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“An explanatory analysis of the possible solutions to the shortage of skilled professionals in the hospitality and gastronomy industry.”

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submitted for the degree of **MSc in International Business Management** is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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“Thank you for being there and thank you for being you.”

Abstract

The shortage of skilled professionals is one of the biggest challenges facing the hotel and gastronomy industry today. It is becoming increasingly difficult for companies in the industry to recruit suitably skilled professionals (DEHOGA, 2019). At the same time, the industry is showing a general growth. 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded in 2018, the number of international tourist arrivals in Europe in 2018 was 713 million with an increase of 6% compared to 2017 (UNWTO, 2019).

The topic of this dissertation is the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. In particular, the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals and the potential solutions are discussed. The work aims to present a clear understanding of the hotel and gastronomy industry concerning the causes of the shortage of skilled professionals, to present a series of practical solutions to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals, to evaluate the practical solution approaches and to make recommendations to the industry. In order to achieve these objectives and to give structure to the research, the following two research questions have been proposed:

1. How can the problem of the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry be evaluated and what are possible reasons?
2. What concrete solution approaches do exist to effectively address the current shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry and how can they be deepened and put into practice?

Twelve semi-structured interviews have been conducted as part of the primary data research. The entire research process as well as the data analysis use individual elements of the Grounded Theory. The interview was conducted with industry experts from Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy from different departments and levels of hierarchy.

This research contributes to the existing literature by proposing possible solution approaches, which can be useful for the industry itself as well as for further research.

Table of Contents

CANDIDATE DECLARATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
ABSTRACT	IV
LIST OF FIGURES	VII
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 OVERVIEW	1
1.2 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH.....	2
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES	4
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1 REASONS FOR THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED PROFESSIONALS.....	5
2.2 DIGITALISATION AND TECHNOLOGISATION AS COUNTERACTION.....	7
2.3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AS COUNTERACTION.....	8
2.4 MARKETING AS COUNTERACTION.....	10
2.5 MIGRATION AS COUNTERACTION.....	10
2.6 ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION APPROACHES AS COUNTERACTION.....	10
2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	12
2.8 CONCLUSION	13
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN	14
3.1 OVERVIEW	14
3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH	14
3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY	16
3.4 COLLECTION PRIMARY DATA	17
3.4.1 Sources	18
3.4.2 Access and Ethical Issues	19
3.5 APPROACH TO DATA ANALYSIS.....	20
3.6 CONCLUSION	21
CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS..	22
4.1 OVERVIEW	22
4.1.1 Research Population	26
4.1.2 Data Gathering.....	23
4.1.3 Data Analysis.....	24

4.1.4	Categorisation	24
4.2	CONSEQUENCES AND EFFECTS OF THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED PROFESSIONALS	26
4.3	ADVANTAGES OF THE HOTEL AND GASTRONOMY INDUSTRY	25
4.4	DISADVANTAGES OF THE HOTEL AND GASTRONOMY INDUSTRY	34
4.5	POSSIBLE REASONS FOR THE SHORTAGE OF SKILLED PROFESSIONALS	42
4.6	INDIVIDUAL SOLUTION APPROACHES.....	50
4.7	POTENTIAL SOLUTION APPROACHES.....	58
4.8	TIME FRAME AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICAL APPLICATION	66
4.9	STRATEGIC SYNERGIES OF THE SOLUTION APPROACHES.....	68
4.10	CONCLUSION	69
	CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	70
5.1	IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	70
5.2	CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH.....	74
5.3	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE.....	75
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	76
5.5	FINAL CONCLUSION AND REFLECTIONS	77
	REFERENCES.....	79
	<i>Appendix A –Plain Language Statement.....</i>	<i>VIII</i>
	<i>Appendix B – Informed Consent Form</i>	<i>X</i>
	<i>Appendix C – Semi-Structured Interview Guide</i>	<i>XII</i>
	<i>Appendix D – Gantt Chart</i>	<i>XIV</i>

List of Figures	Page
Figure 1: Age Structure of the Population in Germany, 2020 and 2030	2
Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Model	12
Figure 3: The “Research Onion”	14
Figure 4: Grounded Theory Process	17
Figure 5: Employment with the Company and Age Structure	23
Figure 6: Categorisation of Interviewees by Department	24
Figure 7: Categorisation of Interviewees by Nationality	25
Figure 8: Consequences and Effects of the Shortage of Skilled Professionals	26
Figure 9: Advantages of the Hotel and Gastronomy Industry	33
Figure 10: Disadvantages of the Hotel and Gastronomy Industry	41
Figure 11: Possible Reasons for the Shortage of Skilled Professionals	42
Figure 12: Reasons for the Shortage of Skilled Professionals	49
Figure 13: Individual Solution Approaches based on Data Collection	50
Figure 14: Applicability of the Potential Solutions	65
Figure 15: Time Applicability of the Potential Solution Approaches	68

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter is supposed to serve as an introduction to the topic of the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. It presents the reasons why the shortage of skilled professionals is an extremely relevant and major challenge for the industry and therefore the justification for the research is presented. Subsequently, the research questions and objectives are outlined and described, which provide the focus for the remaining chapters.

1.1 Overview

According to the German Hotel and Restaurant Association, it is becoming increasingly challenging for companies in the hospitality industry to find suitably skilled professionals (DEHOGA, 2019). 1.4 billion international tourist arrivals were recorded in 2018. The number of international tourist arrivals in Europe in 2018 was 713 million with an increase of 6% compared to 2017 (UNWTO, 2019). The GDP growth rates of Germany (2.2%), Austria (3%) and Switzerland (1.1%) show a positive development (World Bank, 2017). As a result, the unemployment rate in Austria (4.5%) and Germany (3.1%) in August 2019 is relatively low (Eurostat, 2019). The unemployment rate in Switzerland is even lower at only 2.1% in September 2019 (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, 2019). In addition to economic growth and the resulting increased demand for skilled professionals, as well as the growing tourism industry and the low unemployment rate, demographic change is another factor for the acute shortage of skilled professionals (DEHOGA, 2019). In Germany, for example, the number of younger people is declining, and the number of elderlies is rising. One out of two citizens in Germany is already older than 45 years. A declining population is offset by strong immigration of mostly young people (Federal Statistical Office Germany, 2019). Due to the personnel intensity, the hospitality industry is dependent on qualified skilled professionals to be sustainable and successful in the long term. Thus, the shortage of skilled professionals is one of the biggest challenges facing the hotel and gastronomy industry today (DEHOGA, 2019).

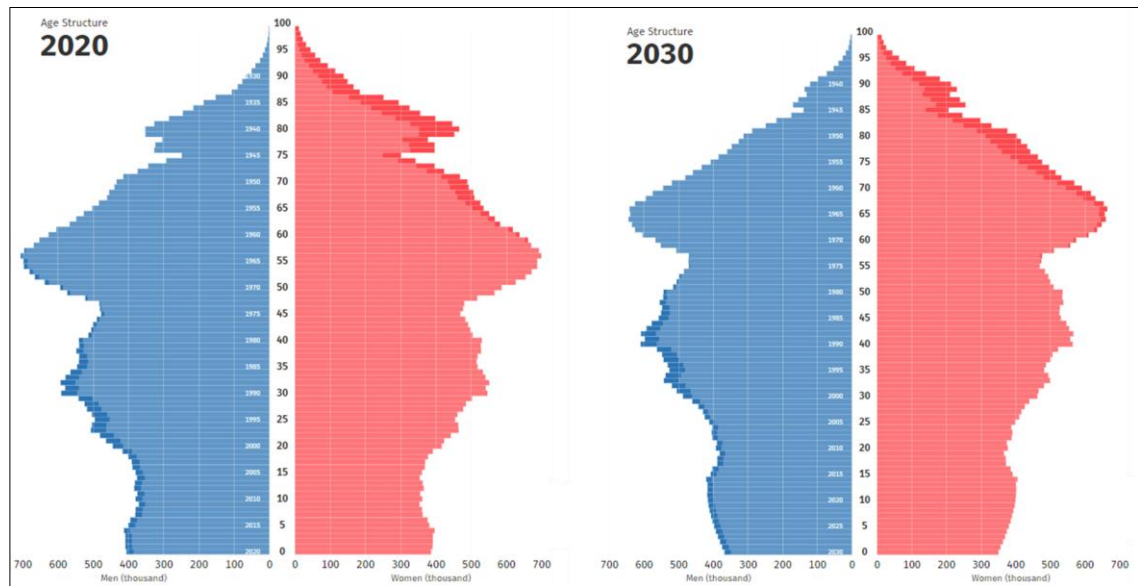


Figure 1: Age Structure of the Population in Germany, 2020 and 2030
(Federal Statistical Office Germany, 2019)

1.2 Justification for the Research

The author's interest in the topic stems from a strong connection to the hotel and gastronomy industry. The author was able to gain early experience in the field of gastronomy and hotel business in family-run businesses. Due to his training at a hotel management school and a bachelor's degree in this subject area, together with work experience in food & beverage management and front office operation in renowned five-star luxury hotels in Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Qatar, the author has intensive reference to the subject. At an early stage, the author recognized the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the industry, especially in the DACH region, and the resulting challenges for the management.

Professionals in a sector are essential for innovation and competitiveness, growth and employment, prosperity and quality of life. The shortage of skilled professionals is one of the central challenges for politics, business and science in the coming years (Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology Germany BMWI, 2019). Based on data from the German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (2019), there will be a 30 percent decrease of workers (16 million people) in Germany, provided that immigration will not be allowed. In addition, 352 of 801 professional categories are currently confronted with a shortage of skilled professionals. Furthermore, 61% of companies in Germany already consider the shortage of skilled professionals as a risk. The Swiss

economy also relies heavily on skilled professionals to maintain its leading economic position. In the hotel and gastronomy industry, an increase in the number of recently immigrated workers exceeds the macroeconomic reference value (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO, 2016). Austria is also severely affected by the problem of skilled professional shortage. According to the Austrian Economic Chamber, 75% of Austrian companies are strongly affected by the negative influence of this shortage. In addition, 60% of companies are already complaining about the financial consequences (Austrian Economic Chamber WKO, 2019). To make the research more relevant, the author focuses primarily on the DACH region and thus mainly to the German-speaking area. The importance and topicality of the problem can be concluded from the context and therefore offer a justification for doing the research in this field.

The purpose of this work is to analyse the possible solutions for the shortage of skilled professionals in the specific sector. In particular, it deals with possible theories and methods that propose a solution to the problem. Expert interviews establish a reference to the literature. The interviewees work in different positions in the hotel and system gastronomy sector. Initially, the work aimed to achieve a number of 10 to 15 interviews to give relevance to the scientific work.

This scientific paper is particularly relevant for the management in the sector, professionals and destination managers. Nevertheless, the findings are also relevant for all stakeholders as well as for the whole economic branch of tourism.

Foremost, the work is concerned with the academic areas of economics, business and politics. The topic is closely related to Strategic Human Resource Management, International Strategy, Sociology, Leadership and Management Development as well as Marketing. It also deals with the topics of digitalisation and technologisation, immigration, and demographic change.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The topic of this thesis deals with the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry in the DACH region. The focus is on the shortage of skilled professionals in the food and beverage sector. DACH stands for D - Deutschland (Germany), A - Austria and CH – Confoederatio Helvetica (Switzerland). Therefore, the DACH region refers to the German-speaking part of Europe. The topic and the resulting work will provide information about the solution approaches of the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry, as well as the consequences and effects.

The main questions the work refers to are the following:

- 1. How can the problem of the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry be evaluated and what are possible reasons?*
- 2. Which specific solution approaches do exist to effectively address the current shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry and how can these be deepened and put into practice?*

The questions provide a framework for a structured discussion and analysis of the topic. The topic was developed through primary field research in the form of qualitative expert interviews. Data was collected and evaluated. A meaningful thematic context could be formed by using theoretical literature.

The main questions are answered based on the following objectives:

- 1. To establish a clear picture of the hotel and gastronomy industry in terms of the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the sector.*
- 2. To present a range of practical solutions to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry.*
- 3. To evaluate practical solutions to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry and make recommendations to the industry.*
- 4. To make recommendations for future research in this area and present the experience in conducting this research.*

Chapter II: Literature Review

2.1 Reasons for the Shortage of Skilled Professionals

The hotel and gastronomy industry has a high turnover of employees and increasing competition from other sectors. It is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit and retain labour, especially skilled professionals (Barrows *et al.*, 2011). The German Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (2019) provides regular statistics and analyses regarding the situation of skilled professional shortage in Germany. A study commissioned in 2017 deals with the key question: "Which industries are affected by the shortages of skilled professionals? Which regions are particularly affected?". It examines the extent to which international skilled professionals, elderly employees and women can counteract shortages of skilled professionals. Each of these groups offers basic potential. Specialist bottlenecks have continued to worsen over the past period. In the meantime, 66% of all vacancies for qualified personnel are advertised in bottleneck occupations. In 44% of cases, the bottlenecks lasted at least five years. This means that the labour market situation is a consolidated problem in many occupational fields. In Germany itself, there are also regional differences in the intensity of the shortage of skilled professionals. Not only the number of unfilled training places but also the number of unplaced applicants has risen. Therefore, there is a problem in the process of bringing applicants and training places together. The greatest imbalance can be found in Eastern Germany. Many training places are also vacant in Southern Germany, nevertheless, almost all applicants find a training place. To counteract this problem, many companies, especially in cities and in the south of Germany, rely on international skilled professionals. On average, international skilled workers are much younger than German workers and thus counteract the shift in the age structure of the workforce. Part-time offers make it possible to longer remain in the company. Furthermore, in occupations in which the proportion of women and men is similarly high, the shortage of skilled professionals is much rarer than in occupations dominated by women or men.

Austria is also massively affected by the shortage of skilled professionals, which is already noticeable in 87% of Austrian companies. As a consequence, the burden on companies and employees increases. In addition, the shortage endangers the quality of service provision and customer satisfaction. In overall economic terms, the shortage in

Austria leads to losses for Austrian companies (lower turnover at higher costs). The shortage of skilled professionals has a significant impact on medium-sized enterprises, tourism and craft trades, as well as on Western Austria. Graduates of an apprenticeship are particularly sought after. The skilled professional's analysis of the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO, 2019) presents valuable data from the secondary analysis as well as a questioning of approximately 4500 enterprises throughout Austria. In this respect, the data of the Austrian Economic Chamber provides an important source of information for the work.

One of the biggest challenges for human resources today is the recruitment and retention of employees. The shift in the age structure of employees is alarming. The consequences of these trends already have a strong impact on the workplace. There is increasing competition for the recruitment of suitable professionals regarding scarce skills. Also, there is a growing trend in internationalisation in terms of recruitment. Employers are increasingly focusing on a strategy to further develop and retain employees. Only a few industries are not affected by a shortage of professionals. This fact can be directly linked to costs. The development of a recruitment strategy is time-consuming and expensive, especially when a vacant position has to be filled adequately and timely. The challenge for the human resource department is to develop a cost-effective strategy by attracting the best talents to the company and keeping them in the organisation. Technology also plays a central role (Pollitt, 2007). Intensifying global competition will increase the importance of employee engagement strategies. Companies are aware that "committed employees" are more productive, achieve a higher level of customer satisfaction, are more loyal and contribute to a higher probability of corporate success (Cook, 2008).

Companies are facing the great challenge of mastering demographic change. The generation of baby boomers is retiring, while the millennials, or Generation Y, are moving up the workforce. The millennials have a basic technological understanding. Despite the good qualities of the millennials, they do not always share the traditional values of the boomers. Potential conflicts emerge from this. Especially the high employee turnover among young people, who have to be recruited, trained and then replaced, leads to high costs for companies (Sujansky and Ferri-Reed, 2009). Nevertheless, the demographic change gives no reason to panic if the positive consequences for society are also considered (Weber, 2019).

2.2 Digitalisation and Technologisation as Counteraction

Digitalisation and technologisation undoubtedly have a strong impact on today's working environment. Unlike humans, robots and algorithms cannot get sick, have children, go on strike or be entitled to a vacation. For many companies, an investment in the capital-intensive structure of automation, therefore, provides a long-term way of minimising costs. Besides, autonomously operating systems offer a high degree of independence from external factors and can be used 24 hours a day. It seems that digitalisation could counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. However, a transferability or an examination of the applicability to the hotel industry still needs to be examined (Wisskirchen, 2017).

During the International Hotel Investment Forum (IHIF), held in Berlin in March 2019, fundamental challenges concerning the digitalisation and technologisation in the hospitality industry were discussed. Questions about functionality, customer connectivity and essential technologies for customers, the combination of comfort and interaction, cost reductions and process simplification were in focus. An important finding was that 84% of business travellers are willing to share their personal information in order to benefit from more personalised service. It was also underlined that the technology for guests should be aligned to the hotel standard. In a luxury hotel, e.g. the technology should be discreet, hidden and designed to give employees more time to personally interact with guests. A study shows that the hospitality sector spends about 9% of its total expenditure worldwide on technology (Kelly, 2019).

It should be mentioned that it is possible to strongly influence a hotel reputation and business through digitalisation and technologisation, like SEO optimisation, virtual tours, open ratings and social networking. Through globalisation, the online world, including the internet and social media, has a big impact on companies' success (Zaitseva *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, a survey of 5,000 millennials revealed that approximately 30% of their income was spent on vacation and restaurants. Fast and free internet was the first hotel selection criteria, followed by hotel services apps, multiple USB charging stations, and music streaming. Potential digital hotel strategies could be apps that analyse the guest to better understand and communicate with them, enhancing personalisation and satisfaction. The hotel staff can thus react better to guests and respond more individually to their needs. In this respect, digitalisation and

technologisation lead to a reduction in the workload of the employees and consequently to a decrease in staff number. Therefore, it can be assumed that digitalisation and technologisation in the hotel and gastronomy industry will improve the situation of the shortage of skilled professionals (Kelly, 2019).

2.3 Human Resource Management Strategies as Counteraction

Retaining suitable employees in the hospitality industry is a constant challenge. It is necessary to retain talented employees and apply appropriate strategies. Topics such as maintaining the work-life balance, increasing employee satisfaction, commitment and employee motivation must be considered with regard to the shortage of skilled professionals in the hospitality and gastronomy industry (Deery and Jago, 2015). To better understand the problem, the particularities of human resource management must be taken into account, including labour law, personnel policy and recruitment, training, remuneration, performance assessment and the social responsibility of human resource management (Hayes and Ninemeier, 2008). Although hotel and gastronomy companies are often aware of the importance of the competitive advantage in terms of human resources, low-profit margins and limited financial resources prevent investment in human resource management in order to increase employee satisfaction and retention (Park *et al.*, 2017).

The hospitality industry is characterised by intangible services, such as direct contact with guests. It is associated with a negative work environment, low wages as well as long working hours and few career opportunities (Barron *et al.*, 2007; Chiang and Jang, 2008 cited by Putra *et al.*, 2017). The impact of employee motivation, satisfaction and the quality of their performance is therefore much more causal in terms of customer satisfaction and company success in the interactive service sector than in less customer-intensive companies (Gordon and Nelke, 2017). Studies have shown that employees with a high level of motivation tend to have high productivity, commitment and performance. Work engagement helps companies to increase their overall performance (Georgellis *et al.*, 2011 cited by Putra *et al.*, 2017). Since many employees in the hotel or gastronomy industry interact directly with guests and thus directly influence guest satisfaction, well-trained employees are decisive for guest's loyalty and consequently also for company's success. The declining number of trainees ultimately means less guest satisfaction. The conclusion from this is that companies must invest in innovative

strategies to increase social sustainability and the number of trainees. Possible measures are, for example, the implementation of various certificates for successful training companies or running further education academies, as is already the case with large hotel chains. For the prospective trainees, this means more prestige, a better image and prospects for their professional development (Gordon and Nelke, 2017).

Concerning intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for work in the hospitality industry, instrumental motivation factors play an important role for higher commitment. Moreover, there is no evidence that intrinsic motivation decreases when extrinsic motivation comes into play. As the hospitality industry is an area with high staff turnover, employers must have a good understanding of the fact that employee support, which leads to an increase in the intrinsic motivation of employees, in turn, leads to an increase in employee engagement. Therefore, management should focus on supporting and motivating employees. A good workplace environment and the ability to make the job itself interesting and meaningful will have a positive effect on the intrinsic motivation. The work commitment can also be enhanced through a positive relationship between employer and employee (Putra *et al.*, 2017).

Literature research shows that employee motivation theories need to be combined with employee retention. Motivation theories can be used to derive strategies for increasing productivity. Furthermore, there is extensive evidence that even in the fiercely contested labour market the retention of employees is possible. Given the high level of investment in employee retention within companies, it makes sense to identify and analyse these challenges (Ramlall, 2004). Possible employee retention practices are the involvement of employees in the decision-making process, growth opportunities and a fair reward system. Employee satisfaction is considered one of the most critical factors regarding retention practices. A satisfied employee will support his employer and this results, through customer satisfaction, indirectly in a higher financial performance (Chi and Gursoy (2009) cited by Park *et al.*, 2017).

Environmental protection and sustainability (regarding plastic waste, extinct species, environmental catastrophes, etc.) create a new opportunity for Strategic Human Resource Management: "Green" human resource practices tie employees to their company, e.g. with carpooling, online interviews, virtual training, a public transport card or a green reward system in the form of a membership in a conservation

organisation. These practices illustrate meaningful work in an environmentally conscious company and thus intrinsically bind employees to the company. There is also a trend in the hotel and gastronomy industry to work preferably for employers committed to environmental protection (Yusoff *et al.*, 2018). Nowadays companies agree to meet ecology requirements, e.g. reduce greenhouse gas emissions, thus tend to interconnect corporate social responsibility and economic goals (Zaitseva *et al.*, 2016).

2.4 Marketing as Counteraction

Digital innovation, as already mentioned, is a current trend in the hotel and gastronomy industry and has a huge impact on marketing. This leads to a link between digitalisation and marketing as a counteraction (Zaitseva *et al.*, 2016). Given the increasing shortage of skilled professionals, personnel marketing should primarily be analysed and focused on. Furthermore, it is important to know the target group and using media efficiently. Governmental actions in terms of the shortage of skilled professionals are also imperative as they could reduce the shortage quantitatively and qualitatively. These could be family policy measures or better ways of attracting foreign skilled professionals (Krüger, 2017).

2.5 Migration as Counteraction

In Germany, demographic change and the resulting shortage of skilled professionals are being discussed more and more. In recent years, Germany has increasingly become a country of immigration. Immigration from the EU has increased enormously since 2010 and from other countries since 2014. Since 2015, this situation has led to the so-called "refugee crisis". In this context, the question arises whether migration is an opportunity to cope with demographic problems and could help to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. The majority of migrants are young and educated. Integration, however, presents an enormous challenge in the short term. The positive effect of migration is, therefore, more likely to be long-term. Politicians are particularly called upon to react actively to the challenge (Wrobel, 2016).

2.6 Alternative Solution Approaches as Counteraction

A further approach to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry would be integrating the elderly more closely into the sector and taking them into account. A study analysed how managers solve problems with an

ageing workforce and whether this has an impact on the industry itself. The study specifically describes management's experiences with the ageing workforce. In the study 20 hotel managers were interviewed in Norwegian hotels as well as restaurants and they reported more positive than negative experiences. No age barriers were found during recruitment, but only a small proportion of managers plan to actively recruit elderly employees. As younger and elderly workers complement each other, there are positive outcomes in creating age-appropriate work in the hospitality sector. Furthermore, the study shows that no obvious negative attitudes towards the elderly have been expressed (Furunes and Mykletun, 2005).

Another alternative solution approach to the shortage of skilled professionals is the increased involvement of disabled people in the industry. The number of people with disabilities worldwide is on the rise and is expected to continue to rise as the population ages and medical technology improves. According to World Health Organisation figures, almost one billion people are estimated to be disabled, including 15-19% of the adult population. Low employment rates are likely to contribute to the high poverty rates of people with disabilities. The hotel and gastronomy industry could involve people with disabilities to a greater extent and thus counteract the shortage of skilled professionals (Schur et al., 2016).

2.7 Conceptual Framework

Based on the study and the literature research to date, it can be stated that there are strong differences in the quantity of literature concerning the individual solution approaches to the shortage of skilled professionals. For example, in the area of human resources and the associated methods, there is a strong presence in the literature, while there are only limited approaches in the area of recruitment and retention in the industry through migration.

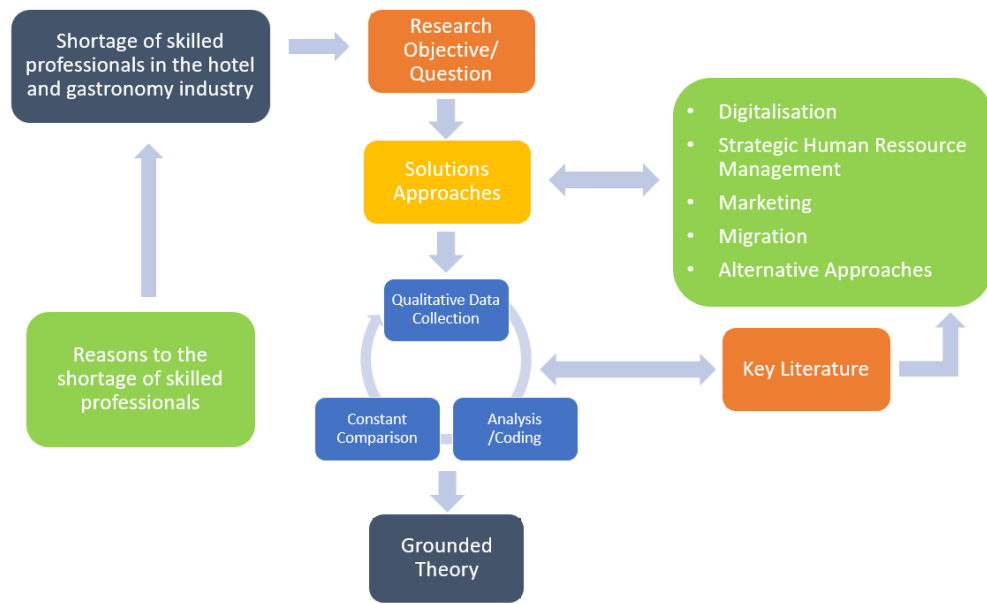


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework Model

A conceptual framework is defined as a network of linked concepts and is strongly linked to the strategy in this case. The first part of the literature deals with the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals and thus introduces the actual topic. The author deals primarily with the various solution approaches, which are discussed in the individual chapters. As part of the Grounded Theory strategy, possible combinations of the solution approaches are pointed out, which are supplemented by further literature. The process is supported by memos and coding. Thus, the key literature has influence on the theoretical part of the work as well as on the qualitative data collection by interviews. The model shown in the figure is an early draft of the conceptual framework used in the dissertation. It also influences the hypotheses, which result from the primary data collection and the partial application of Grounded Theory.

2.8 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter first addresses various reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals, which is leading to a challenge for the hotel and gastronomy industry, not least under the influence of the demographic change. Secondly, different counteractions to the shortage of skilled professionals are linked to the literature. These include digitalisation and technologisation, human resources (HR) management strategies, marketing, migration and alternative solutions. In the last part of this chapter, the conceptual framework was presented and explained.

Chapter III: Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Overview

This chapter deals with methodology and research design. Furthermore, this chapter is guided by the so-called "Research Onion" (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The first part discusses the applied research philosophy and its influence. Then, the research strategy and the partial application of the Grounded Theory is discussed in greater detail. In addition, sources are described, as well as the author's access and approach to ethical issues. In the last part of this chapter, the approach to data analysis is explained.

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

This part of the proposal deals with the philosophical influences on the research approach and the nature of the research purpose and objective. Saunders *et al.* (2016) provide the following so-called "Research Onion" as a guideline in the development of research design. The highlighted points refer to the proposal and are discussed in the next chapters.

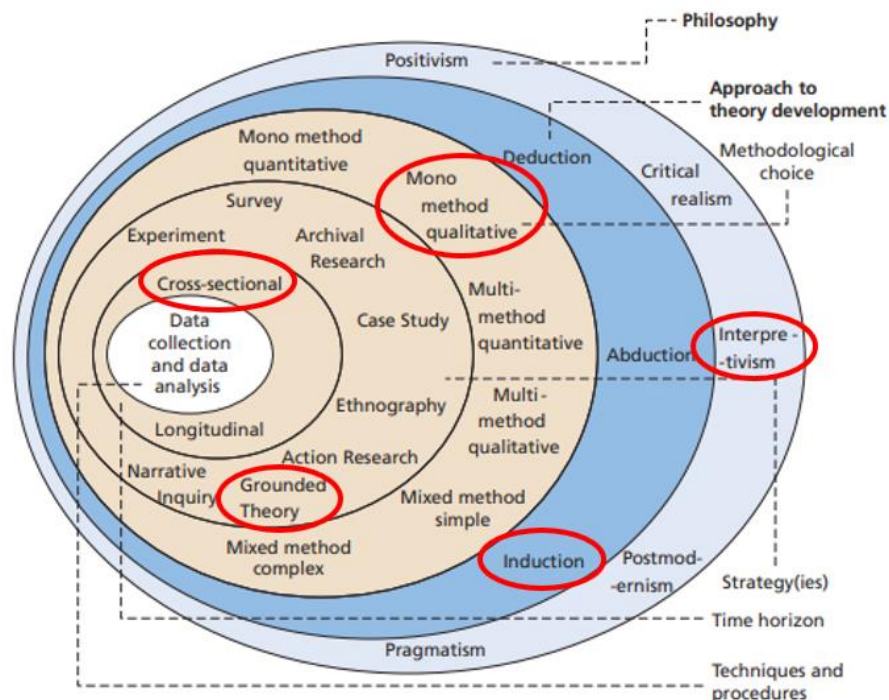


Figure 3: The "Research Onion" (Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

The shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry is a complex problem that can be viewed from different angles and thus lead to different interpretations. A large number of stakeholders are affected in this context or at least passively influenced by the shortage of skilled professionals. In addition to the economic aspect, the shortage of skilled professionals also has an impact on a wide variety of areas, such as social issues. This leads to a choice of interpretivism philosophy, as the main influence of research, since, according to Saunders *et al.* (2016), people with different cultural backgrounds, under different circumstances, like place and time have different meanings. They so create and experience different social realities. Furthermore, the interpretive philosophy negates universal laws that apply to everything and believes that reality is subjective. This philosophy assumes that insights into humanity are lost when complexity is reduced to a series of laws of justice. The reason for interpretivism research is therefore to create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts. There should be a similarity in the study, as each person involved has different backgrounds and influences that lead to their perception.

A deductive approach is only partially applicable to the proposal, as there is no generally valid hypothesis for solving the overall problem of the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. Much more, it is a complex problem with many influencing factors and different approaches, whose applicability for short-term and long-term and practical relevance for companies should be tested by qualitative insider interviews. At the end of the data collection one or several hypotheses, based on the Grounded Theory will be developed. Therefore, an application of the inductive approach makes sense, is appropriate and also supports the approach of the interpretivism philosophy, and hereby of an interpretation of a complex social world (Williams, 2007).

For the study, qualitative research is applied, as the author tried to find solutions from the point of view of different people and thus to gain new insights. The nature of the research applied by the author in the dissertation is explanatory. The reason is that the research focuses on the analysis of different approaches to the given problem for the industry through qualitative industry-insider interviews and evaluate them concerning temporal applicability and practical relevance and therefore looks at causal relationships of the individual possible solutions.

3.3 Research Strategy

In the beginning, the author expected to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research at the same time. Due to limited time, the author decided on qualitative and interpretive approach and methods to deepen the planned insider interviews and to focus on them as a strategy instead of conducting quantitative and qualitative research and thus not collecting deep enough data. Through face to face interviews with various people from the specific industry, a fundamental insight into the problem of the shortage of skilled professionals is provided. The interviews are conducted with people from different hierarchical levels (operational, administrative and managerial) with different experience, and different nationalities, in order to be able to look at the problem from multiple perspectives.

The author uses partial methods of the Grounded Theory as a part of the research strategy. This way to conduct research potentially develops hypotheses or theories after the collection and analysis of a data set. The Grounded Theory by Glaser and Strauss was developed as a counterpart to extreme positivism and provides a systematic strategy for qualitative research (Glaser *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, the Grounded Theory is used to develop theoretical explanations of social interactions and processes, as in the case of the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. While quantitative research often involves collecting all the data and then analysing and evaluating it, Grounded Theory offers the advantage of analysing the qualitative data directly after it has been collected and before the next data collection (in this case face-to-face interviews) takes place. In his strategy, the author collects and analyses the data simultaneously, develops analytical codes and fragments these into categories (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). In the Grounded Theory according to Strauss, the process of "coding" is subdivided into three parts. "Open coding" refers to the organisation of data into categories. "Axial coding" refers to the establishment of relationships between the individual categories. The last step is the integration of the categories to create a theory and is called "selective coding" (Walker and Myrick, 2006). The "coding" is thus an essential part of the Grounded Theory. Continuous comparison plays an important role in Grounded Theory, along with the coding. Each component of qualitative data collection is compared to define similarities and differences. This process of continuous comparison promotes links between the individual codes in the analysis by an inductive approach to theory or hypothesis development. Memos are an important supporting key

Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Italy. The author aimed at a minimum of ten interviews and a maximum of fifteen interviews with a duration of not more than one hour each. At last twelve interviews were conducted. The interviews have been conducted with internal people from several departments of the hotel and gastronomy industry. The semi-structured interviews offered the author the advantage to conduct the interviews in a guided framework and besides, the detailed insights of open questions offered additional expert knowledge and a possibility to get new, previously not considered, solution approaches. As already explained in the previous part of the paper, the data is then strategically evaluated using partly elements of the Grounded Theory. To gain additional insight from different perspectives on the problem and its potential solutions, the author interviewed people from different hierarchical levels.

In addition to the primary data collection, it is also of high importance to consider literature that complements the primary research. In his further research, the author relied on secondary literature from books, peer-reviewed journals and articles, official databases and academic magazines.

3.4.1 Sources

In order to reach the goal of the research strategy, the author refers to industry internal expert knowledge by interviews concerning the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. In addition to the data collected in the interviews, observation played a less important role. Observation involves the systematic viewing, recording, description, analysis and interpretation of people's behaviour (Saunders *et al.*, 2016); therefore observation gives the author a deeper insight into the context of the problem, especially in connection with occupational activities. In the context of this study, an observation of the interviewees, such as their motivation to participate in the interview and their behaviour in the interview itself, leads to possible conclusions about the credibility of the collected data. The general self-confidence of the interviewee, body language, voice, etc. can be observed.

The interviews will consist of open-questions, probing questions and specific and closed questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Open questions will allow the interviewee to describe a situation or event in more detail and encourage him or her to explain a developed and detailed description of the performance. For example:

“Which solution(s) did you pursue in the company to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry?”

The next type is the so-called probing-question. These questions have a similar structure to open-questions but have a deeper focus on a specific topic. The benefit behind this kind of question lies in the encouragement to answer the question without judgement. A possible question is:

“How do you see migration as an opportunity to counter the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry?”

The last type of question used in the interviews is “closed-question”. These are particularly well suited as an introduction to the interview. A possible question could be as follows:

“Do you notice the consequences and effects of the shortage of skilled professionals in your company?”

3.4.2 Access and Ethical Issues

Access to primary data is an important source and a critical point of the research study. According to Saunders *et al.* (2016), there are several strategies to achieve access to data. It is helpful to be familiar with the company before the first contact is made, allowing enough time, to use the existing network, to clarify the reason for the study, to eliminate concerns, to highlight benefits for the company and to appear credible.

It has to be considered that the author could fall back on good professional experience in the hotel and gastronomy industry. The network of the author is particularly influenced by the attendance of a hotel management school, as well as a bachelor's degree in the area of tourism. Also, during several internships in Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Germany and Qatar the author was able to develop a network which would serve as the main access point for his primary research. The author contacted the companies in which he has already worked and thus gained access to primary data.

Regarding the ethical issues, there has been an increase in concerns about the ethics of research practice in recent years, particularly with regard to data confidentiality (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The author makes every effort to ensure the participant's data confidentiality. The taped interviews have been downloaded to a password-controlled

computer, and typed transcripts have been held within password-controlled documents. Audiotapes and hard copies of transcripts have been held in a locked filing cabinet. The confidentiality of information is subject to legal limitations. The participants have been presented the "Plain Language Statement" (see Appendix A) as well as the "Informed Consent Form" (see Appendix B).

The study should have no ethical issues other than data confidentiality.

3.5 Approach to Data Analysis

The data analysis is supposed to provide a better understanding of the subject. This process can be descriptive, explanatory or interpretive (Densombe, 2014). For the dissertation, the author uses the coding system implemented in the Grounded Theory and parallel supporting memos. The focus lies on the careful analysis of the generated qualitative data sources. The "raw data" will be subdivided into categories (Densombe, 2014). At the beginning of the research, the author initially orients himself on the conceptual framework and tries to allocate the analysed data to the individual categories (e.g. "Reasons for the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry" or "Human Resource Management Strategies as a solution to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry"). The memos are intended to document all these steps during the process and provide support, especially for the next phase, namely the axial coding (the establishment of relationships between the individual categories). This technique should create new connections through constant comparison in the final phase, which will then be linked to the literature review's theories and data. The ideal aim is to create an explanatory theory (Chun Tie *et al.*, 2019).

3.6 Conclusion

The potential outcome could assist to have a look at the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry from different angles and explain the various solution approaches. It is very likely that certain solutions are difficult for companies to implement in practice or that other possibilities have not yet been exhausted. It is also possible that new links may emerge between the different approaches. An example could be an increasing digitalisation/technologisation of the industry in combination with increased recruitment and retention of elderly employees in companies to counteract the problem. In the course of the research process, new insights can also be gained from further literature.

The potential outcome may well be of interest to the industry and its stakeholders, as well as creating an approach for further research. The research in this area offers a deeper understanding of the topic as well as an opportunity to gain knowledge, which will be of great advantage for the author's professional career in the hotel and gastronomy or related sectors.

Chapter IV: Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Overview

This chapter describes the findings of the primary data collection, taking literature into account. First, the primary research instruments and the reasons for some of the research methodological decisions are discussed again.

In addition, the effects of the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy sector, the reasons and finally the possible solutions as well as the time frame for their application are discussed.

4.1.1 Research Population

The research population of this work was chosen from different departments of the hotel industry, such as the front office or food and beverage, human resources as well as system gastronomy, in order to generate the greatest possible diversity. One interviewee is active in the wine trade but has a strong background in the 5-star hotel sector. The twelve interviews were conducted by telephone or in direct conversation. The participants are from Austria, Switzerland, Italy, France and Germany, with the majority of the interviews being conducted with German citizens. Three of the participants are female and nine are male.

Furthermore, the interviews were conducted with individuals of different hierarchical levels to consider different opinions and views. For example, a cook, several operations managers, but also an executive assistant and a regional manager were interviewed. The hotels in which the interviewees are employed belong to the 4-star superior or mainly the 5-star luxury segment.

The average length of employment of the interviewees is 7.66 years. The average age is 36.75 years. The following chart (Figure 5) shows the length of employment in years and the age structure. Except for one participant whose name may be mentioned in the work, but not the company he works for, all participants agreed to the publication of the data in the dissertation. This was confirmed by the plain language statement, the informed consent form and the audio recording.

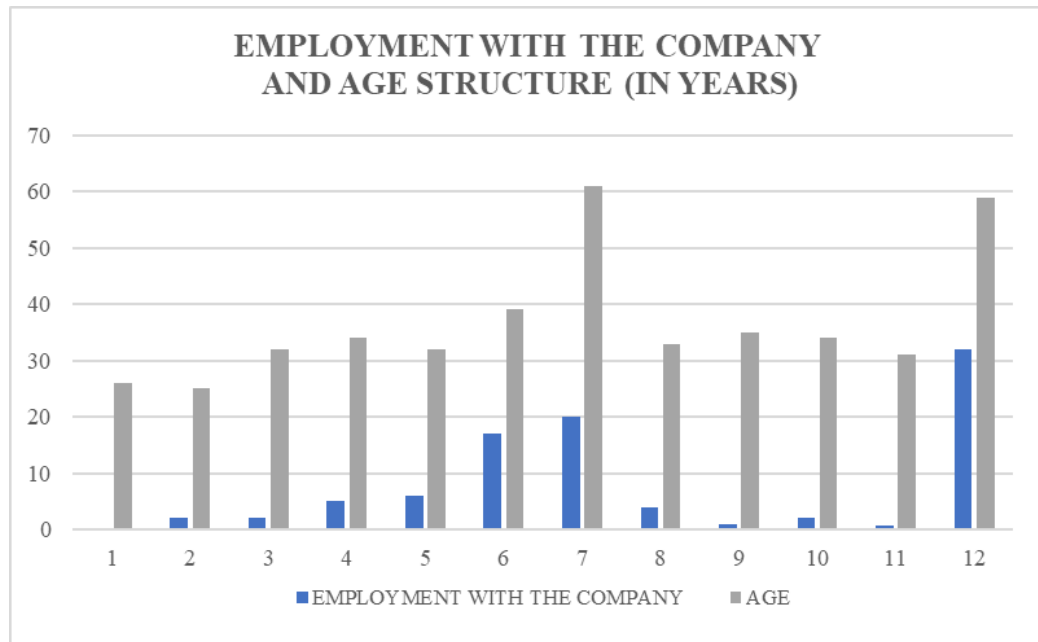


Figure 5: Employment with the Company and Age Structure (in years)

4.1.2 Data Gathering

The primary data collection tool used in this research is the semi-structured qualitative interview (see Appendix C). The interview and the structure of the questions were worked out according to the theoretical guidelines of (Saunders *et al.*, 2016) and were carried out taking into account certain aspects of Grounded Theory. For example, additional questions were added or in certain situations, the interview was purposefully directed in one direction to better reflect certain overlaps or possible differences of opinion to previous interviews in order to be able to deal with them more precisely. The semi-structured interview questions were therefore used by the author as a guideline to ask the primarily important questions. A slightly modified questionnaire was used for line staff in order to make the questions easier to understand and to adapt them to the interviewee. The interviews took place at different locations, whereby the author was guided by the wishes of the participants. Several interviews took place in the companies of system gastronomy or the lobbies of hotels. Further interviews, especially with interview participants from Austria, Italy and Switzerland, were conducted by telephone. The participants received all questions in advance. This led to the author noticing that the interviewed people were tempted to reformulate sentences that had already been phrased and thus the spontaneity was partly lost. Nevertheless, the author had to fall back on this, as the participants usually had a very tight schedule and

therefore a second interview would not have been possible. In this respect, it was a reasonable risk comparable to the possible loss of one or more usable interviews.

4.1.3 Data Analysis

The analysis process of the semi-structured interviews follows several steps based on the Grounded Theory. The so-called "open coding", the organisation of data into categories, the "axial coding", the establishment of relationships between the individual categories and the "selective coding", the integration of the categories into a theory, are applied (see Figure 4).

4.1.4 Categorisation

The interviews of the data collection were divided into the following categories and are further subdivided by subcategories:

- Hierarchy level
 - Low level
 - Middle level
 - Top level
- Department
 - Food & Beverage
 - Front Office
 - Sales & Marketing
 - General Management
 - Human Resources

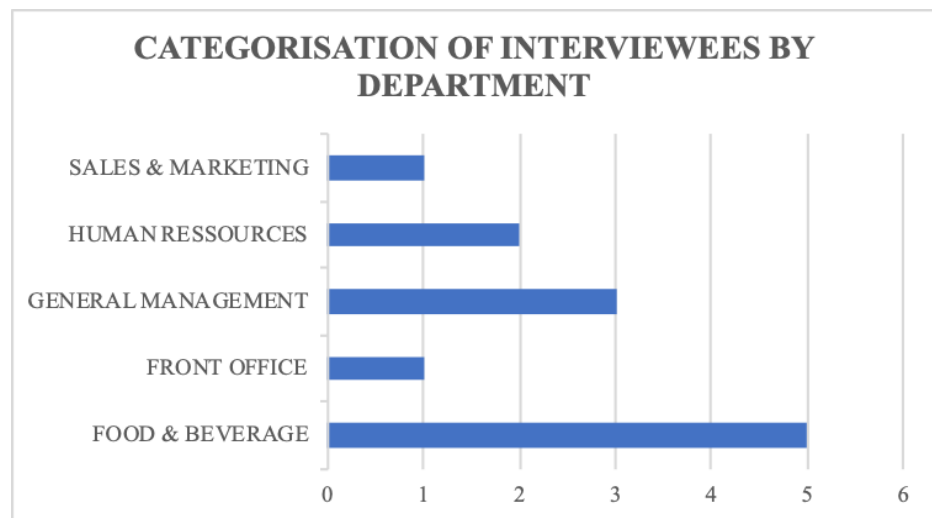


Figure 6: Categorisation of Interviewees by Department

- Employment with the company
- Age
- Nationality
 - Austrian
 - French
 - German
 - Italian
 - Swiss

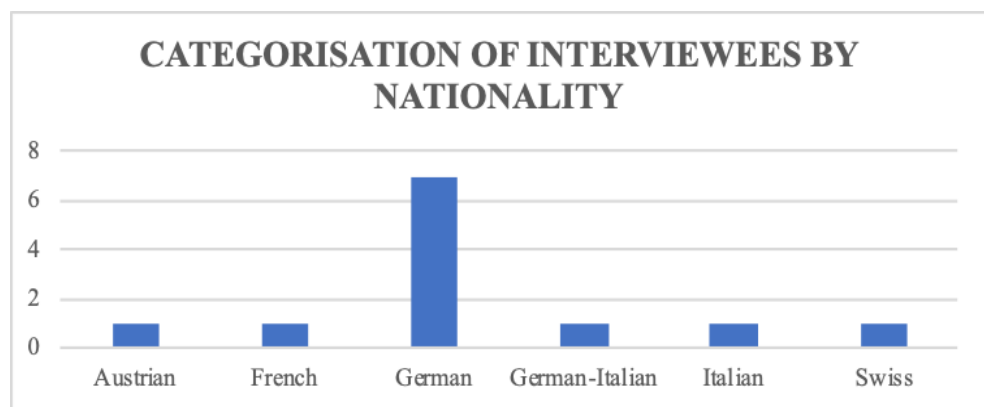


Figure 7: Categorisation of Interviewees by Nationality

In a further categorisation, the author has divided the individual thematic blocks and established sub-themes. These are explained in more detail on the following pages.

4.2 Consequences and Effects of the Shortage of Skilled Professionals in the Hotel and Gastronomy Industry

Question five of the semi-structured interview emphasized whether the interviewees felt the effects of the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry and, if so, what the effects of the phenomenon were. The answers reflect the current and acute problem affecting the hotel and gastronomy industry as well as the underlying literature. All twelve interviews confirmed an (in most cases strong) presence of the shortage of skilled professionals. In the system gastronomy sector as well as in renowned five-star luxury hotels the shortage is noticeable (Int.3; p.3 ll 20-24 and Int.4; p.2 ll 19-21).



Figure 8: Consequences and Effects of the Shortage of Skilled Professionals

Difficulties in Filling Vacancies

According to the interviews conducted, the number of applicants and skilled professionals is very low, so that vacancies could not be filled (Int.1; p.3 ll 42-46 and Int.5; p.2 ll 17-31). It was mentioned several times that especially the entry-level positions are missing (Int.2; p.3 ll 1-3 and Int.9; p.1 ll 22-33) and are therefore advertised continuously (Int.5; p.4 ll 4-6). The search for skilled professionals must also be intensified and is more challenging (Int.4; p.2 ll 19-21). In several interviews, it was mentioned that especially in the food & beverage department the problem of the shortage of skilled professionals exists and that there are more trainees or lateral entrants than skilled professionals. Furthermore, it is increasingly difficult to find

trained cooks. One factor for this could be the highly unequal ratio between many career drop-outs and few career entrants, including those occupying higher positions internally (Int.7; p.1 ll 29-31 and Int.12; p.2 ll 23-29). Opinions differ concerning the shortage of skilled professionals at the front office, which is described as an increasing difficulty in a hotel in Berlin (Int.10; p.2 ll 4-7), whereas it does not seem to be a problem in a hotel in Switzerland (Int.9; p.1 ll 22-33). In another case, jobs were advertised by the head office, with virtually no applications received, so that alternative routes had to be sought (Int.7; p.3 ll 24-27).

Higher Workload for other Employees

In the interviews, it was explained that the impact of the shortage of skilled professionals leads to an increased workload for the employees (Int.1; p.3 ll 25-30). In one company, for example, the working hours of the remaining employees had to be extended from ten to fourteen hours in order to be able to cover the missing position (Int.1; p.3 ll 31-32).

Increasing Number of Lateral Entrants

Another effect is the increasing number of lateral entrants from other sectors due to the shortage of skilled professionals. Although most of these already have experience in the field, they cannot be equated with skilled professionals (Int.1; p.3 ll 39-41). Also, effective performance in terms of wages is often not justified (Int.6; p.3 ll 25-27). Thus, the involvement and passion for the profession is often lacking (Int.8; p.2 ll 7-9).

Problems with Employee Retention

A further effect is an increasing difficulty of retaining employees due to the shortage of skilled professionals (Int.3; p.3 ll 27-29), for example, some employees have left the company within a year (Int.11; p.2 ll 11-13). In this respect, a trend can be observed that employees have more leeway and thus demand short-term promotions (Int.5; p.3 ll 41-44). The consequences are underqualified leadership positions. Maria Wedemeier, Market Talent Acquisition Manager at Marriott International, describes the problem as follows:

“A promotion no longer has much to do with skill, but simply that we have a shortage of skilled workers. This means that we have far too few good leaders.” (Int.5; p.3 ll 44-45).

As a result, service quality and employee satisfaction decline, which in turn leads to fewer applications (Int.5; p.4 ll 10-13).

"I have already heard from former trainees of mine. They went to a 5-star hotel after their training and became banquet supervisors. This is destroying the industry." (Int.5; p.4 ll 29-32).

A further factor concerning the increased leeway mentioned above is that the employee is increasingly able to determine the price for which he is "bought-in". This is reflected by growing recruitment costs, salaries or wages that have to be used to attract potential employees (Staffel, 2016). In conclusion, the higher input leads to costs and makes the final output more expensive and thus less competitive (Int.12; p.2 ll 31-34).

Language Barriers

Due to increasing globalisation, the shortage of skilled professionals is increasingly drawing on foreign personnel, which can lead to language barriers (Int.8; p.2 ll 17-20). Globalisation has brought many different cultures together. As a result, regional and international interactions bring many languages into contact with each other. However, this leads to confusion and difficulties in communication and understanding between social groups, which has negative effects in terms of productivity and effectiveness (Patience, 2016).

4.3 Advantages of the Hotel and Gastronomy Industry

This and the following chapter of the dissertation deal with the advantages and disadvantages of the hotel and gastronomy industry in relation to working in the sector. Question four, therefore, deals with the positive and negative aspects of the hotel and gastronomy industry. The answers provide initial conclusions about the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals and possible solutions to attract skilled professionals to the industry. Firstly, the positive aspects of the industry will be discussed, followed by the negative aspects.

Low Entry Barriers

Several interviewees cited the low barriers to entry as a positive aspect of the industry. The hotel and gastronomy industry, therefore, has different professions and departments. There is a wide variety of entry opportunities, regardless of qualifications

or academic degrees, in hotel chains and private hotels or gastronomy (Int.1; p.2 ll 22-25 and Int.5; p.1 ll 32-35).

„The hotel and gastronomy industry is a good example of the fact that you can join the industry regardless of whether you have vocational training, a bachelor's or master's degree. In principle, everyone starts the same way and can develop on the basis of experience and good work.“ (Int.5; p.1 ll 32-35)

Internationality

The hotel and gastronomy industry is known for its internationality. This affects both, guests and employees and is regarded as a positive aspect of the industry by several interviewees (Int.1; p.2 ll 12-14 and Int.5; p.2 ll 3-4). Internationality thus allows to get to know many different cultures (Int.8; p.1 ll 19-20). In this context, when it comes to the retention of international employees, it is important to note that different needs and motivational structures are depending on the cultural background. Thus, extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors should be adapted accordingly (Piéché, 2015).

Industry Versatility

Industry versatility is one of the outstanding positive aspects of the industry. The majority of the interviewees mentioned industry versatility as a positive aspect of the hotel and gastronomy industry. This includes that the industry is very broadly based, from simple concepts to large luxury hotels, restaurants and events (Int.1; p.2 ll 7-8). The diversity of professions within the industry itself was mentioned as well (Int.2; p.2 ll 7-8). Another aspect are different tasks in various departments (Int.3; p.1 ll 30-36). This versatility leads to the fact that even a change of workplace within a company is possible, which is not always the case in other industries (Int.5; p.2 ll 14-15). Even the working day was described as very varied and individual (Int.9; p.1 ll 21-23) and after the apprenticeship, there is a wide range of opportunities and choices in different sectors. Even after training, the opportunities and choices in terms of occupational fields are countless (Int.10; p.1 ll 19-21).

„What definitely makes the industry attractive is that it is very diversified. It is not a normal office job from 9:00 to 18:00 o'clock, where you have the same tasks every day. Because you are dealing with people, the whole thing is always done individually every day in a completely

different way.“, Andrea Fössinger, Front Office Manager at La Réserve Eden au Lac in Switzerland (Int.9; p.1 ll 21-23).

Travel Opportunity

The hotel and gastronomy industry often offers the opportunity to travel. Because the hotel and gastronomy industry is an international industry, it is possible to work globally, provided the appropriate language skills. This means that there is a chance to choose the country to work and live in, more than in any other industry (Int.1; p.2 ll 10-11). The barriers to work abroad are very low. Alexander Flasdieck, the Executive Assistant of the AMANO Grand Central Hotel in Berlin, sees the travel opportunity as a great advantage for the industry:

„You can easily work abroad, as I did right after my apprenticeship. You have a lot of possibilities to see the world, at a young age and to combine that with work.“ (Int. 10;p.1 ll 21-23)

Language Diversity

Language diversity enables people working in the hotel and gastronomy industry to learn languages quickly and to practice them continuously. Furthermore, languages enable people to get to know a culture better and to work internationally. In most companies, the local language and English is required (Int.1; p.2 ll 18-20).

„You can learn languages through the cultures as well. I was also able to learn four different languages by working in the hotel industry, which is great these days due to globalisation.“ (Int. 8; p.1 ll 22-24).

Career Opportunity

Another positive aspect repeatedly mentioned is the ideal career opportunity in the industry. The industry offers various development and promotion opportunities (Int.6; p.2 ll 6-8). This aspect could be used to attract skilled professionals.

Nico Böttcher, Business Development Manager at Concept Riesling, explains this advantage of the sector compared to other industries as follows:

„From the temporary position to the hotel director; within the hotel career you have many opportunities for advancement, I think these opportunities are one of the pro-points of the

industry. Because I think it's very easy to move up in the industry if you do it right and perform well. I think this is unprecedented. In other industries, it is more difficult.“ (Int.1; p.2 ll 25-28)

Daniel Studer, former Assistant Director Food & Beverage of THE CHEDI Andermatt in Switzerland, describes the career opportunity in the hotel industry as follows:

„(...) another thing I learned when I was in South America is that the larger hotel groups, such as Hyatt, give the people who haven't won a chance to win. You can career through hard work, good work and passion, and that makes the employees' commitment to the business or the company much stronger.“ (Int.8, p.1 ll 25-28)

Working Hours

Although working hours in the hotel and gastronomy industry are mostly regarded as a negative aspect, as described in the next chapter, working hours were nevertheless mentioned as an advantage in three interviews. A simple example is that during the week it is possible to do certain leisure activities and find reduced prices or low occupancy. In this respect, the working hours can be interpreted positively or negatively (Int.1 p.2 ll 37-39).

„It is always a matter of interpretation what is positively perceived and when. I have to say that I think the working hours are still positive because you can also take time off during the week and not only on weekends. You also have the chance to go shopping during the week and not have to queue up in the supermarket on Saturday when everyone else is out shopping.“ (Int.9; p.1 ll 27-31)

Physical Activity

In one interview, the physical activity, which is common in many professions in the hotel and gastronomy industry, was mentioned as an advantage. The advantage, in contrast to a classical office job, is the health aspect of exercise (Int.6; p.1 ll 27-28).

Social Contact

Apparently, a big advantage of the industry lies in the social contact with guests as well as with employees. The aspect of social interaction was mentioned positively in nine interviews and can therefore be regarded as one of the primary advantages of the industry. This includes meeting with international guests, often people with whom one would not necessarily interact in a private environment. And interaction with (mostly)

international employees is experienced as positive. Furthermore, governments increasingly recognise the importance of tourism not only as an economic but also as a socio-cultural force (Walker, 2016).

„I enjoy interacting with guests and getting to know them. You get to know a lot of interesting people and of course, such a big team, like ours with almost 500 employees, is very, very broad and interesting.“ (Int.3; p.2 ll 8-11)

„(...) because you are not only dealing with the guests, but also with the whole team, it is always very diversified, because you never know what is coming up every day and you are not working alone, but in a team, which is very nice.“ (Int.9; p.1 ll 24-27)

„The original intention when I started working in the hotel and restaurant industry was something like "the customer is king". The intention was to give people something, to give them joy with what I do, to do a service for people.“ (Int.12; p.1 ll 32-35)

Product

In three interviews the product itself, while dealing with eating and drinking, was seen as a plus. The three independently interviewed individuals work all for the same company (ARAMARK). Due to the low number of the interviews, however, no conclusions can be drawn.

„Since eating and drinking is a basic need and a wonderful thing besides, (...) eating and drinking (...) come from nature, and are prepared from nature, (...) which brings a lot of joy and fun to deal with this profession and the vocation to it.“ (Int.12; p.2 ll 1-5)

Live Events and Creativity

In one interview being live at events such as football matches, celebrity events etc., was mentioned as an advantage. In another interview with a cook, the creativity of the profession itself was mentioned as a positive aspect (Int.6; p.2 ll 13-16 and Int.11; p.1 ll 25-27).

The following graph (Figure 9) summarises the positive aspects of the hotel and gastronomy industry based on the interviews and illustrates the aspects mentioned in the interviews. "Industry Versatility" and "Social Contract" were both mentioned most frequently, with nine out of twelve interviews each.

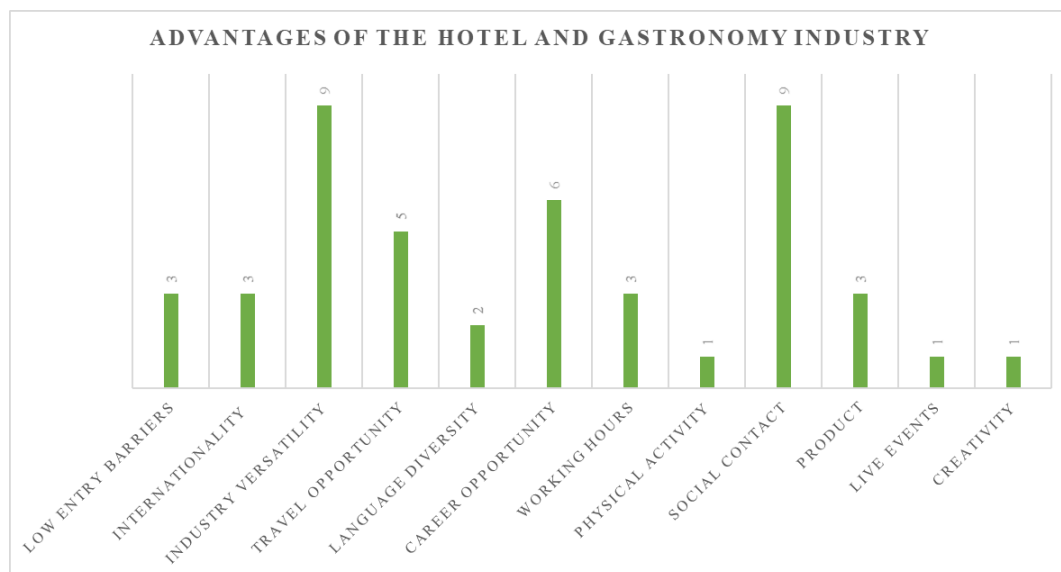


Figure 9: Advantages of the Hotel and Gastronomy Industry based on Data Collection

4.4 Disadvantages of the Hotel and Gastronomy Industry

In the previous chapter, the findings of the positive characteristics of the hotel and gastronomy industry were described and the motivation of people who like to work in this industry was discussed. In this chapter, the author describes the negative aspects of the industry. Here, as well as in the previous chapter, a summarising graph (Figure 10) at the end of the chapter provides a recapitulative overview of the negative aspects of the data collected in the interviews.

Work-life balance

The hotel and gastronomy industry is one of the sectors which, unlike many other industries, is an exception as regards to working hours. Since it is often a leisure industry, weekends and holidays are mainly the days with the highest turnover. The result is a work-life balance which is often difficult to manage for families. Furthermore, for the younger generation, a good work-life balance is increasingly important. For instance, having Monday or Tuesday off is an advantage for many. Therefore, much depends on the individual handling of the family situation. However, in the interviews it was explained that the work-life balance in the sector often has a negative impact on social life and makes it difficult, especially for young people, to work separately from their families (Int.1; p.2 ll 39-42).

Daily working hours themselves are also often difficult to combine with an appropriate work-life balance. Working evenings, mornings, partial shifts or work on demand is often normality. One of the interviewees talks about a recent interview with one of his employees:

"We are now talking about a conversation I had two weeks ago where a breakfast chef told me that he only sees his daughter for an hour in the evening because they both have to go to bed. He then has to get up early, at four o'clock in the morning, to prepare breakfast." (Int.3; p.2 ll 34-37).

Especially in the past, the work-life balance in the hotel industry seems to have been poor. Some of the interviewees describe improvements today compared to the past.

"When I think back to my time as a cook, as an apprentice, we worked a lot in part-time service; that was work-life blending. But I think that the collective agreements also created a basis for (...) not working beyond the statutory working time requirements." (Int.4; p.2 ll 1-5)

„When I think back, 15 years ago, when I started my career, there was no balance. Well, the work as an apprentice was very much in the foreground then, how I was "exploited" and working 16-, 18-hour days, weekends, after school - that no longer exists today.“ (Int.10; p.1 ll 31-34)

There is growing evidence that employee recruitment and retention is linked to a company's positive work-life balance culture (Brough *et al.*, 2020). The negative work-life balance culture in the industry can also be used to its advantage. However, not every company has the opportunity to do so.

„We generally have less the problem of a shortage of skilled professionals, because we benefit from attractive working hours and can thus make our jobs attractive for people who come from fine dining, high-end gastronomy, who now have families, those who simply need an appropriate work-life balance.“ (Int.4; p.2 ll 10-13)

„We also focus on work-life balance. We have the corresponding programs in our company. For us, it is also possible, because we do not have such extended opening hours. (...) let's say in a hotel or restaurant it is, of course, the case that the work-life-balance often suffers.“ (Int.7; p.2 ll 13-19)

„Work-life-balance is much better for me now that I work for ARAMARK, because we have regular working hours, like office hours (...) weekends are always off, holidays too. (...) that's how it works at Aramark, but in the hotel or restaurant business it's completely different.“ (Int.11; p.2 ll 2-6)

As mentioned earlier, it was emphasised several times in the interviews that the younger generation, in particular, is increasingly concerned about a good work-life balance (Int.5; p.2 ll 38-41).

„(...) especially now in the new generation in the hotel industry are many people who are still on the old track and expect that they will work overtime. However, the new generation will pay more attention to the work-life balance.“ (Int.9; p.2 ll 1-2)

In summary, it can be said that the work-life balance in the hotel and gastronomy industry is a very important factor in terms of the shortage of skilled professionals. In eight interviews the "work-life balance" was mentioned as a disadvantage of the industry.

Social Contacts

The aspect "social contact" in the hotel and gastronomy industry is very much linked to the previous point "work-life balance". Nevertheless, it is necessary to list this point separately at this place. As the author has already described in the previous chapter, the social contact, especially with guests and employees, is a very positive aspect. The contact with friends and family, however, is very likely to suffer from the special working hours of the industry. Therefore, the factor "social contact" must be included as a negative point, concerning the assumption that intimate social contacts contribute to the fundamental positive well-being of individuals (Leung *et al.*, 2013).

Lukas Webhofer, Assistant Executive of the Hotel "My Arbor" in South Tyrol, Italy describes the point as follows:

"Of course, it is difficult when the friends are all working in other industries and always have weekends off because the hotel and restaurant industry is usually the busiest at this time. In other words, you have to organise your time differently and make concessions to the social areas." (Int.2; p.2 ll 14-18)

Low Wages

The evaluation of the interviews showed that one of the primary negative aspects of the shortage of skilled professionals are the low wages in the industry. 30,000 employees answered the question "Would you advise a young person to take up your profession?" on the salary portal *Lohnspiegel.de*. The result is a long list of professions that are recommended by the members of the professional group itself as well as a short list of professions, the majority of people disapprove. The negative list is headed by bankers who apparently see no future in the industry, professional drivers and the profession cook. *Lohnspiegel.de* is published by the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences (WSI) of the Hans Böckler Foundation. The data was collected before the outbreak of the corona crisis (Hans Böckler Foundation, 2020).

Each of the interviewees who were questioned by the author, mentioned the comparatively low wages as a negative aspect of the industry. Only a relatively low income is paid for a high number of working hours per week. Often the low wages can hardly be compensated by tips. Moreover, tips are usually only given at the front of the house, i.e. in those departments that have direct contact with guests (Int.3; p.2 ll 21-22).

Especially in the hotel and gastronomy industry, employees are often seen as "costs" and not as "resources" (Lai *et al.*, 2008). This is a major challenge (Int.1; p.2 ll 42-47).

Concerning wage rates in Germany, the interviewees often criticised that the rates are not adapted to the cost of living in the respective German federal states.

„In Hessen is the highest tariff, which starts at, I think, 2450 Euro, while in Hamburg we talk about 1950 Euro. This is a big difference and now you have to consider that Hamburg has almost as high living costs and rents as Munich.“ (Int.5; p.3 ll 19-22)

The low wages are partly due to the high personnel intensity of the industry. Due to these high payroll costs, it is often difficult to increase wages sustainably.

„It is certainly a challenge in the hotel industry. The pay-roll costs are very, very high compared to other companies. I think 60-65% of the turnover is covered by the payroll costs. (...). You need an average occupancy rate of at least 68% to be in the black at all, and that's a tough programme with so many employees.“ (Int.5 p.3 ll 29-33)

This situation leads to the fact that especially young people who are about to choose their profession do not decide to enter the industry unless other motivating factors outweigh this negative factor.

Edwin Quatch-Mach, cook at ARAMARK describes it as follows:

„Another disadvantage is that you don't earn much as a cook, you never become a millionaire as a cook. For me, it was a big difference what I earned then and what I earn now, but I have fun in what I do.“ (Int.11; p.1 ll 31-33)

The comparatively low wages make the industry unattractive for many people, which in turn leads to lower apprenticeship numbers and ultimately contributes to a shortage of skilled professionals. In this context, it has to be mentioned that guests are often not willing to spend money on high-quality food and drinks (Int.12; p.2 ll 11-14).

Working Atmosphere

Another negative factor can be the working environment/atmosphere. Especially in the kitchen, it is common to be treated in a rude way by superiors or colleagues. This can be frightening for many young people entering the profession and can get them to break off their apprenticeship or career in this industry. Even though some interviews indicated that the situation has certainly improved in the last years, it is still a problem in some

companies (Int.3; p.5 ll 2-4 and Int.1; p.5 ll 50). Cultivating a positive working environment helps to prevent a high turnover (Hom *et al.*, 2019).

Physical Exposure

The hotel and gastronomy industry often demands physical exposure. Especially the long working hours, often long distances and heavy equipment can lead to physical damage when not working in an ergonomic environment. Especially the housekeeping department belongs to the physically demanding professions. A long-term physical workload can lead to health problems and deteriorate health (Kalkis *et al.*, 2014). In several interviews, "physical exposure" was mentioned as a negative point (Int.1; p.3 ll 1-5 and Int.10; p.1 ll 26-28).

Psychological Exposure

Service-related activities can have negative effects on employees with respect to health and mental attitudes. As a result, burnout and reduced motivation can have an impact on organisations including employee turnover (Walumbwa *et al.*, 2019). Employee turnover, whether functional or dysfunctional, can be expensive and disruptive for companies (Goldstein *et al.*, 2017). The psychological exposure of the industry was named as a negative influencing factor in seven interviews. What is exceptional about the gastronomy and hotel industry is the *uno-actu-principle*. This means that the consumption and the creation of service take place at the same time. This results in stressful situations as well as stress-free situations in the business. In addition, employees are required to make a friendly and polite impression in front of the guest, regardless their current psychological state. A job in the hotel or gastronomy industry is therefore associated with stress and not every employee can deal with this stress in the long term. One interviewee pointed out that a lot depends on how individuals deal with stress and that it can also play a positive role:

"Stress and pressure are topics that can be worked on. As a person and as a manager you can, of course, add a certain way of thinking and management where the pressure and stress is relieved and that it can be felt as positive." (Int.3; p.2 ll 23-25)

Furthermore, temporary work is often associated with negative consequences. These can include low control over working hours and social conflicts due to work and stress. The

increase in temporary employment is particularly noticeable in the service industry (McNamara *et al.*, 2011).

Labour Shortage

Another negative aspect of the sector, mentioned in the interviews, is the shortage of skilled professionals, which, as discussed in the previous chapters, has a negative impact on the sector. For the companies it is more difficult to get suitably skilled personnel, often the work has to be carried out by other employees and the work-life balance suffers. The higher number of lateral entrants may lead to a loss of service quality and it becomes more difficult to retain employees (Int.8; p.1 ll 34-37 and Int.11; p.1 ll 30-31).

Working Hours

The second most frequently mentioned negative aspect are the "working hours" in the hotel and gastronomy industry. Even though, in most countries, state regulations exist, in practice these are not always adhered to. For employees in the industry, this leads to an unequal pay structure when working hours are offset against pay, which is a primary negative aspect. Overtime hours, according to the interviewees, are often expected in the industry. In some of the interviewees' companies, working hours are strictly adhered and systematically controlled (Int.4; p.2 ll 7-9). The frequent non-compliance of breaks can quickly lead to employees becoming frustrated and changing companies (Int.8; p.1 ll 30-34).

"The working hours, I'm now talking about the German area, are controlled by law, but this is more theoretical than practical. The working hours are long and intensive. In the gastronomy and hotel industry, people often assume a working day that is considerably longer than the statutory 10 hours. There is also often an early/late change. That means you work until late evening and have to work again in the morning. In practice, the rest break is not kept. Unfortunately, this is common practice." (Int.1; p.2 ll 32-37)

"If you calculate the working time against the wage, little is left. Especially in big cities, you have the problem with rising rents and the ever-increasing cost of living, that it simply becomes insanely unattractive to work in this area." (Int.1; p.2 ll 47-49)

"Contrary are the long working hours. We personally in our hotel are very, very compliant, we work within the legal framework and yes we comply with every single point of the law. We write

down every hour, every half hour. We work 7.6 hours a day and we give (...) all holidays, we give two days off a week and that is something that many companies still have to catch up on." (Int.3 p.2 ll 14-18)

Image

Another important negative aspect of the hotel and gastronomy industry is the image with which it is associated. The corporate brand image is significantly determined by its industry image (Burmam *et al.*, 2008).

This point was mentioned several times in the interviews and indicates that it is one of the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry. However, employer branding and the industry image can be used as attraction strategies to maximize the brand awareness of companies in the labour market among both current and potential employees (Wallace *et al.*, 2014). Young people, in particular, are often put off by the reputation of the industry. The consequence is a decline in number of apprentices. Reasons are the working atmosphere (Int.5; p.2 ll 16-33), which leads to a mostly negative image, and secondly the lack of appreciation for the occupation itself (Int.6; p.2 ll 28-29). Although there is an increasing number of TV shows such as cooking shows, for example, they often fail to reflect reality, as criticised in the interviews.

Hans Peter Kremer, Regional Vice President ARAMARK East Germany describes the image of "social status" in the industry as follows:

"What argues against the industry is the social status of this professional group; this profession, brings with it, i.e. the lack of recognition of the work that is done for people. In my opinion, it is often taken for granted; too much taken for granted, combined with the question of the value of good food. The whole subject is, I believe, undervalued (...)" (Int.12; p.2 ll 5-9).

Age Discrimination

Furthermore, the problem of working at an older age was addressed. For example, the inclusion of the elderly people is often only possible to a limited extent due to the physical demands of the positions. This point makes the job unattractive, especially at a later stage of the career. However, there are solutions to this problem. One possibility is the targeted alignment of the HR management, employee-oriented work with a focus on the needs of an ageing workforce (Voelpel *et al.*, 2007). Furthermore, a possibility would be to increase the average active working life by entering the labour market

earlier and by reducing incentives for early retirement. Another approach is to retrain and reintegrate the elderly into the labour market (Mai, 2008).

„(...) and also here is where the next point starts, that you don't have such a B-plan, what can you do when you are 50+; how does it go on there? (...) That's a clear contra and at a certain age you're no longer attractive for employment (...) when you see the application documents and it shows 45+, it's not read further.“, Julia Sachse, Operations Manager Personnel Pool at ARAMARK (Int.6; p.2 ll 31-49).

The following graph (Figure 10) shows in how many interviews the respective negative aspects of the hotel and gastronomy industry were mentioned.

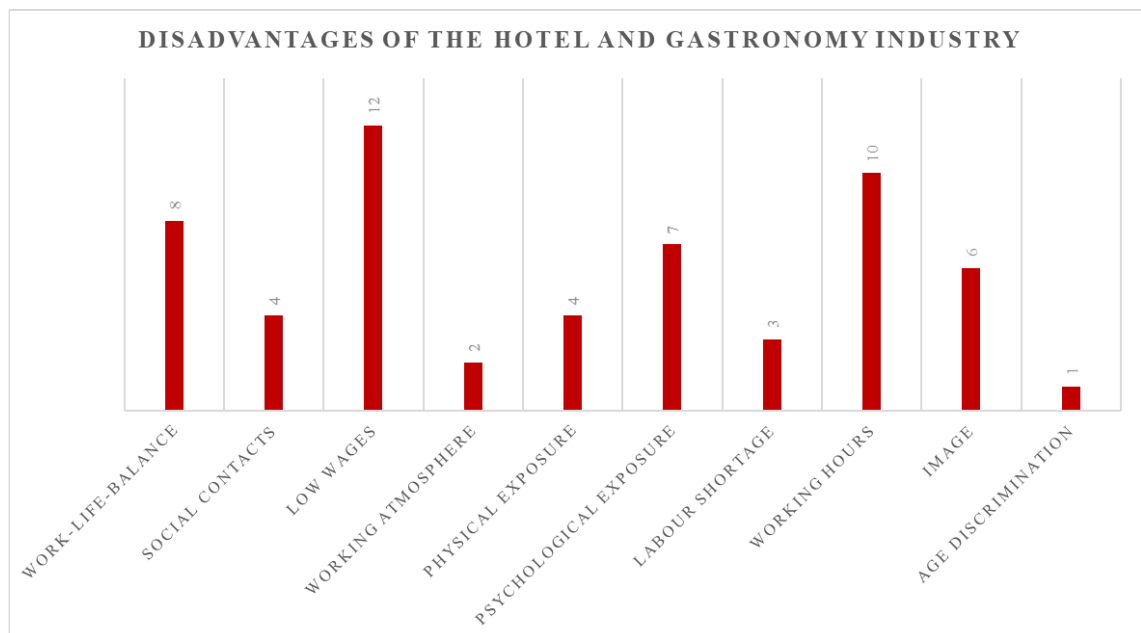


Figure 10: Disadvantages of the Hotel and Gastronomy Industry based on Data Collection

Particularly noticeable in this context are the "low wages" and the "working hours" of the industry. These two aspects were mentioned in most interviews and could, therefore, be the primary reasons why the industry is considered as unattractive.

4.5 Possible reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry

In order to be able to better address the possible solutions to the problem, it is fundamental to understand the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals. The latter cannot be traced back to one specific reason. Rather than this, it is a combination of various factors that lead to the current situation.

The following chapter discusses and describes the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals as described in the interviews. In some aspects, the points mentioned overlap with those of the previous chapter, i.e. the "disadvantages of the hotel and gastronomy industry". Certainly, some aspects coincide. Others, however, take a subordinate position concerning the shortage of skilled professionals.

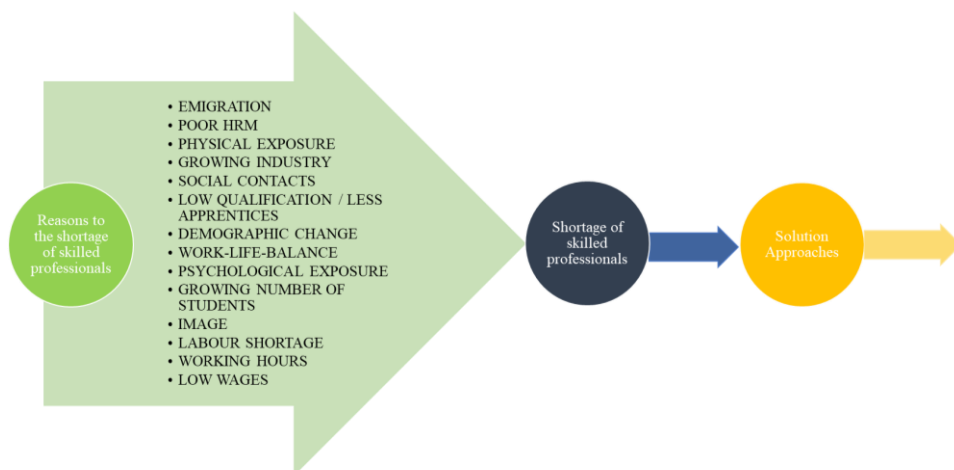


Figure 11: Possible Reasons for the Shortage of Skilled Professionals

A chart at the end of the chapter will summarise and present the described reasons based on the number of interviews in which the reason was mentioned.

Work-Life-Balance

Concerning the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry, the point "work-life balance" can be mentioned. As already described in the previous chapter, the special nature of the *uno-actu* principle of the industry can be challenging. Based on the evaluation of the interviews, the author assumes, that the factor "work-life-balance" has a negative influence on the situation in

the hotel and gastronomy industry in respect to the shortage of skilled professionals. Young people, in particular, are paying more attention to the balance between work and leisure. In this respect, the industry could be considered less attractive especially for young people (Int.1; p.4 ll 26-29). The employee's work-life balance is positively related to organisational loyalty and satisfaction (Mas-Machuca *et al.*, 2016).

„I do think overtime hours has a part to play. Because of course, you always have to sacrifice some of your free time and many people don't like to do that anymore. The work-life balance has come to the focus of attention in recent years. Many people value their free time very highly, which is of course completely understandable, and when it comes to working 12 hours instead of 9, not everyone is happy.“ (Int.2; p.4 ll 1-5)

„For many young people, it is already the case that working hours are a deterrent because you have to be flexible in the hospitality industry, which you don't have to be in an office job, because if someone at the reception desk is absent on late duty, then someone else has to cover for them, because the reception desk has to be staffed 24 hours a day (...) therefore there is currently a shortage of skilled professionals.“ (Int.9; p.3 ll 2-7)

Social Contacts

The issue of social contacts, in connection with an uneven work-life balance, can make it difficult to maintain private social contacts and thus contribute to the problem of the shortage of skilled professionals. In addition to the high number of working hours, “special” working hours are typical for the industry, such as early shifts, late shifts, night shifts, weekend work and work on public holidays. These are often difficult to reconcile with the social environment. Conflicts between work and family have become a growing area of research in the hospitality industry (O'Neill and Follmer, 2019).

„Because many people fix the days of the week again and again; a job from Monday to Friday. Many people want to have time for their friends at the weekend.“ (Int.8; p.2 ll 38-39)

Low Wages

The point "low wages" is probably one of the decisive factors concerning the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. It affects the image and makes the profession appear less attractive. Especially with the combination of the high number of working hours and the often bad work-life balance, low wages have a particularly negative effect on the potential new generation of

employees in the industry. The reasons for the low wages in comparison to other industries are manifold but primarily have economic causes. The low wages can as well be partly attributed to the low educational qualifications (Casado-Díaz and Simón, 2016). It would go beyond the scope of this paper if the author would elaborate on this issue any further. But what is remarkable about the point "low wages" is that eleven out of twelve interviewees see this point as a reason for the shortage of skilled professionals. With regard to the negative aspects of the industry it was mentioned in all twelve interviews. In this respect, this point seems to be of great importance and influence on the problem.

„We have to say quite clearly that the wages in the gastronomy sector in Germany are simply incredibly low by comparison. This is a deterrent for young people since you can just start with a standard course of study, let's take the example of business studies or economics, which many people study, the starting salary in a simple administrative job, which many can take up afterwards, is higher, despite the relativisation of the three years of study.“ (Int.1; p.4 ll 14-18)

Piercorrado Papotto, Assistant Director of Food & Beverage of a five-star luxury hotel in Germany about the low wages:

„(...) I also think that we are underpaid in terms of wages for what we do and that affects all departments in the hotel. But there is no other way to maintain the profitability of a restaurant, especially in Berlin.“ (Int.3 p.3 ll 45-48)

Henrik Döring, Operations Manager ARAMARK at Zalando Campus describes the problem as follows:

„I think we have a lot of people who work in the gastronomy and are willing to work in the gastronomy, but of course wages, working hours, pressure, stress, image are important points that simply support the fact that the industry is not that attractive.“ (Int.4; p.2 ll 32-35)

„(...) even if it is paid in the collective agreement, the wages are of course not so attractive in the entry-level positions. Even as a trainee in other sectors, I perhaps earn more or several times more than what is paid in the hospitality industry.“ (Int.10; p.2 ll 27-29)

„(...) and wage structure, which reflects a bit of this social character, so if you look at other social professions, they are not particularly well paid either. It is clear, especially now in the Corona crisis, that there is a lack of it in every corner and every end and that there is a lack of reasonable wages, and I believe that wages play an essential role.“ (Int.12; p.3 ll 2-6)

Physical Exposure

Physical exposure can also be an influencing factor. Physical exposure can be intense most of the time, especially in the operational areas of the industry. Another factor is that the attractiveness of the profession largely declines with an increasing age (Int.10; p.2 ll 31-36).

Psychological Exposure

The issue of psychological exposure was also mentioned several times in the interviews as a reason for the shortage of skilled professionals. However, several of the interviewees put the point "psychological exposure" into a relative perspective and argued that employees in the industry can cope well with stress in most cases (Int.1; p.4 ll 29-33 and Int.12; p.3 ll 6-7).

Working Hours

The second most frequently mentioned point was the high number of working hours. Overtime is often reported, especially in the hotel industry. The exception here is the system gastronomy, which can offer the advantage of fixed opening hours and thus mostly regulated working hours.

„What I notice is that people like to come to us because of the working hours (...) You can see that they don't like to come to us until they are 30, because of the change in working hours. From this, I conclude, and they say this in their job interviews, that working hours are something that seems to be a problem in the classic gastronomy, including weekend work, working in the evening etc. (...)“ (Int.12; p.2 ll 40-47).

Image

The image of the industry and the profession in the gastronomy and hotel industry plays a central role as a reason for the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry. In principle, the image includes several aspects such as the work-life balance, the comparatively low wages in the sector and the high workload associated with psychological and physical exposure. However, as part of the image, the low esteem of the profession and the associated "social status" are affected. This "social status" related to the profession has a fundamental effect on the choice of occupation and thus also on the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry. A consequence of the negative

image, apprentices increasingly discontinue their apprenticeship or change to another sector after completing their apprenticeship (Int.9; p.3 ll 9-13).

The negative perception of the profession of cook and service personnel was often criticised in the interviews (Int.1; p.4 ll 42-43). Besides, the acute shortage of skilled professionals has led to increased use of student assistants and lateral entrants. As a result, the quality of the service is declining and with it the image of the industry in general. (Int.1; p.4 ll 44-46).

"It's a job that requires training. For three years people go to school and get trained and are equated with someone who waits four hours a week between university, soccer training and shopping." (Int.1; p.4 ll 48-50)

In addition to the image of the entire industry, the image of the individual company can be considered. The interviews show that social media and online platforms, in particular, are having an increasing impact, which is often reflected in the celebrity status of guests, employee satisfaction and guest satisfaction (Int.3; p.3 ll 35-39).

A further aspect in connection with the image is the increase in cooking shows and TV shows. As often explained in the interviews, these do not always reflect reality but are of benefit to the general positive image of the profession of chef (Int.3; p.4 ll 29-34 and Int.4; p.3 ll 1-4).

Furthermore, differences in the image and "social status" of a profession in the hotel and gastronomy industry in relation to countries or cultures can also be assumed. Daniel Studer, Assistant Director Food & Beverage of THE CHEDI, Andermatt was in a previous position in Costa Rica as Food and Beverage Management Trainee and describes the case as follows:

"One reason that I noticed strongly is the attractiveness of the profession in Europe; the attractiveness of a restaurant manager has decreased considerably. In other countries, e.g. Central America, it is a privilege to be a restaurant manager (...)." (Int.8; p.2 ll 31-34)

Hans Peter Kremer, Regional Vice President ARAMARK East Germany, describes the problem of the "social-status" as follows:

„The image is I think an issue (...) because we live in a society that is very much based on material things; I can't represent material things when I'm in a job where I don't earn money and therefore I think that many young people just want to do something else. Well, everybody

wants to be a doctor and professor, to put it in a nutshell, and earn money as a doctor and professor and not as a waiter, cook or other professions in the hotel and gastronomy industry (...) the social recognition both by the image and by the wages. “ (Int.12; p.3 ll 8-17)

Demographic Change

Demographic change, also with regard to literature, is sometimes a reason for the shortage of skilled professionals. This was also confirmed in the interviews. The ageing population is a challenge, especially for the hotel and gastronomy industry, and will continue to intensify in the future. Precisely because physical exposure is often necessary in the industry, the ageing society is an increasing challenge. A baby boomer is a person born between 1946 and 1964. The entry of the baby boomers into retirement will be a preview of the trend towards a growing demand for all kinds of services for retirees. It will also have an impact on the general supply of labour (Barrows *et al.*, 2011).

Reinhold Weierich, Operations Manager ARAMARK at ESMT, described the demographic change as a reason for the shortage of skilled professionals as follows:

"The demographic change will, in any case, have a great influence, because let's say that in all sectors there is a demand for skilled professionals, and let's say that the attractiveness of the profession is perhaps not quite so highly valued so that the young people or recent graduates are more likely to orient themselves in other sectors or to move on to other professions which seem more attractive (Int.7; p.2 ll 39-42).

Growing Number of Students

Another possible reason for the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry is the increasing number of students. As a result, especially entry-level positions are not being filled. A possible reason for this is the high recognition of studies and the increased access to studies for more people due to increased prosperity. A further consequence is the rising number of temporary student workers, which can be considered as an advantage for the industry. This opens up more flexible possibilities for the employer to deploy personnel (Int.1;p.5 ll 2-6 and Int.10; p.3 ll 1-3). An opportunity is offered by the recruiting of skilled professionals at higher education institutions and universities (Int.3; p.4 ll 14-15).

Emigration

In an interview, the special situation in South Tyrol, Italy was pointed out. The majority of the companies in the hotel and gastronomy sector in South Tyrol are family-run. This means that promotion and career opportunities are only possible to a limited extent, as key positions are often held by family members. The consequence is the emigration of skilled professionals to foreign countries. Possible similarities could probably occur in rural areas in the DACH region.

"(...) many of the skilled professionals go abroad. This is due to the fact that in South Tyrol the opportunities for promotion are very limited, as most of the companies are family businesses."
(Int.2; p.3 ll 8-9)

Growing Industry

The construction boom caused by the favourable financing environment has led to rising numbers of new hotel openings for years. The resulting competitive pressure from chain hotels is leading to losses, especially for medium-sized companies (Ehlen *et al.*, 2018). Furthermore, the growing industry has an increasing demand for skilled professionals and a decreasing supply of the same. As a result, the competition for skilled professionals, along with the pressure, increases. Employees have more opportunities to demand higher wages and promotions, which in turn has an impact on the profitability and competitiveness of the company (Int.4; p.2 ll 26-32 and Int.8; p.2 ll 39-45).

Low Qualification of Fewer Apprentices

A decline in the number of apprentices and an increasing drop-out rate is a major reason for the shortage of skilled professionals. This is of course strongly connected with the question of why there is a decline in the number of trainees in general and therefore also with the question of image and the associations related to it. Some interviewees criticised the lack of successful concepts in the industry for retaining young people in the company (Int1; p.5 ll 1-2). The TV shows that have already been mentioned, convey a vague image of the occupation, which leads to an increase in the dropout rate of trainees due to false expectations of the profession's tasks (Int.6; p.4 ll 8-11). In an interview, the declining quality of apprentices in terms of their attention span was also mentioned. For example, it is becoming increasingly difficult for young apprentices to

concentrate on one job for a certain period (Int.4; p.4 ll 33-36). The interviews pointed to a decline in apprentices' general education (Int.7; p.6 ll 27-29). In addition, a growth in the number of apprenticeships in the restaurant sector is particularly noticeable, since the hotel industry offers more professional opportunities (Int.7; p.2 ll 29-31).

The following graph (Figure 12) visually summarises the previously mentioned reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals and shows the number of interviewees who mentioned them. The top performers here are "Low Wages", "Working Hours" and "Image".

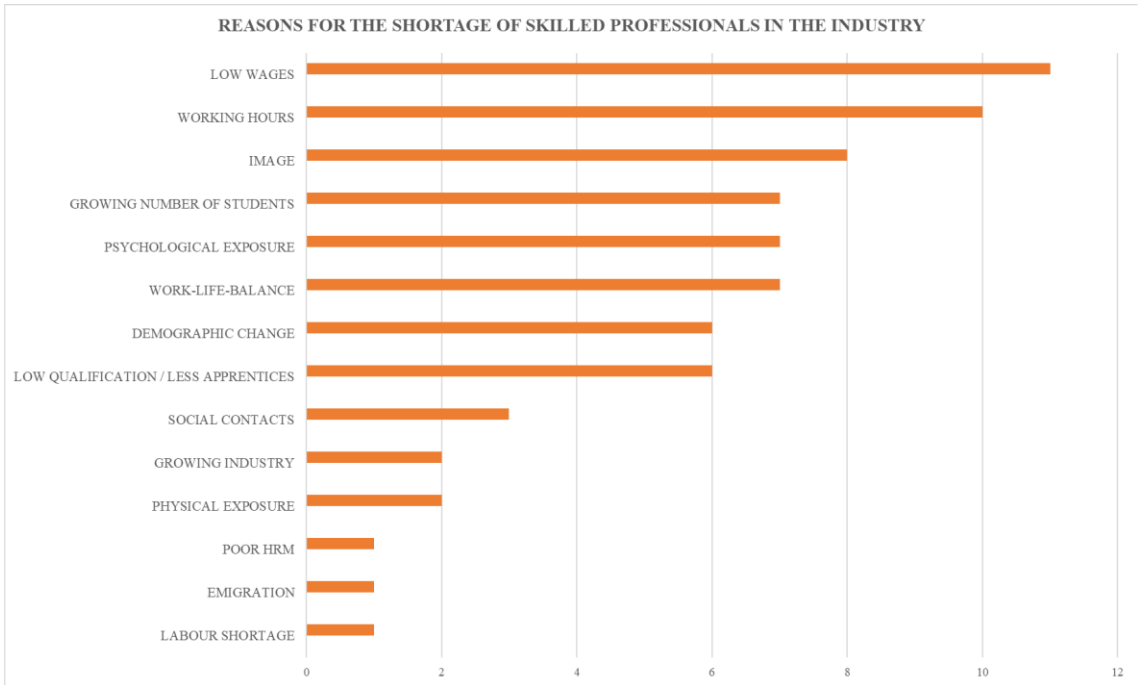


Figure 12: Reasons for the Shortage of Skilled Professionals according to Data Collection

4.6 Individual Solution Approaches

This chapter deals with the possible individual approaches to the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry. In the interviews, the participants were asked about their approaches, how successful the applied approaches are and about possible negative effects. The resulting findings are described and discussed in this chapter. In some cases, in practice, a combination of the individual approaches was also aimed at or implemented. The described approaches might not be applicable for every company, due to the opening hours and individual conditions in the company. However, the following solutions offer an opportunity for companies in the sector to address the shortage of skilled professionals.

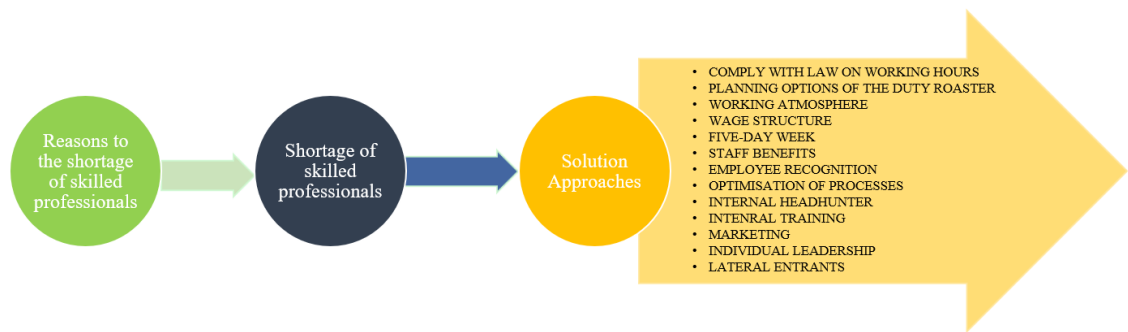


Figure 13: Individual Solution Approaches based on Data Collection

Comply with law on working hours

The previous chapter has already described the negative aspects of "working hours" in the sector and the resulting impact on the shortage of skilled professionals. The intensive working hours influence the work-life-balance and thus lead to a less favourable image of the industry. A possible solution approach would be to strictly adhere to the statutory working hours, even though the industry is often difficult to assess in advance with regard to operating hours. Particularly in the case of partial shifts and late/early changes, break times should be respected in order to prevent frustration and to keep employees in the company.

Nico Böttcher, former host and Assistant Outlet Manager of the Hotel am Steinplatz, Marriott describes compliance with the legal working hours:

"The solution is in principle to comply with the working time laws. I mean the legal basis is simply there. You just have to stick to it. It is not controlled, but it is simply in the interests of both employee and employer to comply with this legal framework." (Int.1; p.5 ll 21-23)

Planning options of the duty roster

The next approach also relates to improving the work-life balance and is relatively easy to implement with good planning. To improve the situation of the employees and their private time planning, the duty roster should be organised in advance to enable the employees to better plan their time off. Spontaneous rescheduling should be avoided if possible. In this context, it should also be emphasised again that the hotel and gastronomy industry must deal with short-term changes which are difficult to predict. Here, too, the focus should be on long-term planning in order to reduce the frequency of short-term changes to a minimum (Int.9; p.3 ll 37-39). As far as possible, the company should introduce two successive days off for its employees, to increase the attractiveness of the industry in terms of work-life balance.

„I have always found it important to be able to look further into the future. It is common practice, unfortunately, that you only get the duty roster for a week, often Thursday or Friday before the week. This means that the planning that the people, employees, young people and trainees have is simply zero.“ (Int.1; p.5 ll 30-33)

Working Atmosphere

Furthermore, the importance of working atmosphere and working environment is easily underestimated. In particular, the culinary concept for the employees was mentioned in the interviews several times. By improving the working atmosphere using various tools and the working environment (e.g. back office areas or changing rooms), employee satisfaction can be increased.

"(...) we are investing more and more in our staff canteen and that is not hundreds of Euros but thousands of Euros (...). "From the well-being side, food is a key position where you can achieve a lot." (Int.3; p.5 ll 3-9)

Wage structure

With regard to wages, it can be noted that a voluntary increase would raise the attractiveness of the industry. From an economic point of view, however, this is only possible to a limited extent, as competition is generally very high. Besides, the industry is very labour-intensive. A possible solution to this problem is digitalisation or technologisation to make the industry more capital-intensive. This approach will be discussed and described in the next chapter.

"Hotel chains are simply often outdated (...) in their structures and have little adjustment, e.g. the fact that in a Berlin top-hotel is supposed to get around 2000 euros as a chef-de-rang - gross. That is 1250 Euros net. With Berlin's rents, that's simply a salary at which you can't afford much (...)" (Int.1; p.6 ll 7-11)

"I think the salary structure extremely important. I think you would have to have lower profit planning to have quality assurance by having satisfied employees. After all, we are not talking about several thousand euros, by which the salary has to be increased." (Int.1; p.6 ll 2-5)

Another problem is that wages are often not adapted to the cost of living. According to a study containing information on 97 jobs in 67 cities, it becomes evident that while the rising cost of living has a positive effect on wages, the adjustment is not as great as the difference in the cost of living (Sturman *et al.*, 2017).

"Hotel chains generalize every place, no matter if the hotel is located at the Baltic Sea or in the city centre of Munich. Often the salary is simply the same, although the surrounding is different. (Int.1; p.6 ll 14-15)

Higher wages could lead to increased employee satisfaction, resulting in higher guest satisfaction and consequently higher occupancy rates. Another consideration would be a wage-bonus system linked to the occupancy rate of the company.

Five-day week

A five-day week could have a generally positive effect on employee satisfaction and work-life balance, increase the attractiveness of the sector or company and thus counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. Nevertheless, the disadvantages arising from this must be taken into account. In addition to increased attractiveness of this measure, increased productivity can also be observed. A concrete example is a company experiment of the Japanese subsidiary of Microsoft. A four-day work system was tested

on 2300 office workers. The result was a productivity improvement of about 40 per cent (Nagata, 2019).

„On the one hand, there is a 5-day week in our company. This is very unusual for the hotel industry, especially in South Tyrol, where the 6-day week is common (...). Of course, two days off and then also in one piece, that is a big advantage. Furthermore, these days off are also fixed, of course with reservations. But normally everybody has his fixed days off.“ (Int.2; p.4 ll 11-15)

„Negative aspects in this context are the sometimes occurring understaffing due to the 5-day-week, especially on days with a lot of arrivals and departures. In this sense, the company is somewhat tied up. Of course, personnel costs are also higher. However, you have the advantage of having local staff, which is incredibly appreciated by the guests.“ (Int.2; p.4 ll 19-23)

Staff benefits

Staff benefits are already implemented in many companies in the industry, but also offer great potential for expansion. Often the cost to the company for staff benefits is lower than an increase in wages. Staff benefits can be diverse and should be implemented and marketed according to the type of company and its possibilities to attract and retain skilled employees. Especially hotels often offer discounts for employees, which can be very attractive. However benefits-programs should meet the unique need of the employees (Dychtwald *et al.*, 2006). But also, in the gastronomy this possibility could be applied, e.g. special discounts for friends and family of the employees or reduced prices for employees during events. Another possibility are discounts for local transport or leisure activities (Int.3; p.5 ll 34-36 and Int.10; p.3 ll 27-30).

Employee Recognition

A negative point in the industry is the lack of appreciation of performance. This lack of recognition can come, among others, from the guests and can be compensated by the employer expressing his appreciation. Furthermore, recognition is directly related to a better performance (Bradler *et al.*, 2016). In general, the company's management should be involved the most in this process, mainly by means of good leadership style. (Int.3; p.5 ll 29-31). Another possibility is to recognize employees in the form of special employee events to thank them for their performance and to encourage good performance.

"Even employee recognition and I emphasize that two or three times. We're also having a star dinner this week. We are organizing it in the most beautiful room of the hotel, where the biggest VIPs and Head of States, CEO of the biggest companies in the world dine; our employees eat there every three months. These are the best employees at all levels who simply deserve a "thank you" " (Int.3; p.5 ll 16-20).

Optimisation of processes

The optimisation of processes as a solution to the shortage of skilled professionals has several advantages. On the one hand, the personnel intensity can be reduced or improved and thus save costs and labour (Int.4; p.3 ll 16-17). Another aspect is the reduction of the error susceptibility (Int.4; p.3 ll 17-22). A precondition for the introduction of process optimisation is a first, often cost-intensive introduction phase (Int.4; p.3 ll 30-31). It is also important that the process is understandable and implemented by employees and management (Int.8; p.3 ll 33-39). Another advantage is the improvement of employee satisfaction if the process is implemented successfully (Int.8; p.3 ll 24-29).

Internal Headhunter

Another solution approach is the use of an internal headhunter to complement the traditional recruitment process. An internal headhunter enables the recruiting of skilled professionals through direct communication and in a personal way and can thus counteract the problem of a skilled professional shortage for companies, but not for the industry in general. Furthermore, companies are increasingly using social media to inform themselves about job applicants (Woods *et al.*, 2012). Marriott International is already successfully choosing this approach. Maria Wedemeier, Market Talent Acquisition Manager about her position:

"My position didn't exist yet and Marriott at some point said, we need someone, we have to do something about it and classical recruitment just doesn't work anymore." (Int.5; p.5 ll 1-2)

"The most successful ways are personal ones. Our world is becoming more and more anonymous, so you feel valued when it becomes personal. That means word of mouth propaganda, recommendations, Kununu is becoming more and more important. (Int.5; p.5 ll 3-6)

"I am like an internal headhunter who is looking for the best possible job, both for the employer to fill the position and for the candidate (...)" (Int.5; p.5 ll 8-10)

An internal headhunter can, therefore, be an advantage both for the company and for applicants. A precondition for this is mutual trust (Stülb von Klimesch and von Klimesch, 2014).

Internal training

Internal training could be considered a possible solution. The advantage here is that knowledge gaps can be filled in relation to the declining qualifications of apprentices already mentioned and employees can learn specifically about the company's characteristics. Furthermore, loyalty to the company and thus employee retention is strengthened (Int.6; p.4 ll 37-41 and Int. 8; p.3 ll 39-40). This also makes it possible to respond more strongly to the interests of the employees (Int.9; p.3 ll 41-44). Lateral entrants can be better familiarised by internal training and knowledge gaps can be closed.

"We do not always try to hold on to the old. We try to create our professionals. What would have been an absurdity a few years ago to hire a complete lateral entrant at the reception who works at the reception without apprenticeship or experience - that's what we do now. We have now started the first attempts and, to be honest, we are also successfully training our specialists in-house." (Int.10; p.3 ll 19-24)

Marketing

Marketing in the sense of cross-branch marketing, to improve the image of the profession, as well as marketing in the sense of company marketing or personnel marketing can be considered as potential solutions to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals.

The next chapter will discuss marketing as a potential solution approach in detail. On the one hand marketing would be affected via social media platforms, for instance with the help of influencers (Int.5; p.5 ll 33-36). Marriott International runs its career site (*careers.marriott.com*) as a private label to generate a higher reach (Int.5; p.6 ll 6-8). Career websites or applications can also be taken into consideration (Int.7; p.3 ll 8-11). On the other hand, word of mouth has been described as an extremely successful

approach in several interviews. Employees can be encouraged to recruit through special bonus systems.

"Well, my experience tells me that word-of-mouth (...) is the best way, we get many employees through this way (...) I would say half of all the good people who have come to us in the last months or a year or two have been through word of mouth (...)". (Int.12; p.3 ll 33-38)

Individual leadership

A study researched the influence of leadership behaviour on the job satisfaction of employees. A quantitative survey method was used and 101 hotel employees in Germany were surveyed. The results of this study indicate that the job satisfaction of German hotel employees is strongly influenced by leadership behaviour (Rothfelder *et al.*, 2012). Individual leadership is actively pursued as a solution approach by several of the interviewees. The aim is to increase employee satisfaction, to bind employees to the company in the long term, to enhance the company's image as a wrestling ground and thus to attract more employees. An individual management system is generally time-consuming (Int.8; p.3 ll 21-33). It is, therefore, necessary to promote individual development (Int.9; p.3 ll 33-37). Therefore the needs, expectations and wishes of employees must be taken into account (Bonin, 2013). The results of a study indicate that if front line employees in the hospitality industry perceive their level of work autonomy as high enough to activate their expression of prosocial motivation, they are more likely to take on responsibility, which should lead to a higher assessment of their overall work performance (Cai *et al.*, 2019). According to another empirical study, the motivational effect is greater among those who consider the performance evaluation to be fair and are satisfied with the feedback after the evaluation (Lee, 2019).

Lateral Entrants

As already described, the shortage of skilled professionals leads to an increase in the number of lateral entrants in the industry. This can be a challenge, but also a possible solution to the problem. Lateral entrants have various reasons for changing jobs: personal, family, financial, forced changes in the job description or changes in the labour market. The chances of being hired depend on the open-mindedness of the human resource department towards lateral entrants (Knecht, 2016).

„A few years ago it would have been an absurdity to hire a complete lateral entrant at the reception who works at the reception without training or experience - that's what we do now. We have now started the first attempts and, to be honest, we are also successfully training our own in-house professionals.“ (Int. 10; p.3 ll 19-24)

4.7 Potential Solution Approaches

This chapter describes possible general solutions to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. These include digitalisation and technologisation, in particular by reducing the personnel intensity. A further point is HR management with the corresponding tools as well as marketing and migration as potential solutions. Furthermore, alternative solutions to the four potential solutions approaches already mentioned are described. A strong reference is made to literature. Most of these potential solution approaches apply to the entire industry to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals.

Digitalisation & Technologisation

Digitalisation and technologisation are changing most of the industries fundamentally. This concerns the expectations and needs of guests to the structure of the industry; the way employees benefit from their jobs and the skills they need to be successful. It is changing the way services are delivered (Nyheim, 2018). Technologisation and digitalisation create new products, processes and services and in some cases whole new industries. Computer and telecommunications technologies, for example, have played a fundamental role in globalisation (Enz, 2009). Technologisation and digitalisation have changed the hotel and gastronomy industry considerably in the area of operations and especially in the area of marketing. Third-party providers are changing the way guests make reservations (Barrows *et al.*, 2011). Reservation processes can be carried out automatically through digitalisation. Other administrative activities, in particular those of the non-operational departments and personnel-related tasks, can also be outsourced either to the head office or third-party service providers, e.g. complete digitisation of the personnel file (Int,6; p.6 ll 7-10). Positions that are eliminated as a result can be used in the kitchen or service area.

In the interviews, it was mentioned several times that digitalisation and technologisation are strongly dependent on the type of business. For example, in many areas of city or business hotels, digitalisation is much more applied and geared to the needs of the guests. In a resort hotel, the focus lies, among other things, on personal guest contact, which is why, for example, a fully automated check-in process is not used in most cases (Int.2; p.4 ll 35-37). This does not mean that digitalisation or technologisation are completely lost. For example, digital ordering systems, hotel apps, digital privacy

agreements at the reception can also be used with a focus on guest interaction (Int.9; p.4 ll 24-26).

"Of course it depends very much on the business, e.g. in a holiday hotel you need more employees than in a city hotel. I think that in the next 5 years a maximum of 5-10 per cent of staff can be reduced by pure digitalisation." (Int.2; p.5 ll 13-15)

"Well, I'm always torn between digitalisation and technologisation and the staff savings that come with it. Without staff a hotel has no soul and especially in the 5-star-grand-hotel business you need such a soul (...) if all this is technologised, then, of course, it all falls away and then you can no longer charge the prices either." (Int.9; p.4 ll 15-23)

Another advantage of digitalisation is in the area of training. Employees can complete training courses in a targeted and independent manner, which in turn can be controlled by employers. An example of this is the "Lobster Ink" training platform, used by Hilton, Marriott or Mandarin Oriental (Int.5; p.6 ll 34-35). Learning apps for trainees are already on the market and can be useful (Int.10; p.4 ll 41-44).

Furthermore, digitalisation is also strongly linked to marketing and personnel marketing (Int.3; p.6 ll 7-13). Apps, in particular, are becoming increasingly attractive and widespread (Int.7; p.3 ll 36-38).

In many areas, digitalisation and technologisation can be seen as a potential solution to the shortage of skilled professionals. In most of the interviews, however, one opinion was very strongly held: It is only possible to digitalise or technologise the professions of the sectors, e.g. the cook, to a limited extent (Int.2; p.5 ll 4-7). The craft trades are too versatile and dependent on creativity with their various tasks to be completely technologised (Int.6; p.6 ll 3-7).

"(...) when we talk about the kitchen, digitalisation rather less, but technologisation, of course, there will always be new appliances that take some of the work off your hands, but I don't think there will be such a drastic cut that you can replace staff. We're talking about reception, administration, accounting with new software or possibilities that will arise in the future." (Int.10; p.4 ll 1-5)

In the interviews, special reference was also made to high-end gastronomy as the "winner of the future" in terms of digitalisation and technologisation.

„I think for some areas in the gastronomy e.g. fast food, I would not mind cooking with robots. Anyway, the whole convenience industry is automated, so warming is something a robot can do. In the high-end gastronomy, you simply need skilled professionals; it's handcraft and you can't do it any other way.“ (Int.11; p.4 ll 2-5)

„The point of digitalisation, if the point is interpreted so broadly that we are talking about robots at the end of the day, then I would say it is something that can help very much to balance that out and will help. I now believe that when you see the first approaches to robots able to cook food, that this is a theoretical way of getting ahead (...) how will the whole catering industry change or how will the restaurant market change (...) in the next 10, 15 or 20 years? (...) I believe that at the end of the story there will be a high-end kitchen or a high-end restaurant, which will be able to pay the best chefs and where the price is still paid, but that the losers will probably be the companies that offer good value for money. (...)“ (Int.12; p.4 ll 21-39)

The hotel and gastronomy industry should maintain good relationships with their guests and business partners by using the right digitalisation and technologisation tools, integrating these tools into their business strategies and training their employees accordingly. Personalised services can also be offered via online platforms (Law *et al.*, 2013).

HR-Management Strategies

HR management strategies as a potential solution consist of much more of a series of HR-related measures to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. One possibility is to optimise the quality of leadership positions through training and high demands on the position. As already described, the shortage of skilled professionals means that leadership positions are often filled with inadequate qualifications (Int.1; p.7 ll 6-12 and Int.3; p.6 ll 16-17). In several interviews, emphasis was on the importance of individual leadership of employees, taking into account their private problems (Int.3; p.6 ll 17-26 and Int.4; p.4 ll 14-17). Another consideration would be flatter hierarchies, even if implementation would be a challenge for the industry (Int.11; p.4 ll 13-14). The results of a study of 380 employees of five-star hotels recommend to increase employee loyalty to the organisation and subsequently reduce employee turnover, the hotels must offer training and development programmes to their staff, introduce a fair and formal appraisal system and provide their employees with comprehensive and clear career development opportunities (Hemdi and Nasurdin, 2006).

Another possibility is the aspect of employee retention. Employee retention and thus loyalty to the company can be increased by various measures (Int.2; p.5 ll 23-26). A high level of employee satisfaction counteracts the shortage of skilled professionals through recommendations, lower fluctuation, better marketing opportunities and PR (Int.6; p.6 ll 23-25). Attracting skilled people and keeping them once they are in place is cost-effective human resource management (Barrows *et al.*, 2011).

"I must honestly say that the big advantage at Aramark is that we have very good HR management. We also appreciate a very cooperative management style. The result is that at Aramark, the length of time employees stay with the company is long (...)." (Int. 7; p.3 ll 45-46)

In this context, the appreciation of employees and the values of a company associated with this should also be taken into account (Int.6; p.6 ll 16-19). It is important that employees share the same values as the company (Int.8; p.4 ll 32-34). There is a correlation between the culture and efficiency of managers and their involvement in the company. Some cultural aspects are related to performance variables such as labour costs and added revenue (Øgaard *et al.*, 2005). A developed and engaged organisational culture in companies leads to a higher level of employee retention (Holtom *et al.*, 2008).

"In my opinion, hotel management, in general, is 20 years behind other industries in terms of leadership standards. There is simply a lack of appreciation for the individual employee. There is a lack of promotion in various degrees." (Int.9; p.2 ll 39-41).

The training of employees plays a key role. It is important that training in the individual departments functions smoothly and is held regularly (Int.8; p.4 ll 38-39). Besides, the training should also be in the interest of the employees and should not focus exclusively on the interests of the company (Int.9; p.3 ll 1).

"In HR you can see that everything is more focused on the entry and exit process, i.e. it's all about the applications. I understand that it's also a lot of work, but the focus should be more on the employees than on the whole process." (Int.9; p.4 ll 37-40)

Additionally, it is advisable to optimise the application process. One way to do this is to improve the management of candidate data to achieve shorter processing times, to share data with third parties (with the consent of the applicants), and to communicate individually with the applicants in order to better understand their motives and to be able to react to problems (Int.8; p.4 ll 7-10 and p.5 ll 2-5).

„You can send a lot of CVs and often get no response, regardless of the quality of the CV or the position. It is simply a way for companies to advertise. But it is important; you can lose a good reputation that way easily.” (Int.11; p.4 ll 18-31)

The negative side of HR measures can be seen in the costs, which are expressed in the fact that the final product can become more expensive (Int.12; p.4 ll 42-47).

Marketing

Marketing is becoming increasingly important, especially concerning the declining image of the industry (Int.1; p.7 ll 22-24). Marketing controls the first impression of a company and is therefore essential (Int.2; p.5 ll 45-46). Due to the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the industry, the image of a company communicated mainly by an online presence with good marketing concepts is becoming increasingly important (Int.9; p.4 ll 44-47). The results of a study show a positive correlation between employer branding (job satisfaction and psychological contract) and employee retention. Furthermore, a positive relationship between employer branding and the commitment of the organisation is observed (Tanwar and Prasad, 2016). The management of the hotel and gastronomy industry can influence the attitude and behaviour of their employees through internal branding, and it is therefore recommended that internal branding should be included in the education and training of companies (Yang *et al.*, 2015).

"It makes a completely huge difference when a chef tells you that he's in the Borchardt's here in Berlin or he's at 123-Catering. People want to show off and since our marketing is still expandable, many people don't know what possibilities there are." (Int.6; p.6 ll 32-36)

Social media websites are increasingly important in terms of marketing (Int.7; p.5 ll 24-26). Marketing that improves the image appears primarily via streaming services or TV in the form of cooking shows (Int.7; p.5 ll 26-29). Business rating portals are also attracting increasing attention. One example is the success of "Kununu" (Int.8; p.4 ll 41-43). The second step is to retain the employees who have been recruited. Here is an intersection with human resource management and its measures (Int.2; p.6 ll 7-11).

"In my opinion, marketing is very important if you (...) look at the issue of image. I believe that marketing for employees (...) has to be pushed much harder to bring the image forward. In other words, changing our jobs, which today may be regarded as unskilled work from the outside, to "cool", fun and economically interesting jobs. I believe that marketing can achieve a great deal. This starts with the marketing of the DEHOGA (German Hotel and Restaurant

Association), the marketing of the individual companies, the hotels, the restaurants and in our case the restaurant operators." (Int.12; p.5 ll 5-12)

An approach to marketing could be a national campaign to improve the image of the industry and attract more professionals. Some academics believe that reputation can be organised, while others believe it cannot. More research is needed on reputation management, but the proportion of studies that argue in favour of organising reputation is probably greater than those that argue against it (Doorley, 2015).

"The German state also advertises for the Bundeswehr; it could also advertise for nursing staff or gastronomy, support subsidies in certain areas, take advantage of opportunities through certain measures - to make good marketing." (Int.1; p.7 ll 30-33)

Migration

Migration offers an opportunity to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. However, appropriate measures are needed to give migrants the necessary opportunities and to realize the full potential of migration (Int.1; p.7 ll 39-44). Migration is an important process in building the current labour force in post-industrial service economies (Dyer *et al.*, 2010). The number of migrant workers has risen sharply, making the debate on labour migration one of the most controversial public policy issues in high-income countries (Ruhs and Anderson, 2010). An effect is that, as low-skilled migrants move into predominantly craft-intensive professions in the labour market, residents themselves will move into professions that take benefit from their competitive advantage, i. e. their communication skills.

A problem of migration often arises from its authenticity related to hospitality and cultures. Guests expect to be served by local staff. An example is South Tyrol, Italy, where the native staff is highly valued to maintain traditional authenticity in guest contact (Int.2; p.6 ll 7-11).

In the interviews, it became clear that the state plays an important role in relation to migration and is partly responsible for the integration of migrants (Int.3; p.6 ll 37-39 and Int.7; p.6 ll 1-8). An important aspect of this is learning the national language or a language that is understood in the respective country (Int.7; p.5 ll 33-40).

Edwin Quatch-Mach, chef at ARAMARK on the Zalando Campus speaks in the interview about language barriers:

"I don't know if that would be a solution, but from experience, we work a lot with temporary employment agencies and often get migrants as temporary workers for a day or a week and some don't speak German. Sometimes it is difficult to communicate if they don't speak German or English." (Int.11; p.4 ll 37-39)

"(...) I believe that the state regulations are important and especially at the beginning when someone comes to our country, I believe it is important to make the appropriate language offers (...)." (Int.12; p.5 ll 27-30)

One of the interviewees is learning Spanish to attract potential employees of the Spanish market, as he has had a good experience with it (Int.4; p.2 ll 28-31).

An internal possibility to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals with regard to migration is through an internal communication manager for immigration authorities. HR managers are often not trained for these tasks or do not have the time to exercise them (Int.5; p.6 ll 24-27). In some cases, this leads to the fact that these necessary work permits or other documents are not available in time and this causes delays (Int.6; p.7 ll 5-12). Especially for Switzerland, necessary documents are often difficult to obtain (Int.9; p.5 ll 16-28).

The advantage of international employees is the linguistic expansion of the team and thus a better service for international guests, expansion of cultural competencies for the existing staff etcetera (Int.9; p.5 ll 10-12).

Alternative Solutions

The alternative approaches are diverse and are often based on solutions already mentioned. However, an alternative approach mentioned in this context is the active promotion of career changers or lateral entrants for the industry.

"(...) maybe you have to attract people from outside the industry to certain areas to get a new perspective. Sometimes it helps if you get an engineer into the hotel who comes in with a completely different approach." (Int.1; p.8 ll 4-6)

The development and empowerment of women in the business world is still an important concern today. Working women are confronted with a variety of challenges and opportunities in the labour market (Barrows *et al.*, 2011). A potential solution could be to increasingly attract women as a target group for the industry and to recruit them as employees, thus counteracting the shortage of skilled professionals.

Another approach could be the development of key positions to increase employee loyalty and to better the image of the company.

"Promotion and better development of key positions. You can break it down. The key position is first of all the restaurant manager and his assistant, bar manager and his assistant or supervisor, F&B manager, F&B director. If you invest more in this position and give people more opportunities to develop, then they are better able to cope in difficult times such as high turnover times, poor staff team etc., because they have been in the business longer and have experience in dealing with such situations. But if the key position is annoyed again and again and is not promoted it is the wrong approach for me. A solution is therefore definitely the development of key positions." (Int.8; p.5 ll 40-47)

Talent management has been advocated as an important strategy for retaining talented employees. However, academic studies that examine their relationship are limited (Narayanan *et al.*, 2019).

The following graph (Figure 14) shows the applicability of the mentioned potential solutions concerning the opinions of the interviewees and can therefore possibly give conclusions about the applicability in companies.

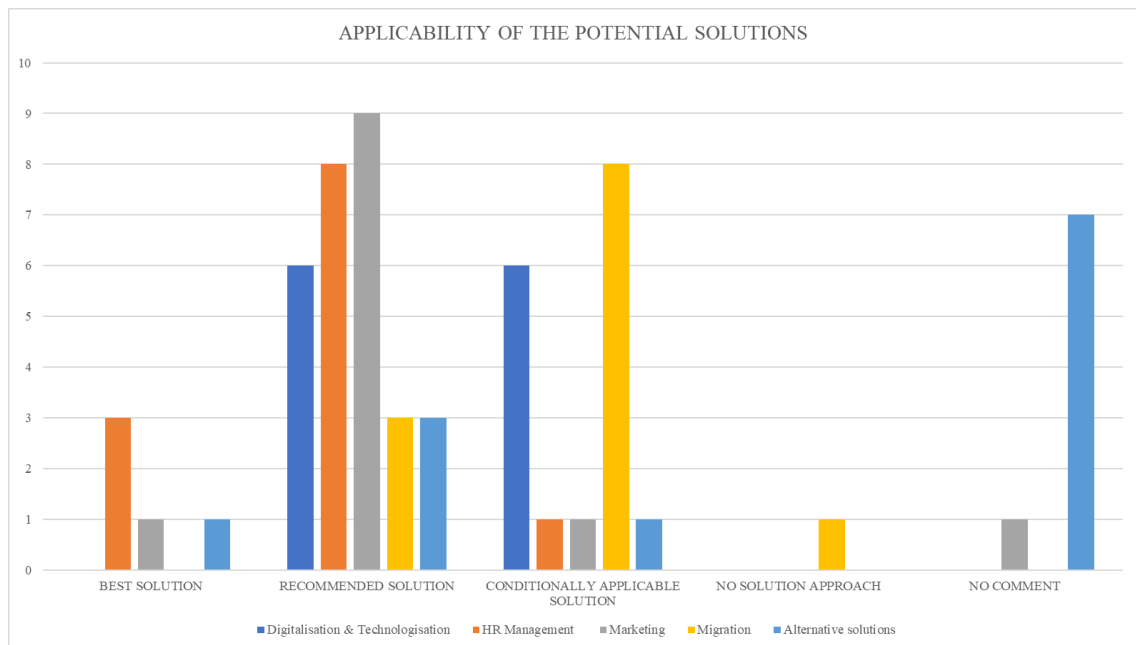


Figure 14: Applicability of the Potential Solutions

4.8 Time Frame and Sustainable Practical Application

Digitalisation and Technologisation

Digitalisation and technologisation can be regarded as both short-term and long-term solutions. The German Federal Government considers digital transformation as a central task for shaping the future not only for the economy but also for science, society and politics (Arnold and Knödler, 2018). Furthermore, a decisive influencing factor for the industry in this regard is the question of personal contact.

In the short term, digitalisation and technologisation can, on the one hand, reduce jobs through automation etc. and, on the other hand, gain employees through digital marketing. Especially parts of the communication with the guest as well as with (potential) employees are increasingly digitalised. This also affects the application process. Digital networks such as LinkedIn are becoming more important (Int.3; p.7 ll 1-6).

In the long term, digitalisation and technologisation are likely to have a strong influence on the fair labour market (Int.8; p.8 ll 14-16). However, certain social interactions can only be replaced by digitalisation or technologisation to a limited extent (Int.2; p.7 ll 10-17). Even the complete "replacement" of a craft is critically regarded in the interviews (Int.7; p.6 ll 36-37).

Digitalisation and technologisation can also be seen as a development process that is constantly evolving through updates (Int.4; p.5 ll 15-17).

"On the subject of " digitalisation/technologisation", that is certainly slow and long-term, it depends on how you define medium and long-term, but I would say that precisely what I described earlier with the robots, that is certainly long-term in the sense of, well, that will perhaps be in 10 years. Digitalisation is a step-by-step process, more and more things are coming on the market that helps you to get better and to counteract this, so for me, it is a medium to long term story. " (Int.12; p.6 ll 18-24)

HR Management Strategies

HR management strategies and the associated measures can be applied both short and long term. A company can make very short-term decisions in terms of HR management, and these can also be short-term implemented (Int.12; p.6 ll 27-28). With regard to the

long-term view, it refers in particular to the long-term process of personnel development (Int.1; p.8 ll 16-19 and Int.2; p.7 ll 19-21).

"I believe that good HR management has a very good and sustainable impact in the medium to long term. At Aramark you can see it in particular: I never thought I would stay with the same company for 20 years. (...). As I said, it is related to feeling comfortable in the company, that the leadership styles fit in the company, that you feel valued (...)." (Int.7; p.6 ll 39-46)

Marketing

Marketing can be used in the short term to attract new professionals to the industry (Int.1; p.8 ll 19-22). It is important to use the right measures and tools to carry out effective marketing (Int.2; p.7 ll 27-31). Often marketing is closely related to digitalisation and needs to be adapted to today's society (Int.3; p.7 ll 25-28). Marketing can also be seen as a long-term measure. Conveying an image or building up sustainable marketing is a long-term process. (Int.7; p.7 ll 27-32).

"For me, marketing is medium to long-term, in the medium term rather change an image, to change the image of an industry; to change the image of a professional group, that takes a certain amount of time. But I believe it would be, if you would drive the marketing effort up, e.g. with the DEHOGA; you could think about making a marketing levy to the DEHOGA, which would lead to the professional group being brought forward within the marketing of the DEHOGA. I believe that this could be an interesting aspect, but it can only have an effect in the medium to long term." (Int.12; p.6 ll 32-38)

Migration

As a result of the interviews, migration is seen as a long-term process to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. The reason for this is that most of the complex and long-term bureaucratic processes make it difficult to implement migration quickly as a counteraction (Int.1; p.8 ll 22-24 and Int.2; p.7 ll 35-37). Nevertheless, there are disagreements and differences of views on migration, both among European citizens and in European politics (Cmeciu, 2019). Some interviewees argue that under certain governmental conditions and the necessary business incentives, migration can contribute to achieving short-term success in terms of the shortage of skilled professionals (Int.7; p.7 ll 3-5).

„In terms of migration, I see relatively short-term applicability. We now have many migrants in the country, and there will not be any less, and the potential should be used as quickly and effectively as possible.“ (Int.7; p.7 ll 3-5)

„Citizenship or work permit for Switzerland, this is a long-term process, but it is something where the hotels should join forces and discuss it with the government (...) it would be very beneficial for Switzerland (...).“ (Int.9; p.5 ll 43-45)

The following diagram (Figure 15) shows the answers to the interviews concerning the temporal applicability of the potential solutions.

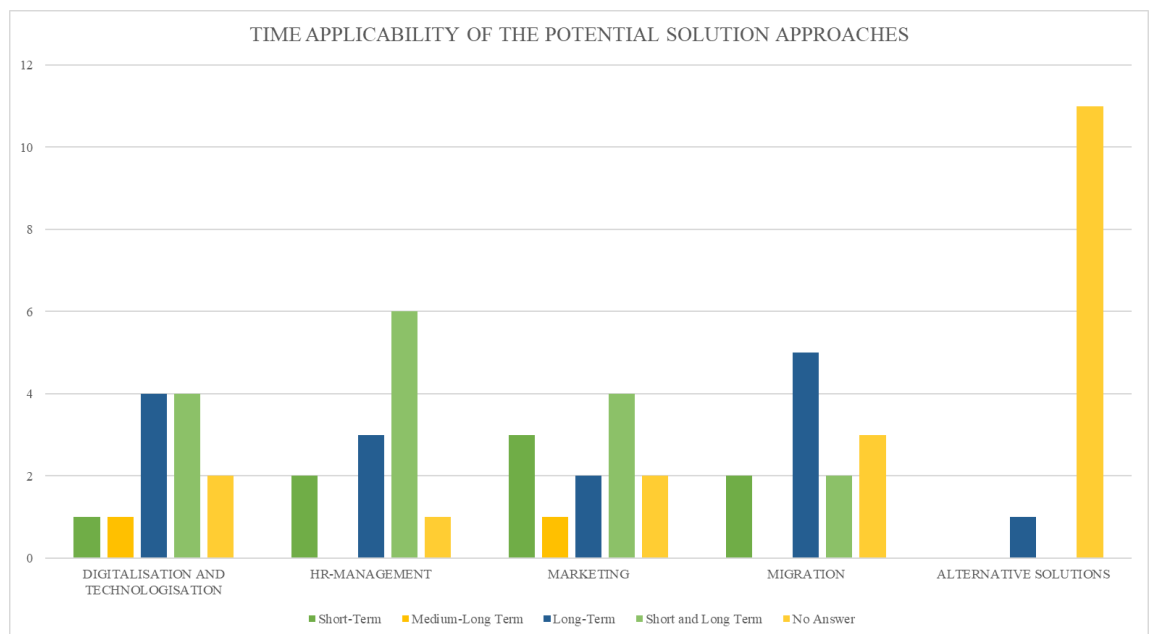


Figure 15: Time Applicability of the Potential Solution Approaches

4.9 Strategic Synergies of the Solution Approaches

In principle, synergies can be created by applying several potential solution approaches. In the qualitative data collection through interviews, the author asked the respondents about possible synergies in the last question of the Semi-structured Interview Guide. The answers vary considerably. One possible synergy is digitalisation and marketing. It stands to reason that increasing digitalisation plays an important role in marketing and thus in the reach of the advertising message (Int.1; p.8 ll 31-34).

HR management strategies in combination with marketing could also be a solution - especially through leader programmes. Management programmes could accompany employees and communication could take place (Int.1; p.8 ll 37-40).

Another possibility of creating synergies would be the point "Migration" and "Marketing". For example, a target group could be addressed as a potential employee for a company (Int.2; p.8 ll 4-5 and Int.7; p.7 ll 20-22).

„Image and compensation are very, very important topics for me. In other words, the social status of a profession; how do we view it, for example. In this Corona crisis, we can see just now, where the decisive points or positions are that ensure that our life continues to go well after Corona, that is in nursing, that is in hospitals, that is in old people's homes, that is in many social professions that are poorly paid and suddenly they get a completely different image, in which clapping is done from the balconies at a certain time every evening and something changes here (...) to combine this HR management and marketing. We are trying to do that at Aramark, by using our Facebook presence, the question is whether this is the right medium, but also to create, continue and make our appearances on other channels. I think HR management and marketing, the combination of the two things, is the crucial point at the moment.“ (Int.12; p.8 ll 6-18)

4.10 Conclusion

The previous chapter has reviewed the findings of the primary data collection, taking literature into account. It can be stated that the effects of the shortage of skilled professionals are noticeable and have serious implications for the industry.

With regard to the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals, it is difficult or impossible to attribute it to just one factor. It is rather a combination of several reasons that ultimately have a negative impact on the image of the industry and thus leads to the shortage of skilled professionals itself.

The positive aspect is that the solutions are very versatile and can often be implemented with little effort. Individual solutions in combination with target group defined marketing can lead to the acquisition of suitably skilled professionals. However, this does not solve the problem of the industry, on an industry level, but can rather be described as a “splitting the cake”. General solutions for the industry were also addressed. In the last part of the findings, the potential solutions and the time of application is discussed. It can be concluded from the data collection that both digitalisation/technologisation and migration can be considered as long-term solutions, while HR management and marketing are regarded as more short-term measures.

Chapter V: Conclusion and Recommendations

The desired output of this dissertation was to create a clear picture of the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry. Another focus was to discuss different practical solutions, to critically examine them and finally to give recommendations for the industry. Apart from that, the dissertation aimed at making recommendations for future research in this area and present the author's experience in conducting this research.

This chapter first describes the implications of findings for the research questions and presents six hypotheses derived from the methodology of the Grounded Theory which can be used for further research.

The contributions and limitations of the research are discussed in the following part of this chapter. Recommendations for practice and further research are provided. In the last part of this chapter, a final conclusion and reflection of the thesis is described.

5.1 Implications of Findings for the Research Questions

The findings have led to clear results with regard to the first research question:

- 1. How is the problem of the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry to be evaluated and what are possible reasons?***

Based on the literature and the analysis of the primary research through qualitative interviews, it can be concluded that the effects on the industry are serious. One indicator for this is that in all conducted interviews, the effects of the shortage of skilled professionals on the interviewee's company were described as noticeable or strongly noticeable. The consequences are difficulties in filling vacant positions, especially entry-level positions, as well as a higher effort in the acquisition of skilled professionals. A further effect is the higher workload for employees in the industry, as often vacant positions have to be compensated by employees. An increase in lateral entrants is a challenge for the industry but also an opportunity. Due to the shortage of skilled professionals, it can also be seen that the increasing leeway for employees leads to problems concerning the latter's retention. A final point is language barriers, which

are often caused by the fact that due to the shortage of skilled professionals, an increasing number of foreign professionals are being used.

The second research question relates to the solution approaches and the resulting practical applications.

2. What concrete solution approaches are there to effectively address the current shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry and how can these be deepened and put into practice?

In order to be able to better address the question of the solution approaches it is fundamental to better understand the reasons that have led to the shortage of skilled professionals. In some cases, avoiding the reasons could serve as a solution.

The work-life-balance of the industry is often criticised. Especially for young people who are facing a career choice, the negative work-life-balance is probably a reason not to start a career in the industry. The poor work-life-balance means that social contacts such as family and friends take secondary importance, especially due to weekend work, work on public holidays and intensive working hours.

Another reason are the comparatively low wages which, in connection with a lack of recognition, lead to a negative image of the industry. The problem behind this is the very rigid cost structures and the competition, which allows profitability related low wages.

Further reasons are the physical and psychological exposure of the profession in the industry. The decreasing number and qualification of apprenticeships worsen the shortage of skilled professionals.

The demographic change influences the shortage of skilled professionals and will have an increasingly negative impact in the future. Added to this is the increasing number of students and the emigration that is particularly prevalent in rural regions.

Individual solutions are on the one hand the strict observance of laws regarding working hours in order to relieve employees, improve the work-life balance and enhance the image of the industry. Legal foundations already exist. The introduction of a 5-day week could further increase the attractiveness of the industry.

Another partial solution with comparatively low costs is an optimisation of the duty roster to allow employees to plan privately as far in advance as possible. This helps to counteract the problem of "social contacts" and at the same time, it increases the attractiveness of the workplace enormously.

A further measure is the improvement of the working atmosphere. This can be implemented in various ways, e.g. back office, changing rooms, staff catering, team events etc and thus increases general employee satisfaction.

An increase in wages or adjustment of wages to the given cost of living would probably increase the attractiveness of a profession in the industry enormously. The associated image change would have positive effects on the industry. Implementation of the measure based on economic considerations is likely to be only partially feasible.

In order to build on the positive points in the industry, the staff benefits should be used to a greater extent. On the one hand, these are not as cost-intensive for the company as wage increases and on the other hand, they considerably raise the attractiveness of the company. An example could be employee discounts or friends & family rates. But also, subsidies for public transport or leisure activities could be offered.

Employee recognition refers strongly to HR management. In the interviews, the lack of recognition in the industry was often criticised. A possible solution would be to recognise employees for their services.

Process optimisations offer the advantage of cost savings through efficiency. This means that employee costs can be saved through improved procedures and processes, thus counteracting the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry from the other side. The means for this can be technology or digitalisation.

Internal "Headhunter" is a modern concept of personnel recruiting that has developed as a result of the shortage of skilled professionals. The implementation of this measure can potentially attract more employees to the company through personal contact than the traditional, passive way of job advertisements. Nevertheless, targeted and successfully implemented marketing offers the opportunity to attract skilled professionals. The trend is towards digital media, including social media.

Individual leadership is a further HR-management related measure to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. Through training, further education and individual employee management, employee satisfaction, employee loyalty and the image of the company can be increased.

Internal training, especially for the growing number of lateral entrants and apprentices, has several advantages for the company, including the increase of employee retention with the company itself.

Other potential solutions include digitalisation and technologisation. This approach is primarily a long-term but important aspect. In the short term, digitalisation or technologisation can lead to less personnel-intensive management of the company, but it can only partially support the entire process or only support it in certain departments. Increasing digitalisation can have a rather counterproductive effect on demand since quality and service and individualisation often suffer from the aspect of digitalisation or technologisation. However, the potential can also be exploited in the area of marketing as well as training and development.

HR management offers an interesting approach. The various measures in this context can increase employee satisfaction, employee loyalty and the image of the industry. Examples of this are leadership styles, as well as suitable managers, employee appreciation, training in the (co-)interest of the employees, optimisation of the application process or staff benefits.

Marketing is becoming increasingly important, especially in terms of the image of the industry. Marketing can help individual companies to attract skilled professionals as well as enhance the image of the profession. In this context, the increasing importance of social media should also be pointed out. A further, often underestimated way of marketing is Word of Mouth, which seems to be particularly successful in the gastronomy and hotel industry.

Migration as a solution approach offers the possibility to face the problem of the shortage of skilled professionals on a large scale. Nevertheless, the problem of excessive bureaucracy and state regulation is an obstacle, especially in Switzerland. One possible internal solution to the problem of migration is the implementation of an internal position, whose main task is the correspondence with immigration authorities

and potential foreign employees, as well as the handling of all processes from recruiting to the training of the migrants.

Another alternative solution could be the active acquisition of lateral entrants to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. Furthermore, the development of key positions and the resulting consequences could contribute to slowing down the shortage of skilled professionals.

In elaborating the findings and taking into account the literature, several implications for the shortage of skilled professionals can be drawn.

Under the aspect of the Grounded Theory applied in the dissertation, six hypotheses can thus be formed, which of course require deeper and more detailed research:

H1. The image of the hotel and gastronomy industry, especially in terms of comparatively low wages and high working hours and the consequences of this are the main reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals.

H2. Individual measures, taken by the companies in combination with the growth of the industry, lead to a redistribution of the shortage of skilled professionals and only partly to a solution to the problem.

H3. A potentially successful solution could be the focus on lateral entrants in combination with internal training.

H4. A general change in the wage structure in favour of the employee in relation to the working hours would have a strong positive impact on the situation of the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry.

H5. Digitalisation/Technologisation has the fundamental potential to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the long term but can only provide limited relief in the short term.

H6. Migration has a strong potential to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry but can only be implemented to a limited extent due to government regulations.

5.2 Contributions and Limitations of the Research

The dissertation describes the possible reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the industry in terms of employment. Furthermore, several potential solutions are proposed and described to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the industry. Also, the temporal applicability and possible synergy effects are discussed.

Thus, the dissertation contributes to show potential solutions to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals.

The applicability and the respective individual solutions have to be worked out in detail by further research and would, therefore, exceed the time frame of this work. Moreover, this work could not go deeper into the individual reasons and the extent of these in more detail.

This study contains twelve semi-structured interviews and literature and is therefore limited in its informative value. As the industry is very diverse, the results may have different outputs when conducted with other interview partners.

An additional challenge in writing this dissertation was the corona crisis, which was simultaneously evolving in Europe. Due to efficient organisational implementation, the author was however still able to achieve his goal and successfully conduct twelve expert interviews. Most of the interviews were conducted before the initial restrictive measures were implemented. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone. In particular, it was increasingly difficult for the author to obtain adequate literature, as libraries were closed due to the exit restrictions.

5.3 Recommendations for Practice

The shortage of skilled professionals creates a significant challenge for the industry. To better understand the problem, the causes should first be identified. Some of the causes are difficult to counteract from a company's point of view and often require government measures. However, companies can also take measures and strive for solutions to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. It is important to know and understand the positive aspects of the industry as well as the negative aspects. The positive aspects can be used to improve the image of the profession and to stand out from the competition through effective marketing. A practical example of a hotel chain would be to give employees the opportunity to work internationally and thus respond to the strength "Travel Opportunity". Every company should be aware of the negative aspects regarding the attractiveness of a profession, an example for the industry is the lack of work-life balance. In this respect, a company can take measures to mitigate this negative aspect. Often it is difficult for companies to implement such measures, however the companies that are able to implement them should advertise themselves accordingly. In

this respect, particular attention should be paid to the relatively low wages, the relatively high number of working hours and the work-life balance. Practical recommendations in this regard would be strict adherence to laws on working hours, optimisation of the general working atmosphere, an appropriate and economically realistic wage structure, the introduction of a 5-day week and early roster planning options, introduction of staff benefits that provide the greatest possible added value for employees while keeping costs for the company low, active employee recognition through targeted measures and implementation in the corporate identity, optimisation of processes with the aim of reducing the workload and minimisation of personnel costs, introduction of an internal headhunter, internal training courses, especially for lateral entrants, optimised and modern target group-oriented marketing concepts, especially digital and word of mouth, on the one hand from the company, but also from industry associations or state organisations and individual management style with the aim of employee retention.

In the long term, digitalisation and technologisation offer a great advantage, as it avoids personnel-intensive structures. It is important to consider whether this personnel structure, in particular, is expected as a product by the guest or not (e.g. automated check-in or personal, individualised).

In many companies, HR management needs improvement and optimisation. Especially due to the shortage of skilled professionals, companies are forced to pay more attention to employee recruitment, employee satisfaction and employee retention. The measures for this are extremely diverse and can be implemented in practice.

Concerning migration, the introduction of a separate position can be recommended if the size of the company allows it, which is exclusively responsible for the recruiting process of migrants.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Due to the time limit of the master dissertation, some aspects could not be considered in detail. For further research, a more precise investigation of the causes would be particularly useful to be able to make a profitable and practically targeted decision regarding the degree of impact of the individual reasons.

Furthermore, more detailed research would be recommended concerning the implementation possibilities of the solution approaches. A further research approach would be an adaptation through benchmarking with an industry-related area that either deals well with the problem of the shortage of skilled professionals or has no problems with the shortage of skilled professionals at all.

Further research could also be done, especially with regard to digitalisation and technologisation as a solution to the shortage of skilled professionals, as well as migration as a solution approach.

5.5 Final Conclusion and Reflections

The shortage of skilled professionals is one of the central challenges facing the hotel and gastronomy industry nowadays. What has led to the situation of the shortage of skilled professionals is much more a complex concatenation of several aspects than a single reason.

Just like reasons, the approaches to solving the problem are diverse. We can start by avoiding the aspects that make the industry appear "unattractive" and by strengthening exactly those points that speak for the industry. Key points are the work-life-balance as well as the performance-related payment of professions in the industry, which have an impact on the image of the industry. It is important that the appropriate marketing is used for exactly those aspects that a company can name as positive points.

Appropriate HR management measures can lead to increased employee satisfaction, growing employee loyalty and retention and thus reduce the fluctuation rate and counteract the shortage of skilled professionals. Companies in the industry should pay particular attention to this.

Digitalisation and technologisation will play an increasing role in the future with regard to the shortage of skilled professionals, not only in the hotel and gastronomy industry but in most franchises. This factor is probably to be seen as a creeping development process that is changing the personnel-intensive industry into an increasingly capital-intensive one. The resulting question is whether the guest is asking for it, or whether they are longing for more "humanity", especially in today's increasingly individualized society. The digitalisation and technologisation of society lead to the fact that people have more leisure time and therefore this industry will continue to grow.

Migration is a potential solution but requires increased focus by the state. Simplified bureaucratic processes and, if necessary, a company internal position can be the first measures to be taken.

Today's marketing should be defined in terms of target groups and designed effectively to attract not only customers but also employees to the company. To increase the overall image of the industry, industry associations or governmental organisations could use marketing to strengthen the image of the entire industry and thus counteract the shortage of skilled professionals.

The hotel and gastronomy industry is one of the sectors most affected by the economic effects of the corona crisis, along with the shortage of skilled professionals, and is, therefore, facing several major challenges now and in the future. Many companies in the industry will not survive the crisis. Furthermore, it is possible that due to the corona crisis and the associated economic decline in the industry, the demand for skilled professionals will also fall in the near future.

Nevertheless, the industry is an ideal workplace for many people, due to its diversity, internationality and human interaction.

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Appendix A – Plain Language Statement



GRIFFITH COLLEGE DUBLIN

I. Introduction to the Research Study

Research Study Title: The shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry.
University: Griffith College, Dublin S Circular Rd, Merchants Quay, Dublin 8, D08 V04N, Ireland
Principal Investigator: Dr Garrett Ryan. Telephone: 01 4163324 or email garrett.ryan@griffith.ie

II. Details of what involvement in the Research Study will require

This project involves taking part in semi-structured interviews and or completion of a survey. These interviews will be audiotaped and seek to gather information on your experience of the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy sector. Questions will be directed towards your thoughts on the current situation of the company or organisation. It is estimated that these interviews will take no longer than 60 minutes to complete. Participants will be offered a copy of their interview transcripts for validation purposes.

III. Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study (if greater than that encountered in everyday life)

I do not anticipate any risk to participants as a result of involvement in this Research Study.

IV. Benefits (direct or indirect) to participants from involvement in the Research Study

The aim of this Research Study is to gain new insights that will enable people, especially those working in the hotel and gastronomy industry, to find solutions to the shortage of skilled professionals. This study can, therefore, be of benefit to you by giving you the opportunity to contribute to the development of these guidelines so that you and those working in the hospitality industry can benefit from improved development opportunities.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of participants. The taped interviews will be downloaded to a password-controlled computer, and typed transcripts will be held within password-controlled documents. Audiotapes and hard copies of transcripts will be held in a locked filing cabinet. Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

VI. Advice as to whether or not data is to be destroyed after a minimum period

Audiotapes will be destroyed on the successful completion of the Master dissertation.

VII. Statement that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

Involvement in this Research Study is voluntary. Invited participants relationship will not be affected in any way should they decide not to take part. Participants who decide to take part may withdraw from the Research Study at any point. There will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the Research Study have been completed.

If participants have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person.

Please contact:

Dr Garrett Ryan,
Griffith College Research Ethics Committee
South Circular Road, Dublin 8, Ireland

Mail: garrett.ryan@griffith.ie
Tel: +353 1 4163324

Appendix B – Informed Consent Form



I. Research Study Title

Research Study Title: The shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry.
University: Griffith College, Dublin S Circular Rd, Merchants Quay, Dublin 8, D08 V04N, Ireland
Principal Investigator: Dr Garrett Ryan. Telephone: 01 4163324 or email garrett.ryan@griffith.ie

II. Clarification of the purpose of the research

The aim of the research topics is to gain knowledge of the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry in the DACH-region and to analyse this, as well as to find possible solutions to the problem.

III. Confirmation of requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement

This project involves taking part in semi-structured interviews and or completion of a survey. These interviews will be audiotaped and seek to gather information on your experience of the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy sector. Questions will be directed towards your thoughts on the current situation of the company or organisation. It is estimated that these interviews will take no longer than 60 minutes to complete. Participants will be offered a copy of their interview transcripts for validation purposes.

Participant – please complete the following (Circle Yes or No for each question)

I have read the Plain Language Statement (or had it read to me)	Yes/No
I understand the information provided	Yes/No
I have had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study	Yes/No
I have received satisfactory answers to all my questions	Yes/No
I am aware that my interview will be audiotaped	Yes/No

IV. Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary

Involvement in this Research Study is voluntary. Invited participants relationship will not be affected in any way should they decide not to take part. Participants who decide to take part may withdraw from the Research Study at any point. There will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the Research Study have been completed.

V. Advice as to arrangements to be made to protect confidentiality of data, including that confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of participants. The taped interviews will be downloaded to a password-controlled computer, and typed transcripts will be held within password-controlled documents. Audiotapes and hard copies of transcripts will be held in a locked filing cabinet. Confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limitations.

VI. Signature:

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researchers, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project

Participants Signature: _____

Name in Block Capitals: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C – Semi-Structured Interview Guide

IBM M.Sc.

Manuel Kremer

Griffith College Dublin; SRH Hochschule Berlin



Master Dissertation Title:

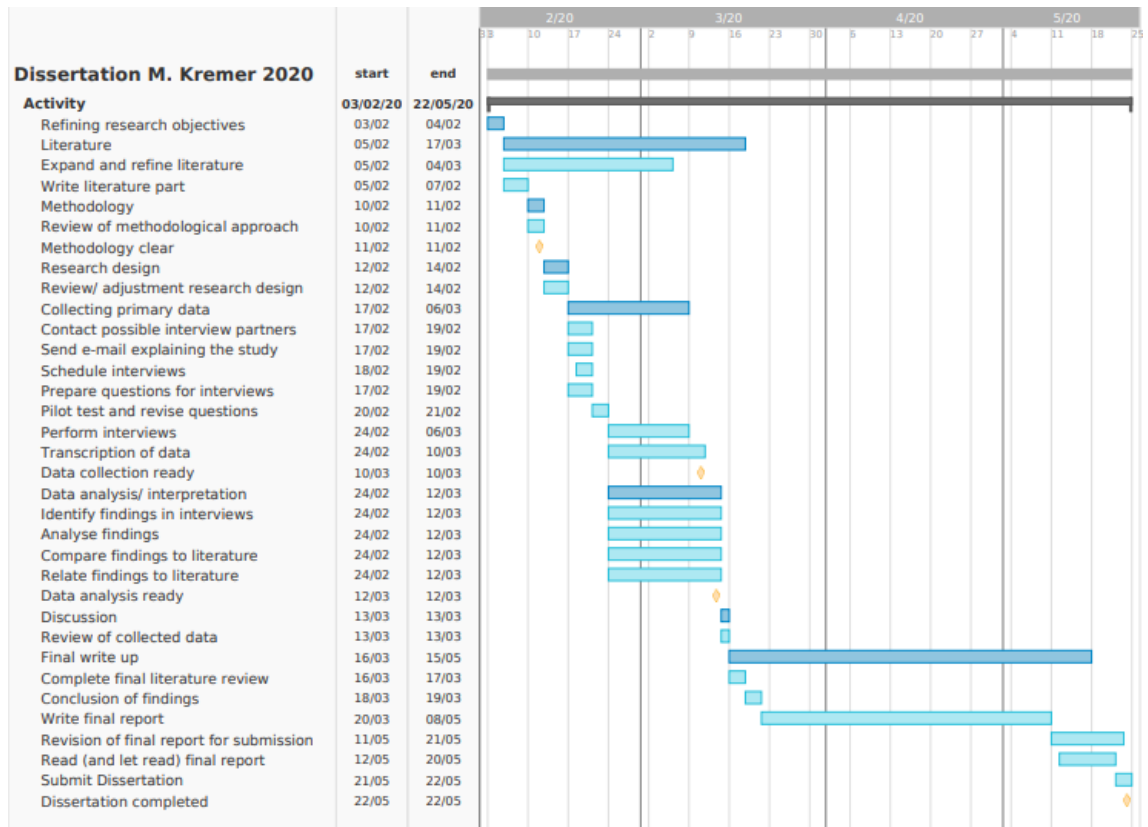
“An explanatory analysis of the possible solutions to the shortage of skilled professionals in the hospitality and gastronomy industry.”

Interview Structure (English)

- Acknowledgement of participation
- Explanation of the interview process
 - Time (30-45min)
 - Number of questions (10)
 - Language (German/English)
 - Legal Framework
 - Recording
 - Retention of data
 - Anonymisation
- Questions
 1. *“Which company do you work for and in which position?”*
 2. *“How long have you been working for the company?”*
 3. *“What nationality do you belong to? Age?”*
 4. *“You work in the hotel or gastronomy industry, which aspects of your profession speak for the industry, which against?”*
 5. *“Do you feel in your company the consequences and effects of the shortage of skilled professionals, if so how do they manifest themselves?”*
 6. *“In your opinion, what are the reasons for the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry?” (wages, working hours, pressure and stress, image, fewer trainees, more students, demographic change)*
 7. *“Which solution(s) do you pursue in the company to counteract the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry?” (Own experience)*

- a. How successful are they?
 - b. Are there negative aspects?
- 8. *"How do you see the following potential solution approaches as an opportunity to counter the shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry?"*
 - a. Digitalisation and Technologisation
 - b. HR Management Strategies
 - c. Marketing
 - d. Migration
 - e. Alternative Solutions
- 9. *"What effects do the analysed potential solution approaches have on the acute shortage of skilled professionals in the hotel and gastronomy industry, both in the short and long term, and which solution approaches are suitable for sustainable practical application?"*
- 10. *"Which possible solution approaches to the shortage of skilled professionals can be strategically combined to create a synergy?"*
- Other questions, acknowledgement and adoption

Appendix D – Gantt Chart



Clarification for Gantt Chart

1. Refining research objectives
In week one the author refined, based on the feedback of the Research Methods 2 proposal and in agreement with the supervisor, the research objective.
2. Literature
The literature research is continuously extended and refined from week one to week seven. The author wrote the primary theoretical literature part.
3. Methodology
The review of methodological approach took place in week two. At the end of this week, the methodological approach was definite.
4. Research design
After week two, the research design was finalized and thus offered a basis for the collection of primary data through qualitative interviews.
5. Collecting primary data
In week three to five, the primary data was collected. This means that interview partners have been contacted, appointments have been made, questions have been defined for the primary research and a pilot test was carried out.
6. Data analysis / interpretation
In week four to six the interviews have been conducted, and the results have been analysed, interpreted, compared with the literature and possible connections have been made. The data was collected by week seven. Discussion with supervisor.
7. Discussion and Final write up
After reviewing the collected data, the final write has begun. In this context, the literature part was revised and compared with the results of the data collection. The final dissertation was written, revised and submitted.