 11-15 years.

The respondents reported working in the following segments of the industry: 57.7% restaurant, 10.3% lodging, 3.1% inns, 4.1% resorts, 8.2% clubs and 1.0% cruises.

Data on education were as follows: 36.1% have a bachelor's degree, 17.5% a master's

degree, 3.1% doctorate degrees, 8.2% held certifications and 4.1% did not hold a degree.

As a follow-up question the respondents also indicated 1.0% held multiple degrees, 1.0%

held associates, 1.0% held Associate of Culinary and 1.0% held masters and all but

dissertation (ABD) status. The respondents indicated their area or major for their

bachelor's degrees were 4.1% business administration, 3.1% education, 3.1% marketing,

2.1% in management and 2.1% in hotel management. Collectively, 5% of the areas of

study were hotel administration, hotel restaurant management, restaurant and institutional

management, and other combinations of restaurant management. Three percent indicated

they held hospitality management program degrees. Lastly, 1% indicated they received a

degree in Family and Consumer sciences and nutrition and food services. For those who

reported having master's degrees, 6.2% stated their major was a master of business

administration and 2.1% had degrees in   Business and education. The remainder master's

level degrees were distributed among business, English, education, marketing and others

all reporting 1.0% each. The doctorate degrees held by the industry leaders were majors

from business, educational leadership, hospitality and law. Fifty-two percent of the

respondents indicated they hire managers for their industry segment.

Table 3

Demographic Information

_____

Characteristics	N	%
Gender		
Male	39	54.9
Female	32	45.0
Total	71	
Industry longevity (years)		
1-5	3	3.1
6-10	8	8.2
11-15	11	11.3
16-20	5	5.2
21-25	9	9.3
26-30	12	12.4
31-35	12	12.4
36-40	5	5.2
>40	5	5.2
Industry Segments		
Restaurants		57.7
Lodging		10.3
Inns		3.1
Resorts		4.1
Clubs		8.2
Cruises		1.0

_____

The respondents were asked if they offered incentives to college graduates during the hiring process that are not offered to candidates that do not have college degrees. The response was 60.8% of the respondents indicated they did not offer incentives to college graduates. Lastly, the respondents were asked to list the reasons they leave the industry. The respondents indicated the following: a college degree is required for department head's positions, higher salaries, managerial positions, relocation, and bonus for MBA graduates, and to stay true to who they really are.

Section Two: Research Data Reporting

This chapter's second section discusses the degree to which higher education

contributes to the success of food service managers from the perspective of industry

leaders who responded to this study.

Table 4

Data Collection Response Rates From NRA

Electronic Surveys	Number	Percentage
Sample size	3,910	100.00
Surveys returned	97	2.48
Number usable	97	100.00
Number of unusable	0	0

Degree to which higher education contributes to the success of food service managers

Research Question One

The first research question (RQ_1) addressed the overall benefits of a college

education; specifically do the benefits of having a college degree transfer to managers in

the hospitality industry? This statement is a summary of the research questions in that it

focuses on the general statement inquiring whether individuals with college degrees are

more successful managers in the hospitality industry. As indicated in Table 5, the majority of the hospitality industry leaders that responded to this survey believed that having a college degree is beneficial in the workplace. This is inferred research based on the distribution frequency. Based on the combined information collected for research questions two and three, 69% of the respondents stated that a college degree increases the likelihood of being hired. Additionally, as described in research question two, 69.1% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that managers with a college degree negotiate the management learning curve more effectively. The data also suggested that managers without a college degree are also successful as managers. Despite the seemingly conflicting findings, the respondents identified the following advantages that managers with college degrees have over those without degrees. Managers with college degrees are more likely to be hired, have higher salaries, earn more money upon initial hiring, earn more after five years and are more likely to be promoted. When asked to respond to specific knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs), the industry leaders indicated that college educated individuals were better at those knowledge skills and abilities.

Research Question Two

The second research question addressed the likelihood that leaders in the hospitality industry will hire individuals with a college degree at higher rates than they will hire individuals who do not have a degree into management positions. Specifically: Are leaders in the hospitality industry more likely to hire individuals with college degrees than individuals who do not have degrees into management positions?

The hypotheses associated with research question two were:

- H2$_0$: The hospitality industry is not more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

- H2$_a$: The hospitality industry is more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

To address this question, the respondents were asked to respond to the following

statements:

- Having a college degree increases the chances of getting hired as a hospitality manager.

- Hospitality managers with a college degree make a smooth transition from college to the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a college degree negotiate the management learning curve more effectively.

- If all candidates were equally qualified, you would hire the individual with a college degree.

Information collected regarding these items is reported in table 5.

Table 5

Summary of Responses for Hiring Managers

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)
Having a college degree increases the chances of getting hired as a hospitality manager	24 (24.7)	43 (44.3)	14 (14.4)	14 (14.4)	2 (2.1)
Hospitality managers with a college degree make a smooth transition from college to the workplace.	5 (5.2)	28 (28.9)	34 (35.1)	25 (25.8)	5 (5.2)
Hospitality managers with a college degree negotiate the management learning curve more effectively.	19 (19.6)	48 (49.5)	19 (19.6)	9 (9.3)	2 (2.1)
If all candidates were equally qualified, you would hire the individual with a college degree.	26 (26.8)	41 (42.3)	22 (22.7)	8 (8.2)	0

(N=97)

Having a college degree increases the chances of getting hired as a hospitality manager.

The strongly agree and agree categories were combined for a total of 69% of the

respondents stating that a college degree increases the likelihood of being hired. Fourteen

(14.4%) of the respondents were neutral. Disagreeing with the statement were 14

(14.4%) while 2 (2.1) % strongly disagreed.

Hospitality managers with a college degree make a smooth transition from college to the workplace.

Thirty-four respondents (35.1%) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with

the statement by selecting the neutral response to this statement.   Agreeing with the

statement were 33 (34.1%) of the respondents. Disagreeing were 30 (%) and strongly

disagreeing were 5 (5.2%) of the respondents. These data suggests that having a college

degree may not provide a significant advantage with respect to making a transition from

college to the workplace.

Hospitality managers with a college degree negotiate the management learning curve more effectively.

When the categories agree and strongly agree were combined, the cumulative

response was 67 (69.1 %) indicating managers with a college degree negotiate the

management learning curve more effectively. Nineteen (19.6%) were neutral on the

statement. Disagreeing were 9 (9.3%) of the respondents while 2 (2.1%) strongly

disagreed. These responses suggest that students who attain a college degree develop the

KSAs such as (emotional intelligence, integrity, enthusiasm, the ability to learn, the

ability to maintain professional standards, personal commitment and communication

skills), that today's industry leaders desire in managers. Additional research is needed to

verify these findings and to help hospitality educators to better understand how and

identify the practices that contribute to the development of these KSAs.

If all candidates were equally qualified, you would hire the individual with a college degree.

The respondents' cumulative response of agree and strongly agree was 67 (69.1%) for the statement if all candidates were equally qualified, you would hire the individual with a college degree. Selecting the neutral response were 22 (22.7%) of the respondents. Interestingly, none of the 97 respondents selected the strongly disagree option. Thus, the majority of hospitality industry leaders who responded to this survey believe that there is an advantage to employing an individual with a college degree over those who do not have college degrees.

While the data are insufficient statistically to test this hypothesis, the results suggest that industry leaders do value college educated individuals when hiring for hospitality positions. With the exception of making a smooth transition from college to the workplace, the vast majority of respondents agreed with the survey items suggesting that persons with college degrees are better prepared for management positions. Figure 3 below illustrates the summary statements for research question two.

Figure 3. Summary of Statements for Hiring Managers
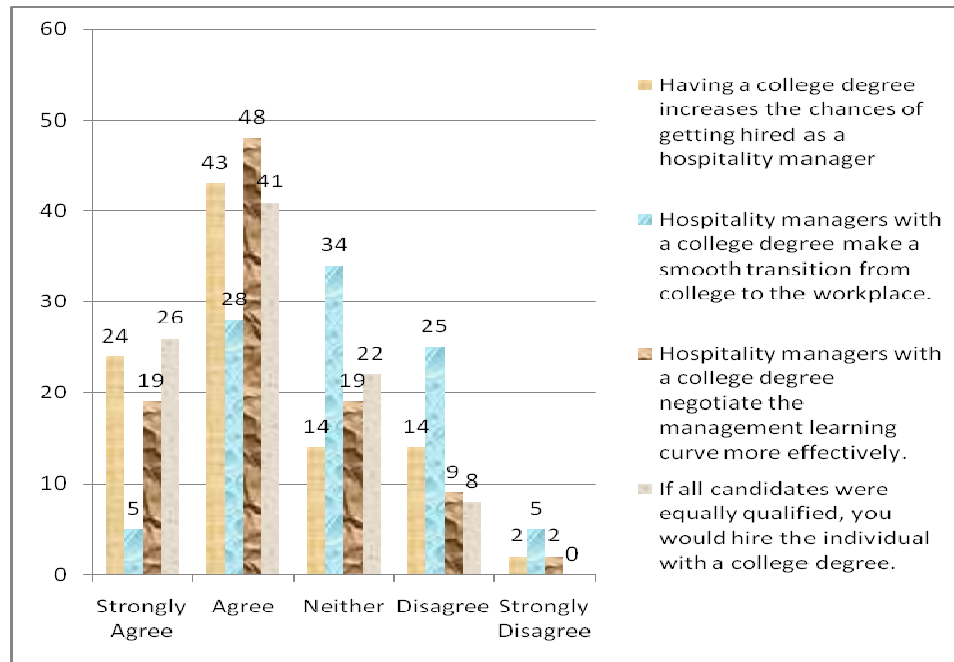
N=97

Figure 3. Summary of Statements for Hiring Managers.

Research Question Three

Research question three assessed the likelihood that salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a college degree are higher than salaries for managers who do not have a college degree? The following hypotheses were associated with this research question:

- $H3_0$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality who hold a degree are not more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

- $H3_a$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

The following statements were used to collect responses to address research question 3:

- Hospitality managers with a college degree have higher salaries.

- Upon initial hiring, an individual with a college degree earns more.

- After working five years in the profession, an individual with a college degree earns more than a person without a college degree.

- After working ten years in the profession, an individual with a college degree earns more than a person without a college degree.

- After working 20 years or more in the profession, an individual with a college degree earns more than a person without a college degree.

    Information collected regarding these items is reported in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Responses for Manager Earnings with a Degree

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree or disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)	
Upon initial hiring, earns more.	8	(8.2)	44	(45.4)	23	(23.7)	14	(14.5)	2	(2.1)
Earns more after working five years	13	(13.4)	46	(47.4)	22	(22.7)	8	(8.2)	2	(2.1)
Earns more after working ten years	15	(15.5)	37	(38.1)	29	(29.9)	8	(8.2)	1	(1.0)
Earns more after working 20 years	15	(15.5)	30	(30.9)	32	(33.0)	13	(13.4)	1	(1.0)

(N=97)

Hospitality managers with a college degree have higher salaries.

Strongly agreeing were 14 (14.4%). Forty-Four (45.4%) of the respondents

agreed with this statement that hospitality managers with a college degree have higher

salaries. Twenty-two respondents (22 or 29.7%) gave a neutral response. Disagreeing

were 8 (8.2%) while 2 (2.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Upon initial hiring, an individual with a college degree earns more.

Ninety-One people (93.8%) responded to this statement. Table 6 illustrates the

responses to the survey items relative to the impact of a college degree on salaries that are

associated with research question three. The majority (53.7%) agreed with the statement

that a college degree helps to earn more. On the other hand when combining disagree

and strongly disagree, the response was 16.6%. Also, 23.7% gave a neutral response.

**After working five, ten and twenty years in the profession, an individual with a
college degree earns more than a person without a college degree.**

Ninety-One people (93.8%) responded to these statements. For these three

statements, the respondents indicated on an average of approximately 45% that they

agree that managers with college degrees tend to earn more than those individuals

without degrees. Table 6 illustrates the responses to earnings.

As described earlier it was inappropriate to conduct statistical hypotheses testing

to answer the research questions. Therefore, there were limitations on the statistical

analyses that could be conducted. Inferences are offered based on examination of the data

collected. While the data was insufficient statistically to test this hypothesis, the results

as described in Figure 4 indicate a trend revealing that the impact of having a college degree on salary is reduced over time. Specifically, the respondents indicated that having a college degree increases a manager's salary at initial hiring. However, as managers remain in the industry, the salary gap begins to closes. It is plausible that those who remain in the industry represent the people who initially have or develop the requisite knowledge and skills for success and are compensated based on their actual productivity rather than their credentials. Based on these limited data, the relationship between having a college degree and the salaries that managers are paid in the hospitality industry needs to be studied further. This finding contradicts previous research and is discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.

Figure 4. Managers with Degrees Earnings
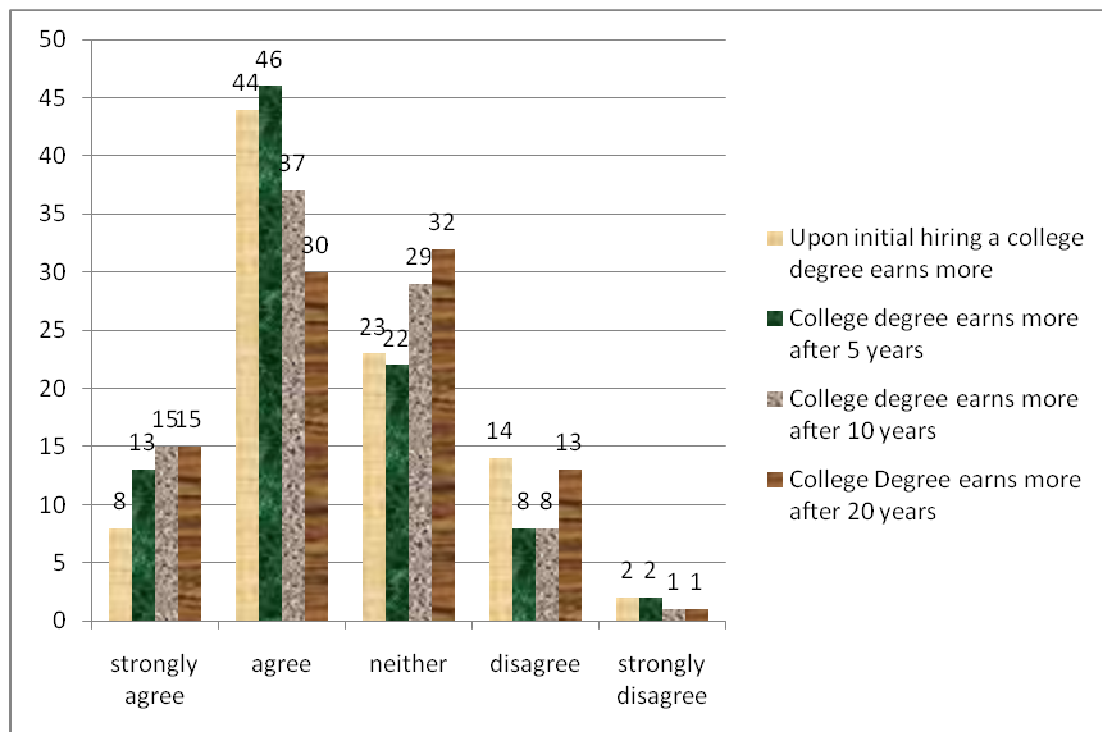
N=97

Figure 4. Managers with Degrees Earnings.

Research Question Four

Research question 4 sought to assess the likelihood that hospitality managers with a college degree will be promoted to higher level management positions than those who do not have a college degree? The hypotheses for this question were:

- $H4_0$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are not more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

- $H4_a$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

The following survey items were used to address the research question:

- Having a college degree enhances a hospitality manager's promotion potential in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with college degrees perform work related duties better.

- Hospitality managers with a college degree are more likely to be promoted to higher level management positions.

- An individual with a degree is more likely to receive the first management promotion within the first three years of employment than a person without a degree.

- An individual with a degree is more likely to receive the second level management promotion within the five years of employment than a person without a degree.

- Individuals with a degree are more likely to receive the third or general management level promotion within the ten years of employment than a person without a degree.

- A degree would not affect my promotional decision.

Information collected regarding these items is reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Summary of Responses for Manager's Promotion with Degrees

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)
Having a college degree enhances promotional potential in the workplace	23 (23. 7)	48 (49.5)	12 (12.4)	6 (6.2)	2 (2.1)
Hospitality managers are more likely to be promoted to higher level management positions.	12 (12.4)	59 (60.8)	9 (9.3)	3 (3.1)	1 (1.0)
An individual is more likely to receive the first management promotion within the first three years of employment	9 (9.3)	49 (50.5)	14 (14.4)	11 (11.3)	0 (0)
An individual is more likely to receive the second level management promotion within the first five years of employment	10 (9.3)	47 (48.5)	17 (17.5)	8 (8.2)	2 (2.1)

(N=97)

<u>Having a college degree enhances a hospitality manager's promotion potential in the workplace.</u>

Eighty-five leaders (86.6%) responded to this statement. When agreed and strongly agreed responses were combined, 67 respondents (73.2%) indicated that having a degree enhances promotion potential. On the other hand, when disagree and strongly disagree were combined, 8 (8.3%) indicated that they disagree with the statement.

<u>Hospitality managers with college degrees perform work related duties better.</u>

This survey item yielded a response rate of 83 (87%). Additionally, the responses were more evenly spread across the scale. The largest number of respondents 32 (38%) were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. Eighteen (21.6%) respondents disagreed with the statement while 17 (19.6%) agreed. These responses suggest that having a college degree does not provide an eminent advantage with respect to performance as the majority of the respondents were either neutral or actually disagreed with the statement. Figure 5 is a graphical summary of the results of the survey item hospitality managers with college degrees perform work related duties better.

Figure 5. Managers with College Degrees Perform Work Related Duties Better
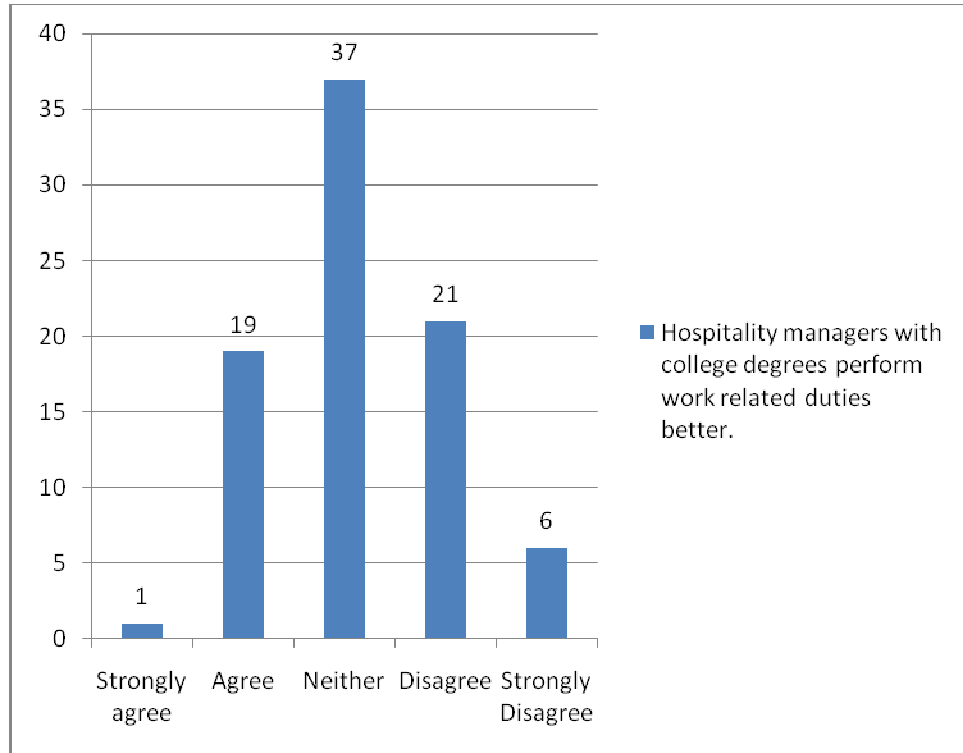
Figure 5. Managers with College Degrees Perform Work Related Duties Better

Hospitality managers with a college degree are more likely to be promoted to higher level management positions.

Eighty-four (86.5%) of the 97 respondents provided data for this statement. When agree and strongly agree were combined, a total of 61 (73.2%) of the respondents selected those response options. Selecting the neutral response were 9 (9.3%). Disagreeing were 3 (3.1%) while 1 (1.0%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, this data suggest that having a college degree could lead to promotion to higher level management positions.

An individual with a degree is more likely to receive the first management promotion within the first three years of employment than a person without a degree.

Eighty-five percent of the 97 respondents provided data for this statement. When strongly agree and agree were combined, the cumulative percent were 58 (59.8%). Providing the neutral response were 14 (14.4%). Disagreeing were 11 (11.4%). None of the respondents selected strongly disagree.

An individual with a degree is more likely to receive the second level management promotion within the five years of employment than a person without a degree.

Forty-seven (48.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement regarding the likelihood of being promoted in three years, the majority of the respondents. When combining the agree and strongly agree categories, the response increases to 56 (57.8%). Selecting the neutral option were 17 (17.5%) of the respondents. Meanwhile, 8, (8.2%) disagreed and 2 (2.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

A college degree would not make a difference in my promotional decision.

The summary statement for this section was a college degree would not make a difference in the promotion decision. The data collected yielded an 82.4% response for the promotion decision statement. The greatest percentage 26 (26.8) disagreed with the statement. Subsequently, 23 (23.7%) agreed with the statement. Also, 22 (22.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement while 4 (4.1%) strongly disagreed. Figure 6 is a graphical summary of the variables relating to promotions.

Figure 6. Selected Variables on Promotional Potential in the Workplace
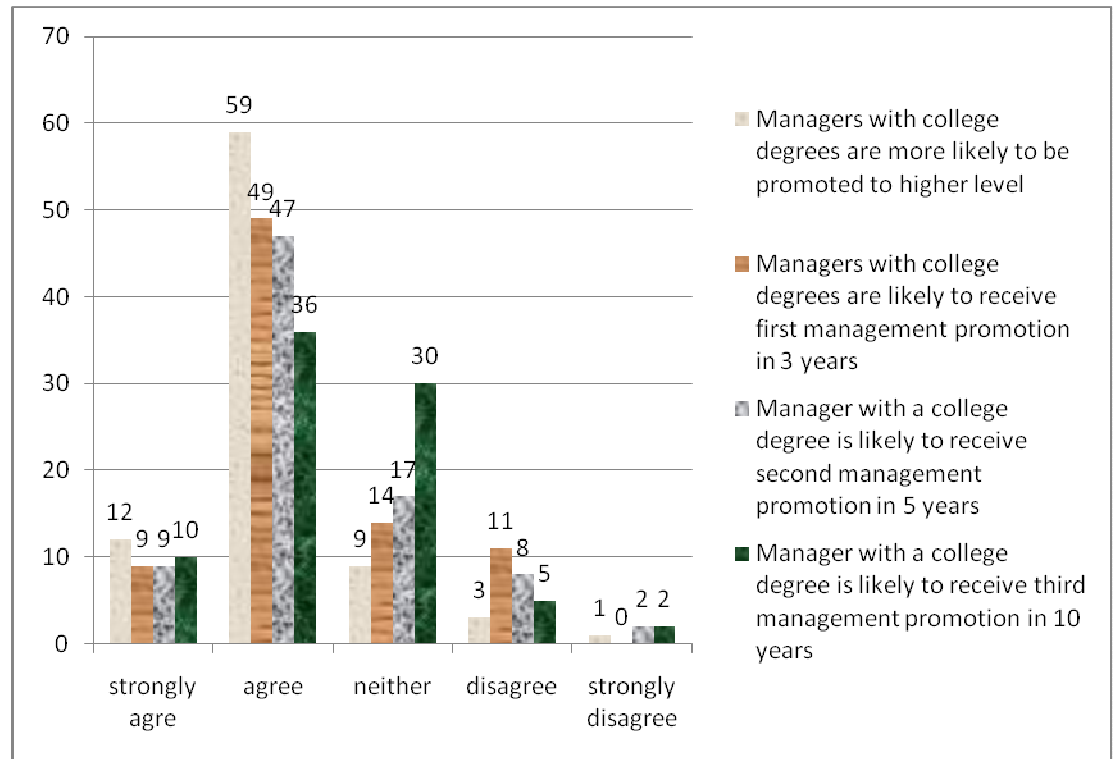
N=97

Figure 6. Selected Variables on Promotional Potential in the Workplace

Although, there is not enough data to statistically address the hypothesis for research question 4; asking what is the likelihood that hospitality managers with a college degree will be promoted to higher level management positions than those who do not have a college degree, the responses to this series of survey items indicate there is an advantage to having a college degree when hospitality industry professionals make decisions on managerial promotions in the workplace. Additional discussion regarding this comparison to prior research is presented in Chapter V.

Research Question Five

Research question 5; what is the likelihood that the turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry who have a degree is lower than the turnover rate for managers who do not have a degree? The hypotheses associated with this research question were:

- $H5_0$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is not likely to be lower than for those managers who do not have college degrees.

- $H5_a$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is likely to be lower than for those managers who do not have college degrees.

To address the research question, the following survey items were used in the questionnaire.

- Hospitality managers with a college degree have less health related absenteeism.

- A manager with a degree is more likely than those without a degree to leave their current workplace within five years.

- In the first five years of their employment with the company, the turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry who have a degree is lower than those without a degree.

- The turnover rates for managers who have a degree are lower than the turnover rates for managers who do not have a degree.

Data collected regarding these survey items is reported in Table 8.

Table 8

Summary of Responses for Managers' Attendance with a Degree
_____

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)
Hospitality managers have less health related absenteeism.	0	5 (5.2)	47 (48.5)	21 (21.6)	27 (7.2)
Managers are more likely to leave the hospitality industry within five years.	0	30 (30.9)	29 (29.9)	19 (19.6)	2 (2.1)
In the first five years of work, the company, the turnover rate is lower.	0	14 (14.4)	40 (41.2)	22 (22.7)	4 (4.1)
The overall turnover rates are lower.	0	16 (16.5)	42 (43.3)	17 (17.5)	4 (4.1)

_____
(N=97)

__Hospitality managers with a college degree have less health related absenteeism.__

For the four survey items above, 82.4% of the respondents responded to these survey items. Forty-seven (48.5%) of the respondents selected the neutral option with the statement that hospitality managers with a college degree have less health related absenteeism. Five (5.2%) agreed with the statement. Disagreeing were 21 (21.5%) while 7 (7.2%) strongly disagreed. None of the respondents selected strongly agree for this statement.

Managers with college degrees are more likely to leave the hospitality industry within five years.

This statement yielded a response rate of 30 (30.9%) agreeing. Selecting the neutral options were 29 (29.9%). Disagreeing were 19 (19.6%) while 2 (2.1%) strongly disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents selected strongly agree for this statement.

In the first five years of their employment with the company, the turnover rate for managers who have a college degree is lower than those without a college degree.

Statements three and four referred to the turnover rate in first five years of their employment. The turnover rates for managers who have a degree are lower than the turnover rates for managers who do not have a degree respectively. Figure 7 is a summary of the turnover rates for managers.

Figure 7. Summary of Manager's Turnover Rates
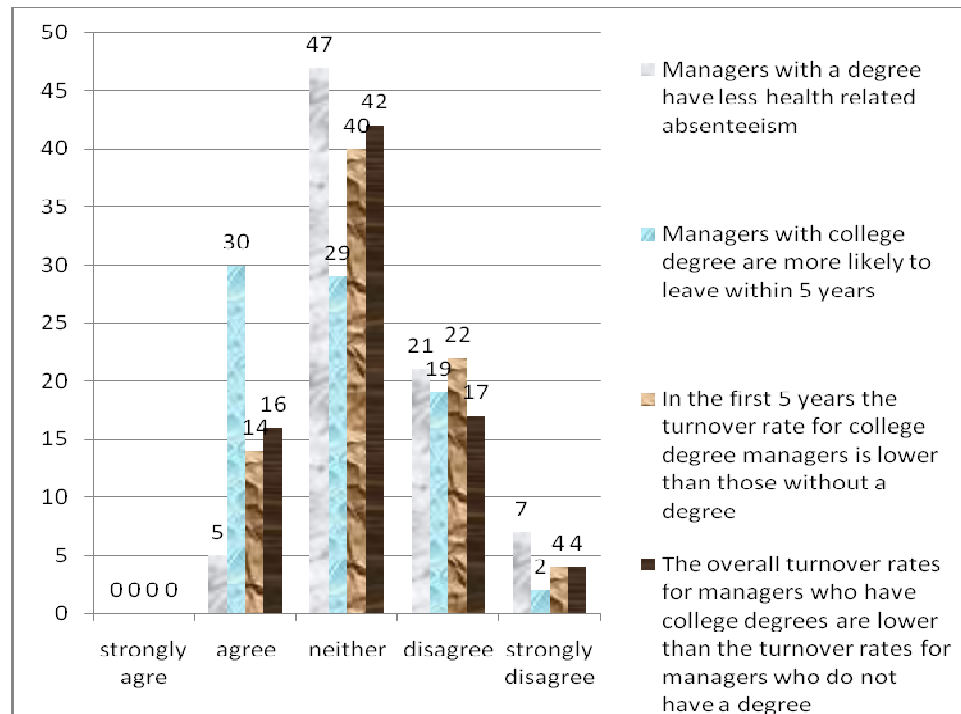
N=97

Figure 7. Summary of Manager's Turnover Rates.

In summary for research question 5; what is the likelihood that the turnover rate
for managers in the hospitality industry who have a degree is lower than the turnover rate
for managers who do not have a degree? The bar charts derived from hospitality industry
leaders who responded to this study infer that there is a difference in turnover rates or
longevity for individuals having a college degree. When looking at the responses of
turnover rate, 31.9% the respondents stated that college educated individuals leave more
than those without a degree. When compared to the first five years, the turnover rate
yielded as response of 41% neither agreed nor disagree that college educated managers

leave the industry more. Additional discussion on the comparison of turnover rates to previous research is discussed in Chapter V.

Research Question Six

Research question 6 explored the impact of a having a college degree on the technical skills possessed by managers in the hospitality industry. The hypotheses associated with this research question were:

- $H6_0$: There is no difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

- $H6_a$: There is a difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

The following statements were used to address the research question:

- Individuals with a college degree are better production managers

- Individuals with a college degree are better sales managers.

- Individuals with a college degree are better at service recovery.

- Individuals with a college degree are better overall operation managers.

Information collected regarding these items is reported in Table 9.

Table 9

Summary of Responses for Managers' Workplace KSAs

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)	Frequencies (percentages)
Individuals with a college degree are better production managers.	2 (2.1)	17 (17.5)	39 (40.2)	12 (12.4)	6 (6.2)
Individuals with a college degree are better sales managers.	0 (0)	16 (16.5)	43 (44.3)	12 (12.4)	5 (5.2)
Individuals with a college degree are better at service recovery.	2 (2.1)	18 (18.6)	40 (41.2)	10 (10.3)	5 (5.2)
Individuals with a college degree are better overall operation managers.	5 (5.2)	28 (28.9)	26 (26.8)	10 (10.3)	6 (6.2)

(N=97)

Individuals with a college degree are better production managers

Seventy-Six (78.3%) responded to this statement. Thirty-nine (40.2%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Seventeen (17.5%) agreed with the statement while 2 (2.1%) strongly agreed. Disagreeing were 12 (12.4%) while 6 (6.2%) strongly disagreed.

Individuals with a college degree are better sales managers

       Seventy-six (78.3) percent of the respondents provided feedback to this statement. As with the previous survey items, the highest responses were the neutral option at 43 (44.3%). The next highest response category selected was agree at 16 (16.5%). Disagreeing were 12 (12.4%).

Individuals with a college degree are better at service recovery.

       Seventy-Five (77.3%) responded to this statement. Forty (41.2%) of the respondents were neutral on the statement. Eighteen (18.6%) agreed while 2 (2.1%) strongly agreed. Disagreeing were 10 (10.3%) while 5 (5.2%) strongly disagreed. Therefore, the respondents in this research showed ambiguity when responding to the research statement that having a college degree provides managers with better service recovery skills.

Individuals with a college degree are better overall operation managers

       Seventy-Five (77.3%) responded to this statement. The majority of the respondents 28 (28.9%) agreed with this statement. However, this choice was closely followed by a neutral response as 26 (26.8%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Five (5.2%) strongly agreed. The remaining categories were disagree with 10 (10.3%), while, strongly disagree responses totaled 5 (5.2%). These data suggest that the respondents don't believe that having a college degree translates into providing better production or sales managers in the workplace. Given the inconclusive nature of the responses, additional

research should be conducted to determine the impact of a college degree on manager's overall operations performance.

While the data collected in this study were insufficient to address the hypothesis, the responses suggest that managers who have college degrees may have a slight advantage over those who do not. Additional discussion regarding hypothesis six is in Chapter V.

Figure 8. Technical Skills for Managers in the Hospitality Industry
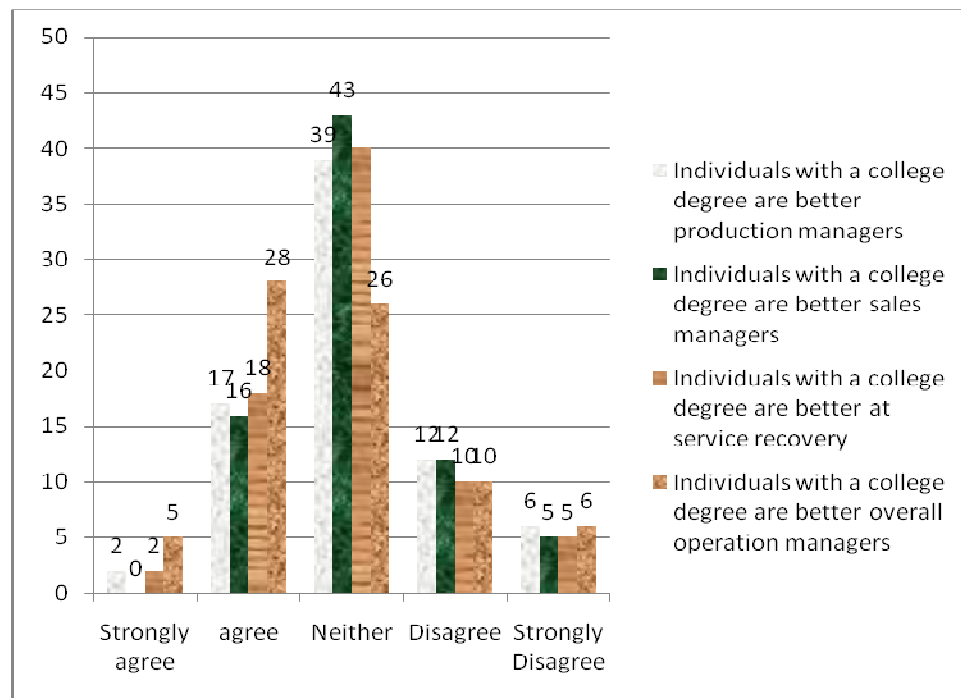
N=97

Figure 8. Technical Skills for Managers in the Hospitality Industry.

Research Question Seven

The seventh and final research question in this study asked whether a college degree provide a hospitality manager with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to be successful in the hospitality industry. The hypotheses associated with this research question were:

$H7_0$: There is no difference in the knowledge, skills abilities for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

$H7_a$: There is a difference in the knowledge, skills and abilities for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

As described earlier it was inappropriate to conduct statistical hypotheses testing to answer the research questions and limitations exist on the statistical analyses that can be conducted. Inferences are offered based on examination of the data collected.

The statements associated with this research question are:

- Hospitality managers with a degree have better working abilities.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are more effective at setting and keeping priorities in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are more effective leaders who are able to influence and inspire others in the work place.

- Hospitality managers with a degree manage diverse teams effectively.

- Hospitality managers with a degree manage costs effectively.

- Hospitality managers with a degree communicate more effectively (verbally) in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree communicate more effectively (in writing).

- Hospitality managers with a degree are better team members.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are better team leaders.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are better problem solvers.

- Hospitality managers with a degree make more competent decisions in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree possess more emotional intelligence in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree display more integrity in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree have a greater ability to learn.

- Hospitality managers with a degree achieve better social status.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are more enthusiastic workers.

- Hospitality managers with a degree possess and display better ethics in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are more reliable in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree possess and display better morals in the workplace.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are better human resource managers.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are better managers of employee productivity.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are better with safety and security concerns.

- Hospitality managers with a degree are better asset managers than those without a degree.

The statements selected to correlate with this research question on the knowledge, skills and attributes (KSAs) of hospitality managers were mainly adapted from previous research. Additional discussion comparing the responses given in this study to previous research can be found in Chapter V. Table 10 summarizes the responses to each statement.

Table 10

Summary of Responses for Managers' KSAs and Working Abilities

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neither agree or disagree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)		Frequencies (percentages)	
Managers have better working abilities.	1	(1.0)	21	(21.6)	31	(32.0)	16	(16.5)	7	(7.2)
More effective at setting and keeping priorities in the workplace	4	(4.1)	33	(34.0)	21	(21.6)	10	(10.3)	6	(6.2)
More effective leaders	4	(4.1)	29	(29.9)	23	(23.7)	10	(10.3)	6	(6.2)
Manages diverse teams effectively	27	(27.8)	15	(15.5)	24	(24.7)	3	(3.1)	5	(5.2)
Managers costs effectively	4	(4.1)	40	(41.2)	18	(18.6)	6	(6.2)	5	(5.2)
Communicate more effectively (verbally)	5	(5.2)	38	(39.2)	20	(20.6)	6	(6.2)	5	(5.2)
Communicate more effectively (in writing)	13	(13.4)	48	(49.5)	6	(6.2)	2	(2.1)	4	(4.1)
Manage diverse teams more effectively	3	(3.1)	27	(27.8)	24	(24.7)	15	(15.5)	5	(5.2)
Better team members	1	(1.0)	14	(14.4)	34	(35.1)	17	(17.5)	7	(7.2)
Better team leaders	5	(5.2)	19	(19.6)	29	(29.9)	16	(16.5)	4	(4.1)
Better problem solvers	4	(4.1)	30	(30.9)	22	(22.7)	12	(12.4)	4	(4.1)
Make more competent decisions	2	(2)	28	(28.9)	29	(29.9)	10	(10.3)	4	(4.1)
Possess more emotional intelligence	3	(3.1)	16	(16.5)	34	(35.1)	13	(35.1)	5	(5.2)
Display more integrity	0	(0)	13	(13.4)	36	(37.1)	17	(17.5)	7	(7.2)

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Greater ability to learn	4	(4.1)	37	(38.1)	15	(15.5)	10	(10.3)	7	(7.2)
More enthusiastic workers	1	(1.0)	8	(8.2)	37	(38.1)	17	(17.5)	9	(9.3)
Possess and display better ethics	0	(0)	10	(10.3)	36	(37.1)	21	(21.6)	5	(5.2)
Manage costs more effectively	1	(1.0)	15	(15.5)	31	(32.0)	22	(22.7)	3	(3.7)
More reliable in the workplace	1	(1.0)	17	(17.5)	31	(32.0)	17	(17.5)	6	(6.2)
Possess and display better morals	0	(0)	8	(8.2)	40	(41.2)	18	(18.6)	6	(6.2)
Better human resource managers	7	(7.2)	39	(40.2)	18	(18.6)	4	(4.1)	4	(4.1)
Better managers of employee productivity	30	(30.9)	10	(10.3)	25	(25.8)	1	(1.0)	6	(6.2)
Better with safety and security issues	3	(3.1)	31	(32.0)	23	(23.7)	11	(11.3)	4	(4.1)
Better asset managers	7	(7.2)	26	(26.8)	29	(29.9)	6	(6.2)	4	(4.1)

(N=97)

Figure 9. Hospitality Managers Workplace Effectiveness

N=97
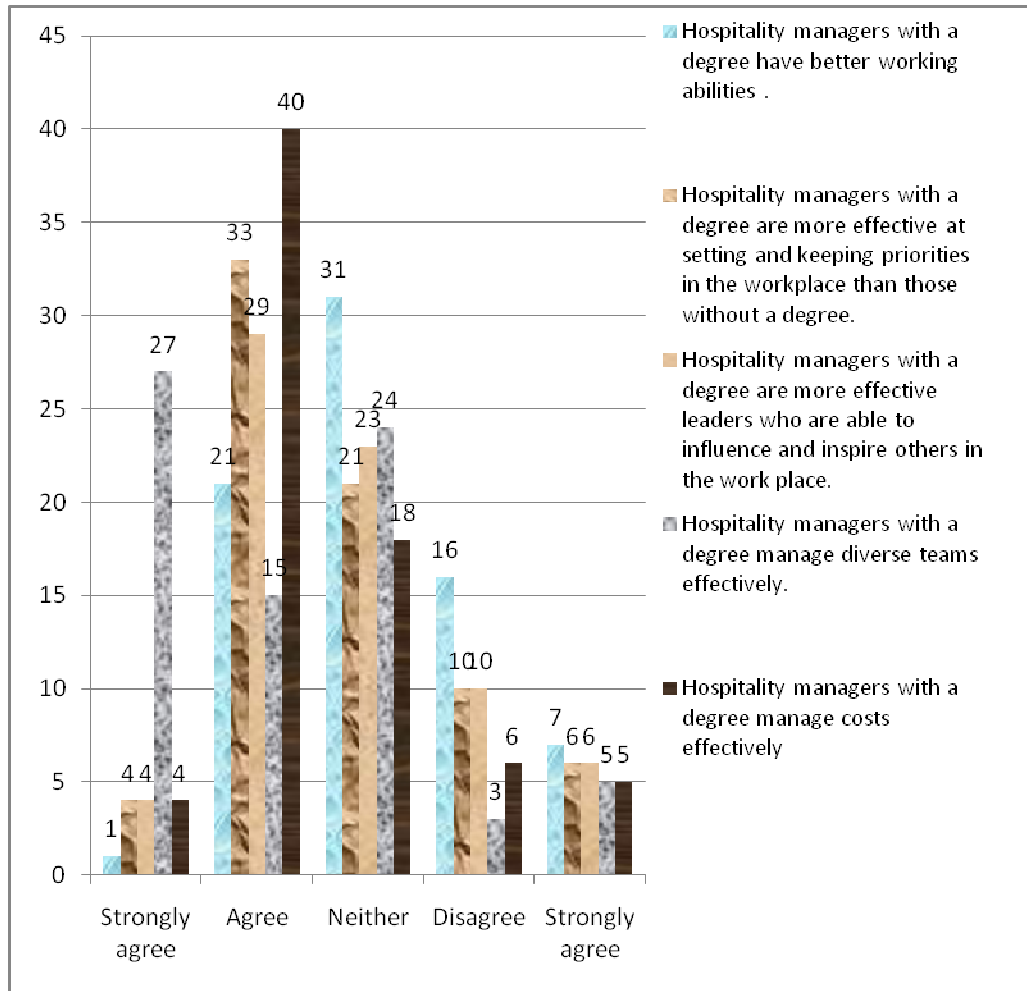
Figure 9. Hospitality Managers Workplace Effectiveness.

Hospitality managers with a degree have better working abilities.

Seventy-Six (78%) of the 97 hospitality industry leaders who participated in this study responded to the statement. The majority (32%) of the respondents indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Hospitality managers with a degree are more effective at setting and keeping priorities in the workplace.

Of the 76 respondents providing data for this statement, 33 (34%) agreed that college degrees make a difference with managers is prioritizing work. However, it is notable that 21, (21.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Perhaps this is an area to collect additional data to determine the real thoughts of the industry leaders on this knowledge, skill and ability area.

Hospitality managers with a degree are more effective leaders who are able to influence and inspire others in the workplace.

Seventy-four of the respondents agreed at a rate of 29 (29.9%) with the statement that those with college degrees are more effective leaders in the workplace. The data from this research indicates there is no effect of a college degree in the leadership effectiveness.

Hospitality managers with a degree manage diverse teams effectively.

The statement regarding managers' ability to manage diverse teams more effectively was responded to by 76% of the respondents. The two selections with the greatest response were agree at 27 (27.8%) and neither agree nor disagree at 24 (24.7%).

Hospitality managers with a degree manage costs effectively.

When combining the strongly agree and agree categories, 44 (45.3%) of the respondents agreed with the statement. Eighteen (18.6%) of the respondents chose neither agree nor disagree option.
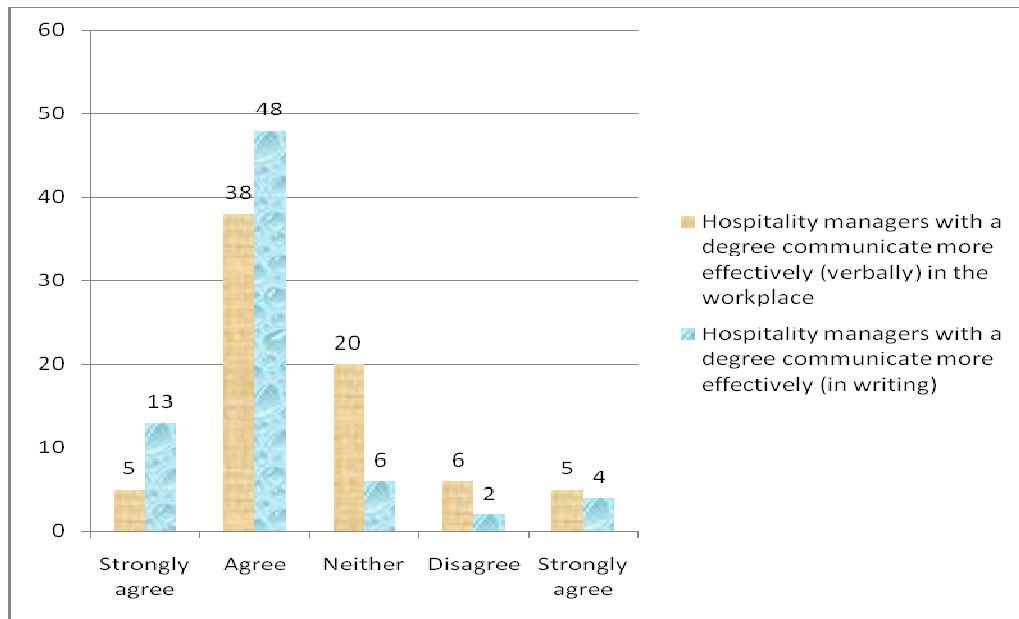
Hospitality managers with a degree communicate more (verbal communication)

      Thirty-eight (39.2%) agreed with the statement that managers with a degree communicate more effectively verbally in the workplace.

Hospitality managers with a degree communicate more (written communication)

      Seventy-four persons representing 76% responded to the survey items about communication. The greatest response was 48 (49.5%) agreed with the statement. While it appears that these managers believe that having a college degree positively enhance a manager's communication skills, the degree seems to provide an even greater advantage with respect to written communication. See Chapter V for additional discussion on this statement.

Figure 10. Hospitality Managers Communications Skills

N=97

*Figure 10. Hospitality Managers Communications Skills.*

Hospitality managers with a degree are better team members.

Seventy-five percent of the people responded to this question and the majority 34 (35.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed that managers with college degrees are better team members than those without college degrees. These responses indicate that hospitality industry leaders do not believe a college degree provides an advantage when participating in teams in the workplace.

Hospitality managers with a degree are better team leaders.

Twenty-nine (29.9%) of the respondents indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that hospitality managers with a degree are better team leaders. These responses suggest that having a college degree does not provide an advantage in leading teams in the workplace. Figure 11 below is a summary of the responses relating to managers as team members and leaders.

Figure 11. Hospitality Managers as Team Members and Leaders
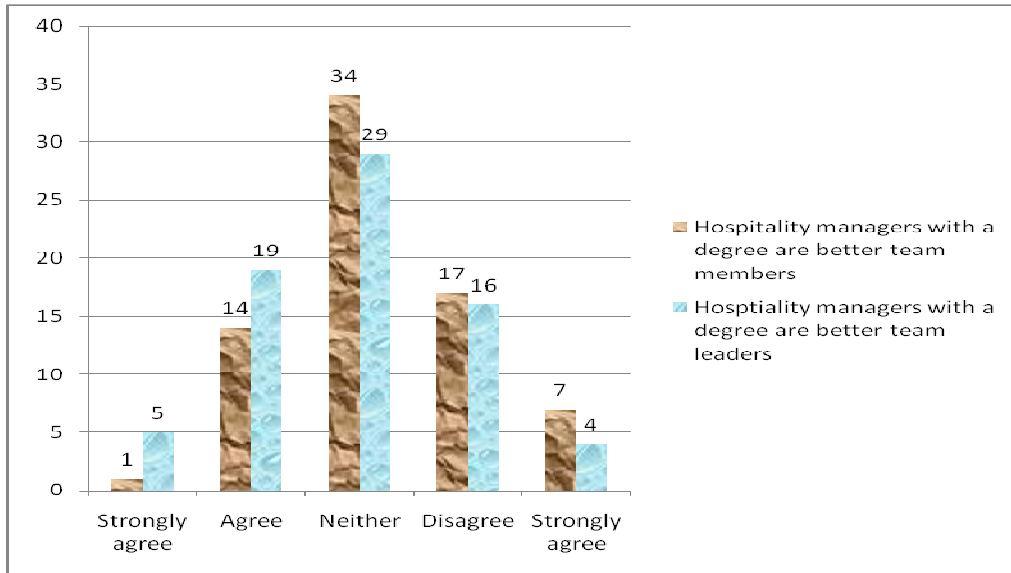
N=97

Figure 11. Hospitality Managers as Team Members and Leaders.

<u>Hospitality managers with a degree are better problem solvers.</u>

Seventy-four percent responded to the statement that managers with a degree are better problem solvers. A total of 30 (30.9%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that managers with degrees are better problem solvers.   Additionally, 22 (22.7%) selected the neutral option. Based on the data collected, the majority of the respondents believe a college degree provides an advantage when problem solving.

<u>Hospitality managers with a degree make more competent decisions in the workplace.</u>

Seventy-four (75.3%) responded to this statement that a manager with a degree make more competent decisions in the workplace. The greatest response were 29 (29.9) selected the neutral option. Following closely were 28 (28.9%) agreeing with the statement. From these responses, the impact of having a college degree on a manager's decision making is unclear.

<u>Hospitality managers with a degree possess more emotional intelligence in the workplace.</u>

Seventy-three (73) percent responded to the statement that managers with degrees possess more emotional intelligence in the workplace. Thirty-four (35.1%) of the respondents selected the neutral option with the statement.

<u>Hospitality managers with a degree display more integrity in the workplace.</u>

The data collected from 73% of the respondents indicated 36 (37.1%) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that managers with a degree display more integrity in the workplace. Thirteen (13.4%) indicated they agreed with the statement.

None of the respondents selected strongly agree when responding to the statement. The

following figures are separated into multiple charts for ease of displaying.

Figure 12

 Problem Solving and Workplace KSAs
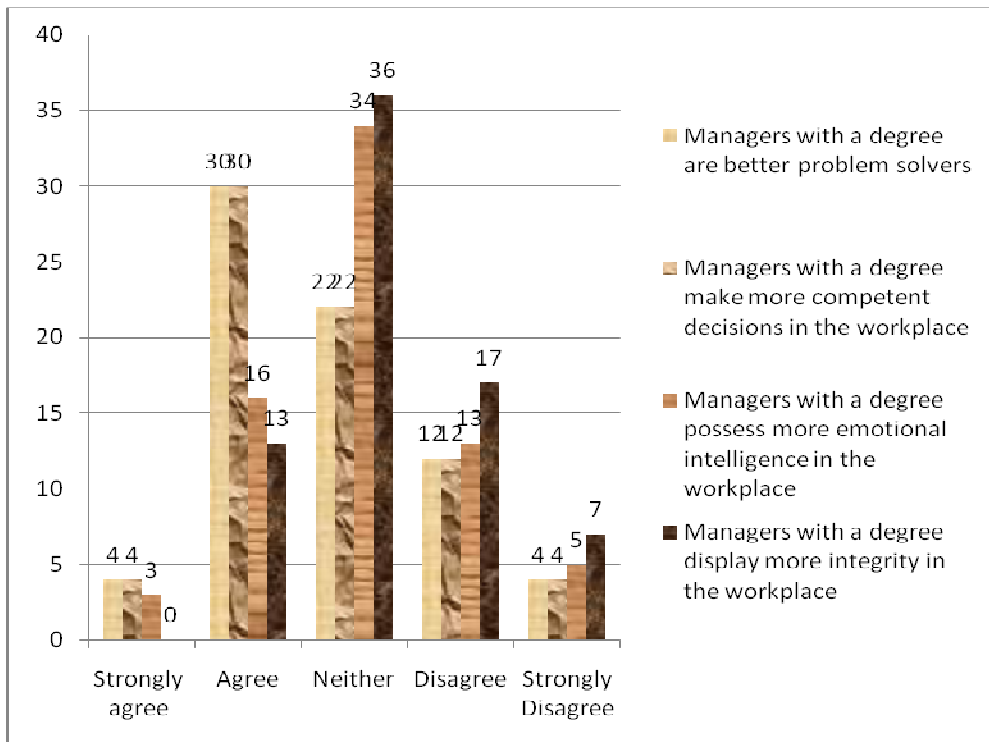
N-97

Figure 12.   Problem Solving and Workplace KSAs.

Hospitality managers with a degree achieve better social status.

Seventy-five percent of the respondents responded to this statement. Thirty-seven

(38%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 4 (4.1%) percent selected

strongly agree.

Forty (41.2%) agreed with the statement. When strongly agree and agree are combined, the percentage increased to 51.5%.

Hospitality managers with a degree are more enthusiastic workers.

Thirty-seven (38.1%) selected neither agree nor disagree with the statement that managers with degrees are more enthusiastic workers.

Hospitality managers with a degree possess and display better ethics in the workplace.

The majority of the respondents 36 (37.1) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. When combining disagree and strongly disagreed with statement, 26 (26.7%) disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents selected strongly agree as a response.

Figure 13. Learning Ability and College Degrees KSAs
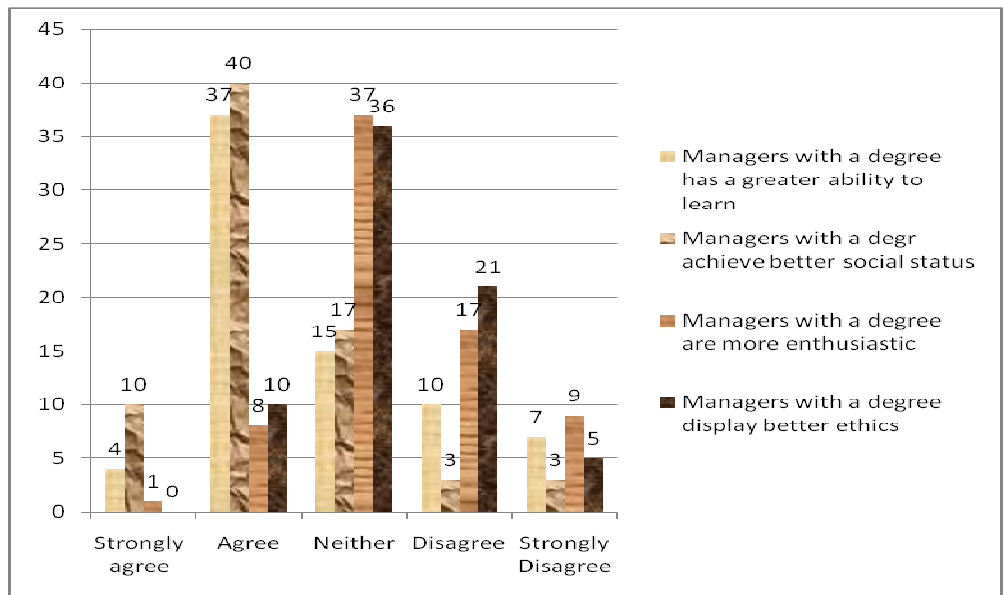
N=97

Figure 13. Learning Ability and Degrees KSAs.

Figure 14. Reliability in the Workplace
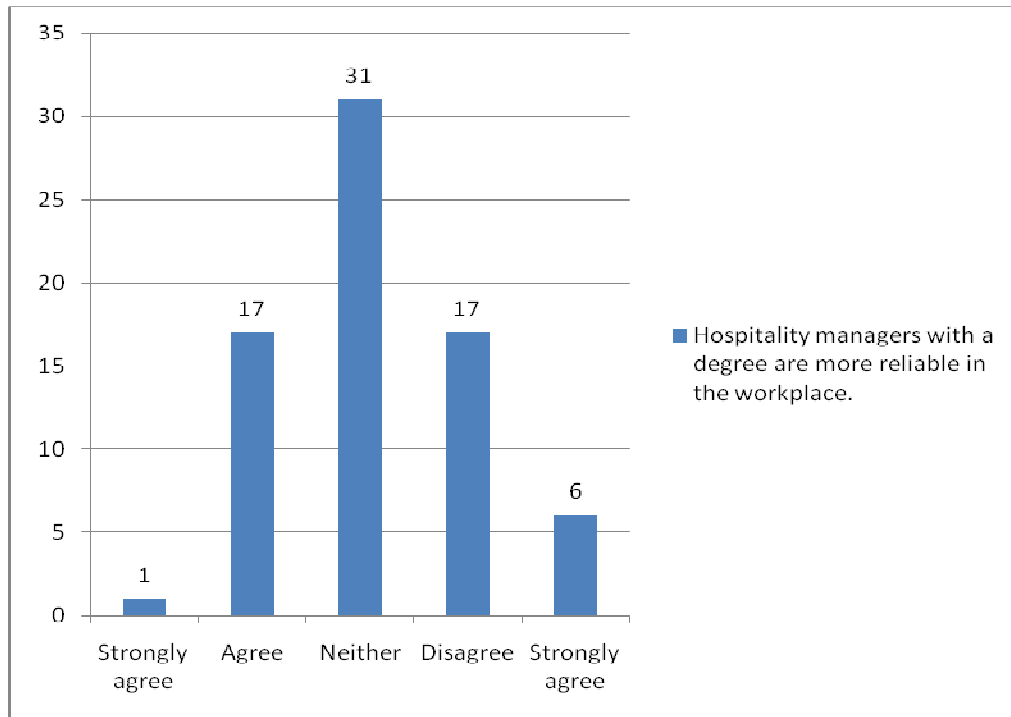
Figure 14. Reliability in the Workplace.

Thirty-one (32%) indicated they neither agree nor disagreed with the statement that Hospitality managers with a degree are more reliable in the workplace.

Figure 15. Morals in the Workplace
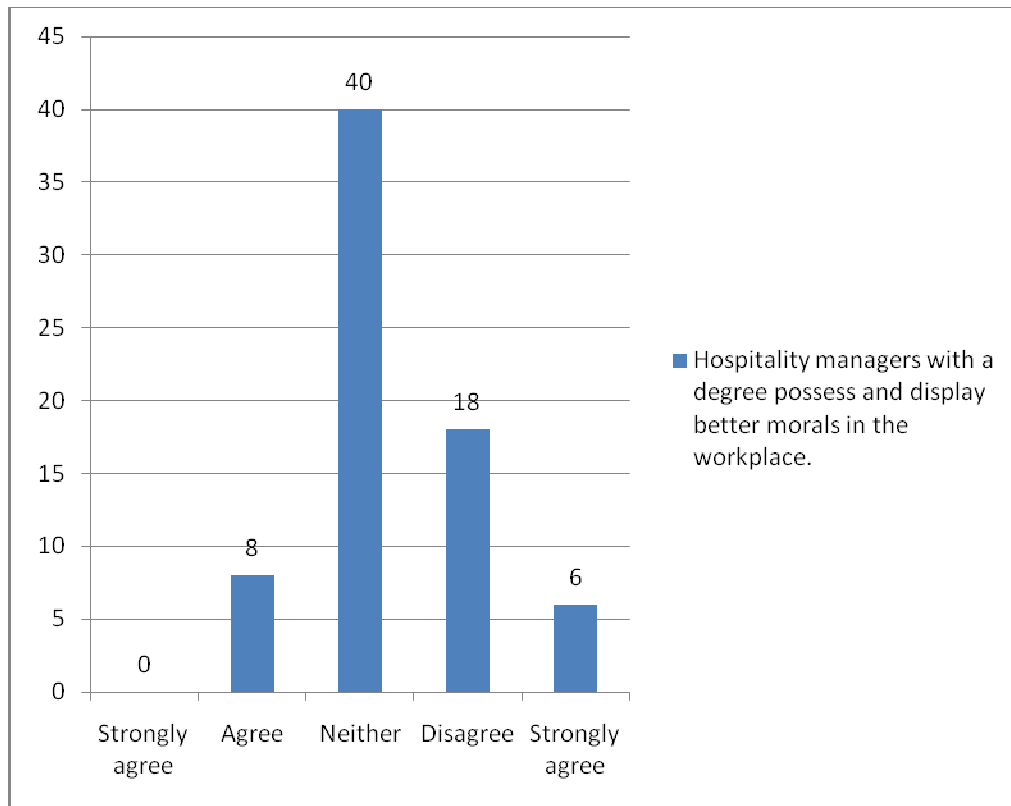
Figure 15. Morals in the Workplace.

This statement on morals was responded to by 71 (73%) of the respondents.

Forty (41.2%) of the respondents selected neither agrees nor disagree.

Figure 16.   Human Resource Management
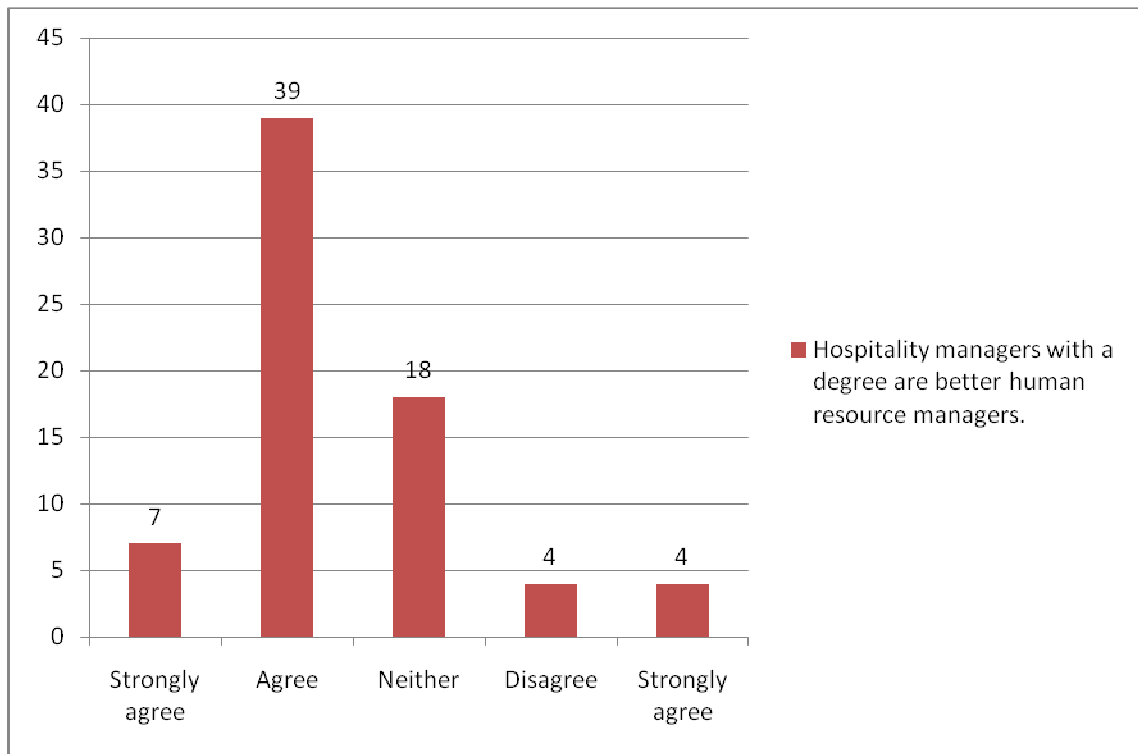
Figure 16. Human Resource Management.

Seventy-four (74.2) percent of the people responded to this statement Thirty-nine (40.2%) agreed with the statement. When agree and strongly agree were combined, the percentage of industry leaders who responded favorably increased to 47.4%.

Figure 17.   Productivity in the Workplace
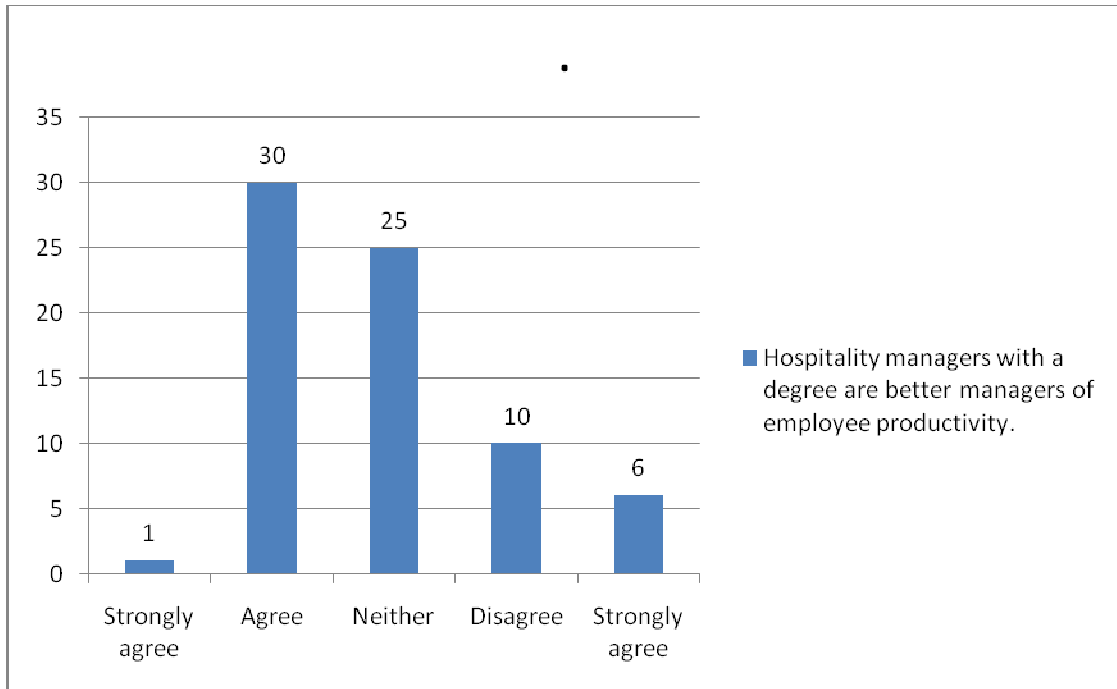
Figure 17. Productivity in the Workplace.

Thirty-one (31.9%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that hospitality managers with a degree are better managers of employee productivity. Twenty-five (25.8%) indicated they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement.

Figure 18. Safety and Security Concerns
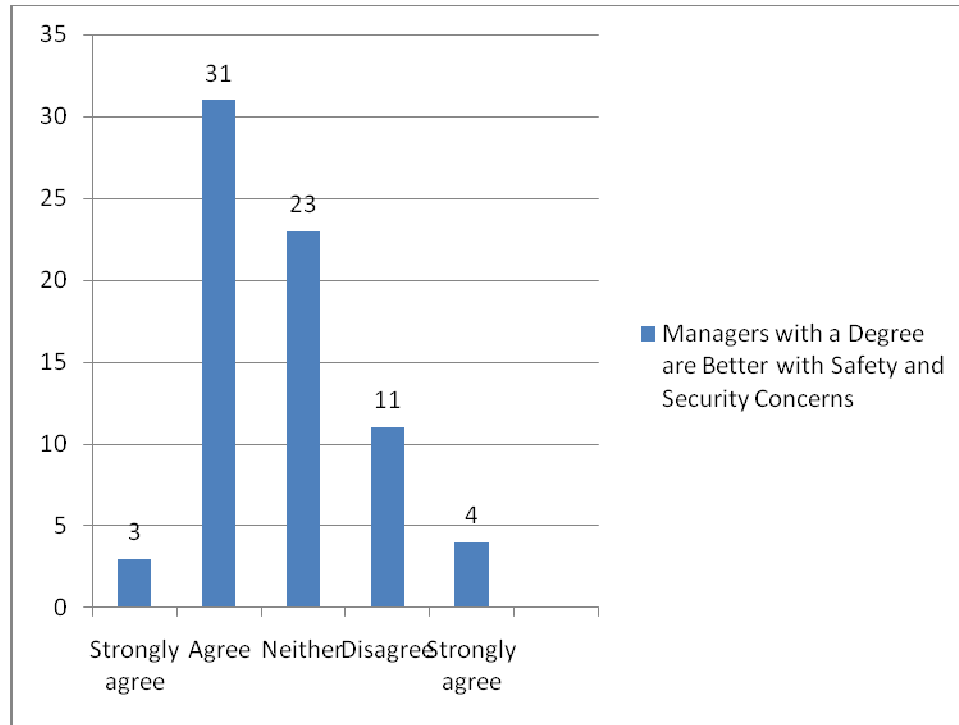
Figure 18. Safety and Security Concerns.

Thirty-one (32%) of those who responded agreed with the statement that managers with degrees are better with safety and security concerns. The largest response were 23 (23.7%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement of the respondents.

Figure 19. Asset Management
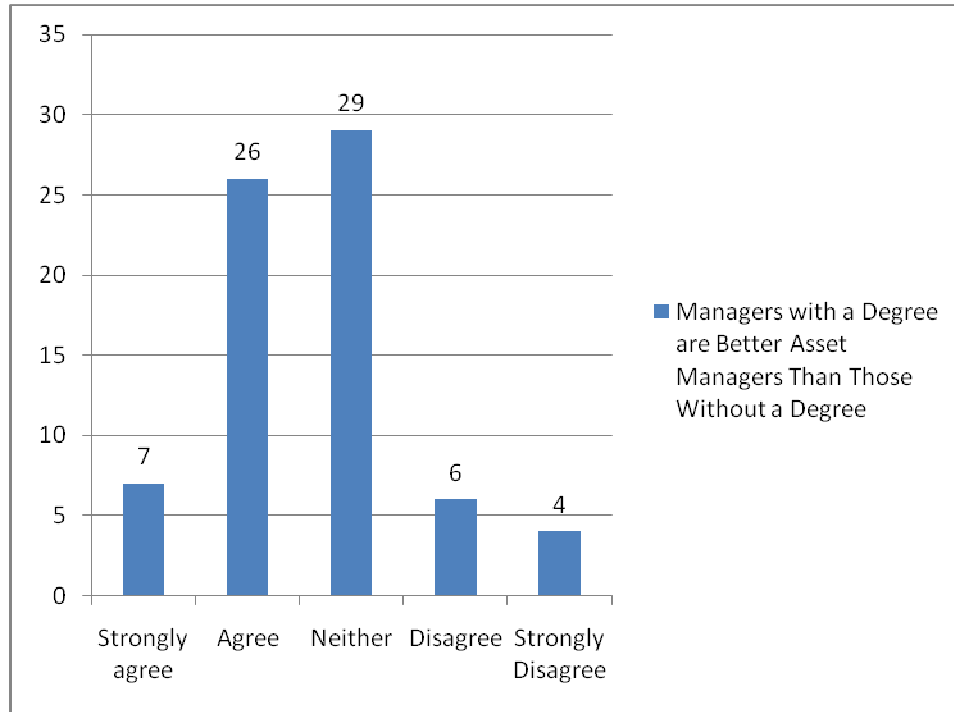
Figure 19. Asset Management.

The final statement in the questionnaire sought to discern whether managers with a college degree are better asset managers. Twenty-nine (29.8%) of those responding neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Agreeing were 26 (26.8%) of the respondents, while 7 (7.2%) strongly agreed with the statement.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to: (1) ascertain the degree to which the general benefits of a college education transfer and contribute to the success of managers in the hospitality industry; (2) determine the perceived value of a college education in the hospitality industry from the perspective of hospitality industry leaders; and (3) assess whether individuals who have a college degree are more successful in the hospitality industry than individuals who do not have a college degree.

Seven research questions were developed for this study. Additionally, hypotheses were developed from the research questions. The research questions and hypotheses were:

1. Do the benefits of having a college degree transfer to managers in the hospitality industry?

2. Are leaders in the hospitality industry more likely to hire individuals with college degrees than individuals who do not have degrees into management positions?

   $H2_0$: The hospitality industry is not more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

   $H2_a$: The hospitality industry is more likely to hire individuals into management positions with college degrees than students who do not have college degrees.

3. Are salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree more likely to be higher than salaries for managers who do not have college degrees?

   $H3_0$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are not more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

   $H3_a$: The salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are more likely to be higher than the salaries for managers that do not have college degrees?

4. Are hospitality managers with college degrees more likely to be promoted to higher level management positions than those who do not have college degrees?

   $H4_0$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are not more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

   $H4_a$: Hospitality managers with college degrees are more likely to be promoted to higher level managerial positions than those who do not have college degrees?

5. Are the turnover rates for managers in the hospitality industry who have college degrees more likely to be lower than the turnover rates for managers who do not have college degrees?

   $H5_0$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is not likely to be lower than for those managers who do not have college degrees.

   $H5_a$: The turnover rate for managers in the hospitality industry with college degrees is likely to be lower than the turnover rate for those managers who do not have college degrees.

6. Does a hospitality manager with a college degree have greater technical skills?

   $H6_0$: There is no difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

   $H6_a$: There is a difference in the technical skills for managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

7. Does a college degree provide a hospitality manager with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities to be successful managers in the hospitality industry?

    $H7_0$: There is no difference in the knowledge, skills and abilities of managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

    $H7_a$: There is a difference in the knowledge, skills and abilities of managers in the hospitality industry with a college degree and those managers who do not have a college degree.

This study was conducted during the summer and early fall of 2010. *Chapter II* contains the review of literature that was completed at the onset of the research project. The review of literature consisted of 1) Introduction, 2) Human Capital, 3) Economic Capital, 4) Social Capital, 5) Historical Hospitality Industry Review, 6) College Degree, 7) Concerns of Industry Leaders, and 8) Summary.

Chapter III described the research methodology. Following the review of literature and evaluation of previous surveys, a questionnaire was developed to collect data. It was determined by the researcher and the advising committee that a convenience sample should be used in this study to target those with knowledge of the management and hiring practices of the hospitality industry. Initially, the sampling frame consisted of members of the American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA) and the NRA (NRA). These two associations were selected because they contain the largest representation of managers in the hospitality industry. These two organizations bring together hospitality educators, industry professionals and executives to improve the quality of education, research, service and industry business operations. The original research model included both organizations as the sample to obtain information from

hospitality industry leaders as the majority of them are members of one of the organizations.

Unfortunately, the AH&LA did not allow the researcher to survey its members. Therefore the NRA membership was the only organization used for the population. The denial of access to the AH&LA membership contributed to the small data set for this research which resulted in the inability to test the hypotheses. Therefore the NRA membership was the only organization used for the population.

Following the permission to survey, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to members of the NRA by their research and insights group (R&I). The research and insights department is a division within the NRA that provides services to its members. In particular, the R&I anticipates developing trends, research those trends, compile data and provide that information to the organization's membership through articles, reports and a regular column in the industry's publications on topics such as economic reports and restaurant operations and performances. The proposed questionnaire for this study was sent to the NRA's research and insights division. The questionnaire contained two sections. . Section One of the questionnaire contained questions addressing the demographics of the respondents. A sample of 3,965 NRA members was sent e-mails. Of the 3,965 sent emails, 3,910 (98%) were successfully delivered. Of the 3,910 emails delivered inviting hospitality leaders to complete the survey, ninety-seven (2.48%) people responded to the questionnaire. Section Two contained a series of statements and a Likert scale to address the research questions

Chapter IV reports the study results. The results were reported in two sections. The first section discusses the demographics of the hospitality industry leaders who

participated in this study. The second section discussed the degree to which higher

education contributes to the success of food service managers from the perspective of

industry leaders who responded to this study. This chapter summarizes and discusses the

implications of the research findings. Additionally, this chapter provides

recommendations for future research on the impact of a college education on the success

of hospitality managers. As described earlier due to the inability to collect information

from half the proposed sample and the low response rate, the hypotheses for this research

could not be tested. Therefore, the results are used primarily to make inferences about the

research questions and related statements that were used to collect the data. However, it

is also important to note that the findings of this research are generally consistent with the

findings of similar studies. Therefore, the inferences from this study could be used to help

guide the development of related research studies in the future.

Findings and Conclusions

Results of Responses to Statements:

The first research question (RQ_1) addressed the overall benefits of a college

education. Specifically RQ_1 explored whether the benefits of having a college degree

transfer to managers in the hospitality industry? To address RQ_1, a general statement

inquiring whether individuals with college degrees are more successful managers in the

hospitality industry was asked. The frequency distribution indicated that the majority of

the hospitality industry leaders (69%) believed that individuals with a college degree are

more successful managers in the workplace and increases their chances of getting hired.

This finding agrees with Casado (1992) that education is a contributing factor for hiring managers into the industry.

RQ_2 provided additional support for the premise that a college degree is desired and provided a candidate with more favorable qualities. RQ_2 asked are leaders in the hospitality industry more likely to hire individuals with college degrees than individuals who do not have degrees into management positions. Sixty-seven (69.1%) of the respondents indicated that if all candidates were equally qualified, they would hire the individual with a college degree. These responses infer that having a college degree gives a candidate who possesses the foundational knowledge, skills and abilities required of managers in the hospitality industry a slight edge over otherwise equally qualified candidates. In the current economic climate where unemployment rates are high, this could be an important attribute for colleges and universities to highlight to potential students. Additional statements used for RQ_2 to determine if the college degree equated success were: 1) Hospitality managers with a college degree make a smooth transition from college to the workplace and 2) Hospitality managers with a college degree negotiate the management learning curve more effectively. The majority of the respondents disagreed with the first statement (i.e. respondents did not believe that individuals with a degree make a smoother transition into the workplace than those without a degree). On the other hand, (69.1%) of the respondents indicated that hospitality managers with a college degree negotiate the management learning curve more effectively than those without a degree. These findings imply that hospitality education does a good job of preparing students for the technical aspects of work in the industry, but fail to provide them with the necessary "soft skills" to make the transition

from college to the workplace. These findings reiterate that a lot of research and information has been dedicated to industry competencies, but only a limited amount of research on how higher education and career success is correlated (Solnet, Kralj, Moncarz & Kay, 2010; Kay & Russette, 2000; Okeiyi et al., 1994). Additionally, Williams (2005) stresses the need for additional research that explores what hospitality educators believe need to be taught in relation to knowledge, skills and attributes that industry leaders believe contribute to the success of managers in the industry.

RQ$_3$ addressed the impact of a college degree on the salaries of hospitality managers. The question asked if salaries for managers in the hospitality industry who hold a degree are more likely to be higher than salaries for managers who do not have college degrees. When responding to the salaries and amount of money managers with college degrees make, (59.8%) of the respondents indicated that managers with college degrees have higher salaries. These findings are congruent with Williams (2003) that compensation is a key benefit to obtaining a college education. The topic of salaries was probed further by asking the respondents to indicate whether those managers with college degrees earn more money over time. Greater than 50% of the respondents indicated that those with college degrees earn more when they are hired, after 5, 10 and 20 years working in the industry. The results of this study infer that hospitality workers with a college degree can expect to earn more wages over time. This inference is consistent with a number of previously conducted studies that occurred over a fairly wide time span (Brown, 1985; Koslowski, 1993; Menon, 1997; Williams, 2003).

Thus, it appears that the generally positive relationship between earned income and possessing a college degree transfers to managers in the hospitality industry. Again,

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hospitality educators should emphasize this during student recruitment as well as when advising students who may be considering dropping out of degree programs (i.e. student retention).

RQ$_4$ addressed whether hospitality managers with a college degree are more likely be promoted to higher level management positions than those who do not have a college degree. Greater than 60% of the respondents agreed that hospitality managers with a college degree are more likely to be promoted in the workplace. This research's finding is congruent with the Raybould and Wilkins (2005) report that individuals with hospitality degrees can expect better promotions in the industry.

RQ$_5$ asked if the turnover rates for managers in the hospitality industry who have college degrees are likely to be lower than the turnover rates for managers who do not have a college degree? The respondents in this study indicated that hospitality managers who do not have degrees do not necessarily have lower turnover rates. Thus, these results infer that industry leaders do not believe that having a college degree contributes to work attendance and absenteeism. In fact, the responses indicate that industry leaders are neutral on this issue (i.e. the majority neither agreed nor disagreed) with the statement. Based on this study, perhaps this is a question of less concern for the industry.

Another perception that could be derived from this research is that industry leaders do not notice better retention rates of managers with hospitality degrees. The respondents were also neutral on the statement that managers with college degrees are more likely to leave the hospitality industry within five years. Similarly, the respondents were neutral about the impact of having a college degree on turnover rates in the

restaurant industry. The respondents indicate the turnover rates are very similar whether the managers have a degree or not. The data from this research suggests that there is not a difference in managers leaving the industry within five years whether they have a degree or not.

Barron (2008) suggested that the decision by hospitality education students to choose another career is made during the education period. Perhaps students whose career aspirations are incongruent with the type of knowledge, skills and abilities KSAs required to be successful in the hospitality industry choose another career during the education period. It is plausible that a similar occurrence happens with people who work their way up (i.e. people who do not possess the KSAs to be successful as a manager) leave the industry as a result of their experiences in entry level positions. Again, this is something that could be studied further if a researcher wanted to try to identify and collect data from persons who left the industry while pursuing a college degree or while working in entry level positions.

Perhaps future studies could further identify the percentages of managers that leave within five years and their reasons for leaving. Additional studies could also probe further into the turnover rates for managers by isolating those with a degree and those without a degree to determine the reasons that both groups choose to leave the industry as well as the timeframe in which they leave (i.e. ,<1; between 1 – 3 year; between 3 – 5 years; > 5 or more years etc).   Because of the details and varied responses possible with respect to turnover and retention rates it is suggested that this question be addressed using a mixed methodology that includes both quantitative and the qualitative data collection and analysis. Quantitative data could be collected from human resources departments to

determine and compare the actual retention rates between managers who have degrees and those who do not. Additionally, qualitative interviews could be conducted with industry leaders to probe their perceptions of why there are or are not differences in retention rates.

A more rigorous research model could also include surveys and key informant interviews with managers who have both left and remained in the industry to ascertain the factors that contribute to both turnover and retention rates. The data could be coded and analyzed in a manner that yield greater knowledge of the actual turnover rates as well as some of the underlying reasons that managers both leave and remain in the industry. It may also be interesting to assess whether there are differences in on the turnover rates and factors that contribute to both attrition and retention across the different industry segments (i.e. hotel, restaurant, lodging etc).

RQ_6 explored the impact of a having a college degree on the technical skills possessed by managers in the hospitality industry. The statements related to this question sought respondents' perceptions of specific management skills such as production, sales and service recovery. Again, the majority of the responses to these statements were neutral meaning that the respondents do not believe that there is much difference in the KSAs of managers with degrees when compared to managers who do not have degrees. These responses are congruent with Tas et al. (1988) and Miller, Mao, and Moreo (2010) studies that implied specific skills may not be the problem for success in the industry.

Similar to RQ_6, RQ_7 asked whether a college degree provide a hospitality manager with the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) to be successful

managers in the hospitality industry? Participants were asked to respond to a series of

statements that identified their perception of whether managers with college degrees

possessed more of the KSAs that are deemed to be important to hospitality industry

leaders than managers without degrees. Interestingly, when industry leaders were asked

about the working abilities, prioritizing, influential, diverse management, costs and

communication skills, the respondents indicated that individuals with degrees do not rate

any higher than those without a degree. Ricci (2005) reported that entry level managers

often have a difficult time transitioning into the industry. Kay and Moncarz (2004)

further added the entry level managers also lack necessary knowledge, skills and abilities

to be successful. Therefore, if the entry level managers lack the skills and have a difficult

time adjusting; it is plausible to understand the responses from this study that managers

with degrees do not possess more of the aforementioned KSAs than managers without

degrees.

Additional KSAs used for this study included a comparison between managers

with degrees and those without degrees on: 1) team membership, 2) team leadership, 3)

problem solving, 4) decision making, 5) emotional intelligence, 6) integrity, 7) learning

ability 8) enthusiasm, 9) ethics, 10) cost management and 11) reliability. Again, the data

from this study infer that industry leaders do not believe that managers with degrees

possess more of these particular KSAs.

Interestingly, these findings are consistent with those from previous research

studies. For example, Alexander (2007) concluded that the necessary skills for success

are not always obtained through formal education. Raybould and Wilkins (2005)

reported that although individuals with hospitality degrees can expect better promotions

in the industry; the education does not necessarily equip them with entry level knowledge, skills and abilities to perform more effectively than those who did not have a college degree. Kay and Russette (2000) found that many of the managers and workers in the industry do not complete formal training or have a college education.

Therefore, the results of this and other research studies suggest that the completion of college continues to be a desirable component to hiring hospitality managers, even though having a degree does not necessarily mean that managers possess more of the KSAs that are requisite for success than those without a degree. The implications of these findings are far reaching and suggest a need for further research and possibly some revision of curricula in hospitality education programs. With respect to future research, additional studies could explore why industry leaders seem to favor those with college degrees during the hiring process while simultaneously reporting that having a degree may not provide managers with more of the requisite KSAs. Studies could also be conducted to explore why hospitality education program curricula are not successful and providing graduates with the requisite KSAs that contribute to success.

Demographics

The population from which data were collected in this study were leaders in the food service segment of the hospitality industry who are members of the NRA. Kay and Moncarz (2004), defined hospitality industry leaders as managers, owners, supervisors and human resource officials that control businesses that service people away from home. Demographic data were collected on the age, gender, education, income, area of expertise, years of experience, and years in current position, number of employees

supervised, number of managers supervised and college degree requirements. As reported in Chapter IV, 39 (54.9%) of the respondents were male and 32 (45%) were females. Twenty percent of the male respondents were between the ages of 50 and 55.

Of the total respondents, eighteen 24% had worked in the industry between 26 and 35 years;12.4% for 26-30 years; 12.4% between 31-35; and 11.3% of had worked between 11-15 years. Thus, the data collected for this study represents the experiences and perceptions of experienced hospitality industry leaders.

In conclusion, managers who responded to this research study seem to prefer a college educated manager. Furthermore, having a college degree contributes to the personal success of a manager, particularly giving them a competitive edge in the hiring process and results in an increase in salary. However, the specific value that a college degree contributes to a manager's ability to work effectively is unclear. These findings are generally consistent with the findings of other studies. For example, Boyd (2004) reported that some people achieve success without a college education.

Ultimately, this research sought to ascertain whether a higher education degree is a vital or necessary component for managers to be successful in the industry. The results infer that the qualities that managers obtain from years of work in the industry may contribute more to their success than a college education. However, the fact that experienced managers in the industry seem to favor entry level managers with college degrees as compared to those who do not have degrees suggest that years of experience in the industry and higher education influence a manager's long-term success. Combined with the results of this study, my knowledge and experience in the industry as both an

educator and manager lead me to conclude that entry level managers should possess a minimum of an associate's degree prior to entering into management positions. The preparation of students by providing them with a theoretical foundation, laboratory and case study preparations, practical experiences through internships and a myriad of other curriculum measures provides students with a foundation of the critical KSAs that assist them to make the transition from college to the workplace. Previous research indicated the college degree is preferred. However, it is still conflicting as to whether the college education is considered imperative to the success of managers. This is mainly due to the inherent success of people (both with and without college degrees) who have worked their way up through the ranks of management and leadership. As a result of the inclusive nature of this study and the similarity of findings with previous research, The researcher strongly suggest that future studies seek to engage hospitality industry leaders and educators in collaborative efforts that foster synergy between the two segments of the industry.

Implications

The results of this research study have both practical and theoretical implications for both hospitality educators and industry leaders. This study explores (1) the perceived value of a college education in the hospitality industry from the perspective of hospitality industry leaders in the food service segment of the industry who are members of the NRA; and (2) assessed whether college educated managers are more successful in the hospitality industry than those individuals who are not college educated.

The results of this research suggest that a college education is still valued by hospitality industry leaders. However, some of the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that contribute to a manager's success in the hospitality industry may not be directly attributable to having a college degree.

These results infer that it is still valuable to obtain a college degree prior to acquiring a management position in hospitality. In fact, this research suggests that having a degree increases the likelihood that a person will be hired as a manager. However, the possession of a degree does not necessarily mean that an individual will be a more successful manager once they are hired than a person who does not have a degree. The ambiguity with respect to the contribution that having a college degree makes to a manager's success is caused in part by the fact that possessing a college degree does not necessarily ensure that a person possess the specific KSAs that make one successful as a manger. The hospitality industry leaders who responded to this study indicated that they believed that there was no real measurable or discernable difference in the requisite KSAs between managers who hold college degrees and those who do not. Therefore additional research could be conducted to explore why industry leaders perceive that there are some advantages to having a college degree while simultaneously reporting that having a degree may not provide managers with the requisite KSAs to be successful in the industry. As previously suggested, research that is conducted collaboratively between hospitality educators and industry leaders could lead the development of research questions, methodology and analysis that would isolate both the specific advantages of having a college degree as well as the specific KSAs that people acquire in the pursuit of the degree. Finally, such studies may also lead to the revision of hospitality education

curriculum and teaching methods that would result in students acquiring more of the specific KSAs that contribute to success in the industry.

It also suggests that hospitality industry educators should seek ways to ensure that students are exposed to courses, labs and other activities that help them to gain the KSAs that are requisite to success during matriculation if they want to give their graduates a competitive edge that will cause industry leaders to place a greater value on a college degree. A more recent report indicated that hospitality industry supervisors highly value attributes and competencies such as attitudes, behaviors and interpersonal skills while rating other competencies such as written communication and information technology as moderately important (Fournier & Ineson, 2010). Combined, these two implications may also suggest that there is a need for greater communication among and perhaps collaborative research to be conducted between industry leaders and hospitality educators.

If industry leaders and hospitality educators worked together, perhaps future studies on this topic would be successful in obtaining participation from a more representative sample of industry leaders. This would enable more in depth analysis of data that could help to: 1) determine the degree to which the general benefits of a college education transfer and contribute to the success of managers in the industry; 2) identify specific benefits related to having the college degree; and 3 assess whether individuals who have a college degree are more successful in the hospitality industry than those individuals who do not have a college degree. Larger data sets would enable cross-tabulations and regression analysis that may also help to determine the specific concerns of leaders from different segments of the hospitality industry. A higher response rate

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and a more finite sample could possibly provide additional information on the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) the industry deemed vital for successful managers. This research only represents the food establishments segment of the hospitality industry and not the lodging segment as stated in the original research plans for this study. With a larger sample size the various KSAs could be further explored and perhaps some could be explicitly isolated. Isolated KSAs could be further used to provide information to hospitality educators as data for consideration when planning college curriculum. The use of the data collected from research on KSAs could help to bridge if not narrow the gap between what the hospitality educators teach students and what the industry expects potential graduates to know. Currently, many hospitality programs are out of touch with industry management needs and preferences (Ashley, et. al. 1995).

Also, as reported by industry leaders, there are still no major requirements for managers to have degrees. This implies, industry leaders may believe that managers with and without degrees are perhaps equal when considering promotions. Future research could investigate to what extent and how degrees play a role in the promotion of managers in hospitality. The findings from future research could be very helpful to hospitality educators as they seek to develop and modify curriculum.

Recommendations and Limitations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered for consideration:

Recommendations for future research

1. Hospitality educators should collaborate with industry leaders to clearly define the specific KSAs that help entry level hospitality manager's to be successful.

2. Hospitality industry leaders should commit to fully participating in future research that seek to identify the gaps between the KSAs desired by industry leaders and entry-level manager preparation.

3. Hospitality educators and researchers should further research and identify the role of higher education for entry level, middle and upper management promotions.

Recommendations for practice

1. Hospitality educators and industry leaders should work together to clearly identify how to modify curricula including the incorporation of additional or alternative activities to ensure that students who are pursing degrees acquire the knowledge, skills and abilities' identified in #1 above.

2. Hospitality industry leaders should be more involved, supportive and participate in research addressing the education and role of education of hospitality managers. This involvement should include financial contributions that support research efforts, curriculum development and the provision of experiential learning opportunities.

3. Hospitality industry leaders should consult with hospitality educators develop an effective matrix that clearly delineate the educational and promotional requirements for its managers at all levels of the industry.

Given the limited number of responses, the researcher acknowledges that the small sample size limited the statistical analyses that could be conducted. Additionally, the results of the study cannot be generalized as only one of the two major associations, the NRA (NRA) within the hospitality industry participated in the survey. Additionally, only 2.48% of NRA members who received the survey responded.

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APPPENDICES

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Thursday, June 24, 2010

IRB Application No HE1050

Proposal Title: The Role of Higher Education for Successful Managers in the Hospitality Industry

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved   Protocol Expires: 6/23/2011

Principal
Investigator(s):

Suzzette Shaw Goldmon   Bill Ryan
8 Haycox Court   210 HES
Durham, NC 27713   Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

June 30, 2010

Dear Restaurant Professional,

I am Suzzette Shaw Goldmon, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration at Oklahoma State University. In conjunction with the National Restaurant Association, I am asking you to participate in a research study titled, "The Role of Higher Education for Successful Managers in the Hospitality Industry." You will be asked a few questions concerning your experiences as a hospitality industry professional. Study results could impact curricula and educational programs that prepare individuals for careers in the hospitality industry.

This research study is being conducted in conjunction with the National Restaurant Association. Mr. Hudson Riehle has agreed to assist with this project by distributing surveys to members of the National Restaurant Association. Your response is completely voluntary, anonymous and will be kept confidential. All responses will be analyzed and reported in aggregate form.

Please take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete this survey. There are no known risks associated with this study that are greater than those you would find in daily life. Your response will remain confidential, and no individual's answers can be identified. While we would like you to answer the research survey completely, you have the right not to respond to any questions for whatever personal reason you may have. To participate in this study, you should be **at least 18 years of age.**

Please click the link below to start the research survey. By clicking on the link, you agree that you understand and are giving your consent to participate.

If you have any question regarding the survey, please contact the principal investigator, Suzzette Goldmon (email: suzzette.goldmon@okstate.edu, phone: 919-423-7462) or the academic advisor, Dr. Bill Ryan (email: b.ryan@okstate.edu, phone: 405-744-8485). If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu. Thank you so much for your valuable time.

Sincerely,

Suzzette Shaw Goldmon, M.S.	Bill Ryan, Ed.D., Director	Hudson Riehle
Ph.D. Candidate	School of Hotel and Restaurant	Research and Strategy
School of Hotel and Restaurant Adm.	College of Environmental Sciences	National Restaurant Association
Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma State University	1200 17th St. NW
Suzzette.Goldmon@okstate.edu	b.ryan@okstate.edu	Washington, D. C. 20036

The Role of Higher Education for Successful Managers in the Hospitality Industry

Purpose: This study will explore the benefits of an undergraduate college education in hospitality in comparison to the benefits from other industries; determine the perceived value of a college education in the hospitality industry from the perspective of hospitality industry leaders; and assess whether college educated individuals are more successful in the hospitality industry, than those individuals who are not college educated.

SECTION I. Demographics

Instructions: Please answer the following questions by circling the number that fits your demographic profile or by filling in the blank.

1. What is your age?

    o 18-24

    o 25-29

    o 30-34

    o 35-39

    o 40-44

    o 45-49

    o 50-55

    o 56-65

    o 66-70

    o More than 70 years old

2. What is your gender?

    o Female

    o male

3. How many years have you worked in the hospitality industry?

    o Less than 1 year,

    o 1-5 years,

    o 6-10 years,

- o 11-15 years,
- o 16-20 years,
- o 21-25 years,
- o 26-30 years,
- o 31-35 years,
- o 36-40 years,
- o More than 40 years

4. What segment of the hospitality industry do you work in?

- o restaurant
- o lodging
- o inns
- o resorts
- o cruises
- o airlines
- o clubs

5. How many years have you worked in this industry segment?

- o Less than 1 year,
- o 1-5 years,
- o 6-10 years,
- o 11-15 years,
- o 16-20 years,
- o 21-25 years,
- o 26-30 years,
- o 31-35 years,
- o 36-40 years,
- o More than 40 years

6. What is your post high school degree earned?

- None

- Certifications

- Bachelors

- Masters

- Doctorate

- Other? List:

7. What is the major of your Bachelor's degree if applicable?

8. What is the major of your Master's degree if applicable?

9. What is the major of your Doctorate degree if applicable?

10. Do you hire managers for your industry segment?

11. Are there some skill(s) you believe all hospitality college graduates should possess?

- If so, what are they?

12. Do you offer any incentives to college graduates during the hiring process that are not offered to candidates that do not have college degrees?

- If so, what?

13. What position do you currently hold in the hospitality industry?

- Entry level

- Middle manager

- General manager

- District manager

- Other? List:

14. How long have you held your current position in the hospitality industry?

- Less than 1 year,

- 1-5 years,

- 6-10 years,

- 11-15 years,

- 16-20 years,

- o   21-25 years,

- o   26-30 years,

- o   31-35 years,

- o   36-40 years,

- o   More than 40 years

15. How many employees do you supervise?

- o   None

- o   1-10

- o   11-20

- o   21-30

- o   31-40

- o   41-50

- o   51-60

- o   61-70

- o   71-80

- o   81-90

- o   91-100

- o   >101

- o   Other? How many:

16. Do you supervise managers? If yes, how many?

- o   None

- o   1-10

- o   11-20

- o   21-30

- o   31-40

- o   41-50

- o   51-60

- o   61-70

- o   71-80

- o   81-90

- o   91-100

- o   >101

- o   Other? How many:

17. Does your firm require a college degree to be hired as an entry level manager?

18. Does your firm require a college degree to be promoted to General Manager (GM)?

19. Does your firm require a college degree to be promoted beyond GM level?

20. Are you a member of the following organizations?

- o   National Restaurant Association/State Restaurant Association

- o   American Hotel and Lodging Association

- o   Both

21. If you would like to add any additional comments, please do so below.

SECTION II. Educational Benefits
Instructions: Please select the level of benefits that best reflects your opinion.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Having a college degree increases the chances of getting hired as a hospitality manager.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Hospitality managers with a college degree make a smooth transition from college to the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Hospitality managers with a college degree negotiate the management learning curve	1	2	3	4	5

more effectively.					
4. If all candidates were equally qualified, you would hire the individual with a college degree.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Hospitality managers with a college degree have higher salaries.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Upon initial hiring, an individual with a college degree earns more.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Upon initial hiring, an individual with a college degree earns more after working five years in the profession.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Upon initial hiring, an individual with a college degree earns more after working ten years in the profession.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Upon initial hiring, an individual with a college degree earns more after working 20 years or more in the profession.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Having a college degree enhances a hospitality manager's promotion potential in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Hospitality managers with college degrees perform work related duties better.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Hospitality managers with a college degree are more likely to be promoted to higher level management positions.	1	2	3	4	5
13. An individual with a degree is more likely to receive the first management promotion within the first three years of employment than a person without a degree.	1	2	3	4	5
14. An individual with a degree is more likely to receive the second level management promotion within the five years of employment than a person without a degree.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Individuals with a degree are more likely to receive the third or general management level promotion within the ten years of	1	2	3	4	5

employment than a person without a degree.					
16. A degree would not make a difference in my promotion decision.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Hospitality managers with a college degree have less health related absenteeism.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Managers with degrees are more likely to leave the hospitality industry within five years than those without a degree.	1	2	3	4	5
19. In the first five years of their employment with the company, the turnover rate for managers who have a degree is lower than those without a degree.	1	2	3	4	5
20. The overall turnover rates for managers who have a degree are lower than the turnover rates for managers who do not have a degree.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Individuals with a college degree are better production managers.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Individuals with a college degree are better sales managers.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Individuals with a college degree are better at service recovery.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Individuals with a college degree are better human resource managers.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Individuals with a college degree are better overall operation managers.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Hospitality managers with a degree have better skills.	1	2	3	4	5
27. Hospitality managers with a degree have better working abilities.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Hospitality managers with a degree are more effective at setting and keeping priorities in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5

29. Hospitality managers with a degree are more effective leaders who are able to influence and inspire others in the work place.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Hospitality managers with a degree manage diverse teams more effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Hospitality managers with a degree manage costs effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
32. Hospitality managers with a degree communicate more effectively (verbally) in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Hospitality managers with a degree communicate more effectively (in writing) in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
34. Hospitality managers with a degree are better team members.	1	2	3	4	5
35. Hospitality managers with a degree are better team leaders.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Hospitality managers with a degree are better problem solvers.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Hospitality managers with a degree make more competent decisions in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Hospitality managers with a degree possess more emotional intelligence in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
39. Hospitality managers with a degree display more integrity in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Hospitality managers with a degree have a greater ability to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Hospitality managers with a degree achieve better social status.	1	2	3	4	5
42. Hospitality managers with a degree are more enthusiastic workers.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Hospitality managers with a degree possess	1	2	3	4	5

and display better ethics in the workplace.					
44. Hospitality managers without a degree manage costs more effectively than those with a degree.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Hospitality managers with a degree are more reliable in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Hospitality managers with a degree possess and display better morals in the workplace.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Hospitality managers with a degree are better human resource managers.	1	2	3	4	5
48. Hospitality managers with a degree are better managers of employee productivity.	1	2	3	4	5
49. Hospitality managers with a degree are better with safety and security concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Hospitality managers with a degree are better asset managers than those without a degree.	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

VITA

Suzzette Shaw Goldmon

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SUCCESSFUL MANAGERS
          IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Major Field: Human Environmental Sciences, Hotel and Restaurant Administration

Biographical:

Education:

> Completed the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy in Human Environmental Sciences, Hotel and Restaurant Administration at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 2011.
>
> Completed the requirements for the Master of Science Department of Home Economics, Concentration: Food Science and Nutrition The University of Tennessee at Martin, Martin, Tennessee/USA, August, 1984.
>
> Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science/ Department of Home Economics: Concentration: General Dietetics and Food Systems Administration from The University of Tennessee at Martin. Martin, Tennessee/USA, August, 1983.

Experience:

> Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, Assistant Manager Residence Hall Dining, Oak Hall Food Service, 8/84 – 8/87.
>
> The University of Tennessee. Knoxville, TN. Food Services Department Staff Assistant and General Manager, University Center Food Operation, 8/87 - 8/92
>
> University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Chapel Hill, NC and NCCU, Durham, NC Visiting Lecturer/Instructor, 8/93 - 5/09; North Carolina State University. Raleigh, NC, Family and Consumer Education Agent: Food and Nutrition,12/96 – 8/2006
>
> The Art Institute of Raleigh-Durham, Durham, NC, Culinary Instructor, 8/2009-Present

Professional Memberships:

> Kappa Omicron Nu, National Human Sciences Honor Society; Eta Sigma Delta, International Hospitality Honor Society; International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Education; American Culinary Federation

Name: Suzzette Shaw Goldmon   Date of Degree: July, 2011

Institution: Oklahoma State University   Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION FOR SUCCESSFUL
               MANAGERS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Pages in Study: 153   Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major Field: Human Environmental Sciences, Hotel and Restaurant

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to: (1) ascertain the degree to which the general benefits of a college education transfer and contribute to the success of managers in the hospitality industry; (2) determine the perceived value of a college education in the hospitality industry from the perspective of hospitality industry leaders; and (3) assess whether individuals who have a college degree are more successful in the hospitality industry than those individuals who do not have a college degree. The sampling frame for this research study were leaders in the food service segment of the hospitality industry who are members of the National Restaurant Association. A web-based, self administered survey was used to collect data. The survey had a Cronbach's alpha of .937. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section discussed the demographics of the hospitality industry leaders. The second section discusses the degree to which higher education contributes to the success of food service managers from the perspective of industry leaders who responded to this study.

Findings and Conclusions:
        Three thousand nine hundred sixty-five questionnaires were distributed electronically. Three thousand nine hundred ten (98%) were successfully delivered. Ninety-Seven (2.48%) people responded to the questionnaire. Thirty-nine (54.9%) of the respondents were male and 32 (45%) were female. Twenty percent of the male respondents were between the ages of 50 and 55. Of the total respondents, eighteen (24%) had worked in the industry between 26 and 35 years; 12.4% for 26 - 30 years; 12.4% between 31 - 35; and 11.3% of had worked between 11-15 years.
        Generally, the findings of this study were consistent with previous research. When all other qualifications are similar, the respondents preferred a college educated manager. Thus, the results infer that having a college degree contributes to the personal success of a manager, particularly giving them a competitive edge in the hiring process and results in an increase in salary. However, the specific value that a college degree contributes to a manager's ability to work effectively is unclear.
        Additional research that seeks to engage hospitality industry leaders and educators in collaborative efforts to better understand why industry leaders favor managers with college degrees and to further explore the specific benefits that having a degree contributes to the success of managers in the hospitality industry should be conducted.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Bill Ryan