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Gap between hospitality employers' demands and hospitality students' perceptions regarding entry-level managers' requirements in the United States

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**PURDUE UNIVERSITY
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Thesis/Dissertation Acceptance**

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By Yijun Huang

Entitled GAP BETWEEN HOSPITALITY EMPLOYERS' DEMANDS AND HOSPITALITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ENTRY-LEVEL MANAGERS' REQUIREMENTS

For the degree of Master of Science

Is approved by the final examining committee:

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02/27/2014

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GAP BETWEEN HOSPITALITY EMPLOYERS' DEMANDS AND
HOSPITALITY STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS REGARDING ENTRY-LEVEL
MANAGERS' REQUIREMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of

Purdue University

by

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of

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West Lafayette, Indiana

To my parents, Weijuan and Weigang, who nurtured me and supported my studying
abroad at Purdue University

感谢我的父母，吴韦娟和黄为钢，对我的栽培和养育，支持我到普渡大学学习
深

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ABSTRACT

Huang, Yijun, M.S., Purdue University, May 2014. Gap between Hospitality Employers' Demands and Hospitality Students' Perceptions Regarding Entry-Level Managers' Requirements in the United States. Major Professor: Joseph La Lopa.

This study aims to identify the gap between recruiters and students regarding what knowledge, skills and abilities are most needed for graduates to secure entry-level managers in the hospitality industry. Previous literature used different approaches to attain a similar idea that students and recruiters do have different opinions, especially for those intrinsic or person-related characteristics. The researcher borrowed statements from different researchers and added two statements to make up the missing part of previous research and then combined, split and revised these statements to see whether students' thinking matched the industry's thinking. The results showed that recruiters generally ranked these statements higher than students did, especially when it came to ethical issues. Students tend to rank relocation and relevant working experience more highly than recruiters do. Moreover, the study demonstrated that students from other university hospitality programs have similar perceptions regarding entry-level managers' requirement with Purdue hospitality program students. Furthermore, gender issues among students are subtle. However, freshmen students tend to rank all statements higher than sophomore, junior, or senior students do. To narrow the gap, internships might offer an effective means as long as they are continual, applicable, and rewarding. Case studies,

field trips, and guest speakers serve as the bridges to industry. Educators should utilize curriculum closely bound to global trends so that students have a broader perspective.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In the field of hospitality, recruiters, schools, and students have all been confronted with hardships. Students who graduate from hospitality programs tend to change their focus from hospitality industries to others (Kwong & Law, 2008). Hospitality educators began to rethink their program values. And recruiters find it would be difficult to find qualified candidates. Therefore, Raybould and Wilkins (2006) argued that a hospitality management degree must meet all the stakeholders' needs—students, industry, and academic professionals. As such, this research examined these challenges from these three perspectives.

1.1.1 Challenges of hospitality industry

The world has gone through dramatic changes due to globalization (Cline, 2011). These changes might be the only constant we can expect. The hospitality and tourism industry is not exempt from such changes (Sigala & Baum, 2003). In other words, because the hospitality business is evolving as quickly as technology is, any resistance to change would have serious negative consequences. Just like many other industries, the hospitality industry has shown an increase in competition and complexity (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) argued that the hospitality industry is blamed for its poor image of a high-level turnover rate. As a result, the

industry may encounter challenges attracting young recruits and retaining the talented ones.

Moreover, although many hospitality schools apply real-life hotel and restaurant simulations in their students' education, industry people are more likely to use their own training programs. This would not only duplicate the cost of training between schools and the industry (Kauma & Waudou, 2012) but also undermine the value of the hospitality programs from students' perspective. Furthermore, educational resources are not fully appreciated by the industry. Industry recruiters would find it more difficult to locate qualified students due to different perceptions. All these problems cause self-doubt in students, loss of investment in school, and loss of talent in the industry.

1.1.2 Challenges of hospitality programs

Hospitality education, a relatively new field, has faced some challenges and criticism. In the 1980s, every university in the United States seemed to pursue a hospitality program to meet the explosion of new hotels all over the world. The number of 2- and 4-year hospitality and tourism programs increased by 300% in the last 25 years (Rowe, 1993). In addition, the number is still increasing. As of 2008, there were more than 170 four-year undergraduate programs and more than 800 associate-degree hospitality programs in the United States (Rivera & Upchurch, 2008). Enrollment in these programs has also been increasing (Tesone & Ricci, 2009). However, this rapid growth is not always a good sign from the hospitality recruiters' perspective. Tesone and Ricci (2009) argued that the diversity of hospitality programs had caused inconsistency among the programs and might cause frustration for recruiters' involved in the selection process. In addition, the hospitality programs face a threat from general business programs.

Hospitality programs are losing their “identity” because more and more general business courses have been added into the curriculum. Goodman and Sprague (1991) argued it is urgent to reposition hospitality programs and to adapt to industry changes or face the fate of specialized programs such as insurance, banking and so on, which have been absorbed into some more general business management programs. Moreover, after the hospitality industry stagnated in the 1990s (decreasing numbers of staff, restructuring of management boards, outsourcing of food and beverage businesses, and shifting from full service to limited service), most of the American hospitality programs were reduced, remodeled, and even cut (Kwok, Adams & Price, 2011).

To tackle these challenges, hospitality programs must reform their curriculum. Garavan and Morley (1997) argued, “Universities have a major role to play in structuring the experiences of graduates in terms of the kind of work they can expect to perform, their pay and promotion prospects and degree of freedom and discretion they may have within an organization” (p.153). If universities could have an active role predicting a good picture of their future options, taking on the a role of “forming and bridging expectations” (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001, p.316), disillusion could be made for students, and students would not have unrealistic expectations.

Moreover, Assante, Huffman, and Harp (2010) argued hospitality programs must be constantly evolving to satisfy the role of serving as the source for the industry’s future leaders. The goal of hospitality programs is to maintain the high quality of graduates and their placement and retention within the hospitality industry (Nelson & Dopson, 2001). Failure to do either of the two would lead to a failure of hospitality programs. Goodman and Sprague (1991) called for hospitality educators to adjust their curricula to meet the

changing needs of industry; otherwise, hospitality programs would lose their attraction to new students and therefore risk losing potential talent enrolling in the hospitality programs. Hospitality educators need to emphasize the importance of professionalism and a need to understand “business first, a hospitality company second; problem-solvers first and technicians second” (p. 68). As a result, hospitality schools are beginning to adjust their teaching patterns to meet this challenge. However, hospitality educators are being criticized for being either too industry related or too theoretically bound. Moreover, the students’ voices are usually overlooked. Therefore, hospitality programs need to meet both industry’s and students’ expectations by informing students of the skill sets. This would allow students to be prepared with these skill sets when they step into the industry.

To meet the skill sets by industry, methods of hospitality teaching have been dramatically impacted. Goodman and Sprague (1991) said that “developing specialized programs tailored to the needs of managers-in-training”, “expand the educational niche” and therefore “broaden graduates’ career horizons” (p.70) to keep hospitality programs unique, competitive and survive. Moreover, educators focus more on financial and management skills than on traditional operational skills. There also is a need for a change in management leadership style, rather than the traditional management style of supervision and control (Umbriet, 1993). The 20th century witnessed the need for management and financial capacity, and the last decade witnessed information technology being fully applied to the hospitality industry. Hospitality programs are absorbing these new elements into their curriculum. Besides, some schools do not only focus on the hospitality setting in their education. They place the hospitality industry under the larger umbrella of the tourism industry and name it Hospitality and Tourism

Management (HTM) to appeal to more students. Finally, the study by Phelan, Kavanaugh, Mills, and Jang (2009) stated that many hospitality courses set up their introductory classes to give students an overview of this industry and then more in-depth information in upper level courses. All of these changes matched Goodman and Sprague's (1991) statement that "traditional hospitality programs must continue to earn the loyalty of their stakeholders—students, faculty, and industry recruiters— by increasing the breadth and quality of their curricula" (p. 69). In general, most of changes in hospitality programs could also be regarded as getting a balance between applied and theoretical approaches (Raybould & Wilkins, 2006). This importance of integration between class theory and industry perspective is supported by many researchers (DiMicelli, 1998; Kelly-Patterson & George, 2001; Sigala & Baum, 2003).

1.1.3 Challenges of hospitality graduates

Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) cited one student's comment when he first stepped into the hospitality industry: "[I was] failed by the University. --- students should be fully informed about what they are being involved in bad or good" (p.321).

When hospitality students are asked why they applied to enter a hospitality program, their responses indicate that they are more likely to have unrealistically high expectation of the industry's jobs, namely, a glamorous working environment, great gourmet food, nice business suits, and so on. However, many end up rethinking their careers when they realize they are not fit for the industry (Megan, 1993). Therefore, it is necessary for hospitality students to have realistic expectations of their industry. Students need to evaluate their own backgrounds, expectations, career goals, and skills before they enter a

hospitality program (Martin & McCabe, 2007). Failure to do so could lead to huge negative consequences for these students (O'Mahony, McWilliams, & Whitelaw, 2001).

Moreover, Goodman and Sprague (1991) argued that hospitality graduates are competing with other general business graduates because the line between the hospitality program and general business program is apparently blurring. Hospitality programs are beginning to offer some business-related courses such as accounting and human resources, while general business programs are offering some hospitality-specific courses like travel-agency operations and golf and skiing management. Graduates from hospitality programs would be no different from other business programs graduates, as this first group is losing its "hospitality identity" when it looks for jobs, which will mask the group's career options.

Besides the employment competition from general business graduates, hospitality students might be "short-sighted" for their career. The study by Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) investigated 21 hospitality graduates from Thames Valley University in the United Kingdom about their future job prospects only to find two of the 21 indicated they would have a long-term career with the organization. The other 19 stated that they were just working at the current organization for short-term monetary benefit or taking advantage of training opportunities. What is more, nearly half of 21 graduates said they are anxious and uncertain about having a long-term relationship with the hospitality industry. However, this study also investigated 15 managers and found 14 managers are seeking long-term relationship with graduates. Namely, graduates "focus their pay and conditions on more than career development opportunities, which organizations believe are important" (p. 322).

Finally, when hospitality students leave campus and step into the industry, they are being criticized for their slow adoption to the changing working environment. The study by Raybould and Wilkins (2006) found that most hospitality graduates meet the needs of academic rigor but failed to meet industry expectations regarding the required skill sets needed in the workplace. Assante, Huffman, and Harp (2010) stated that “hospitality educators, industry executives and students are questioning whether today’s graduates are adequately prepared as they enter a workforce environment that is more complex than ever before” (p.164).

1.1.4 Background of the Gap Between Students and Recruiters

Kelley-Patterson and George (2001) mentioned the breach between industry and school and cited one manager’s comment that universities are “Ivory Towers.” “There are gaps in university preparation—universities need to think of practical happenings at work—not just theoretical frameworks” (p. 321). The goal of any hospitality management program is to meet the industry’s need for future successful recruits; therefore, educators need to make sure the curriculum design should not only match educational demand but also industry’s expectations regarding the required knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Therefore, understanding what the industry is expecting would benefit students by establishing a realistic view of their future jobs.

The literature has shown that students and employers have different opinions on what the most important characteristics are for any potential employee to be an eligible entry-level manager (Kamau & Waudu, 2012; Kwok et al., 2011; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Seonghee, Erdem, and Johanson, 2006).

There are many studies that focus on what industry people regard as important characteristics of hospitality graduates (Kaman & Waudo, 2012; Kwok et al., 2011; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Tesone and Ricci, 2012). Industry people insist that they are closer to real life and that they understand what is truly needed, while schools insist that students who are being inculcated in their schools' curricula will gain a more structured knowledge. There is no single way to judge which one is right. In fact, the industry should learn from schools and vice versa (Kamau & Waudo, 2012).

Students regarded knowledge or conceptual ideas as much more important than recruiters did (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Furthermore, most students tended to think academic performance (Kwok et al., 2011) or specific skills are recruiters' most important concerns. In contrast, the study by Kwok et al. (2011) found recruiters favored students who had lower academic performances over students who had average or even better academic performance. This is because recruiters found students who had higher GPAs tended to have an unrealistic expectation about their careers and would like to "run before they could walk" (Kelley-Patterson & George, 2001, p. 319). Moreover, in their study, Tesone and Ricci (2009) introduced three domains of competencies: knowledge, skills and abilities, and attitude. And recruiters regarded attitude more important than students did (Tesone & Ricci, 2009). What is more, Cheung, Law, and He (2010) said recruiters ranked leadership skill as the top skill, while students only ranked it fifth but ranked communication as the most important. Recruiters thought leadership skill would be the cornerstone of successful hospitality candidates, while students thought it would be difficult for them to truly understand the meaning of leadership. Based on these findings, academic performance or specific working skills are usually disregarded by

recruiters. However, candidates' general aptitudes, attitude, and leadership skills are much more appreciated by recruiters.

Regarding why knowledge is generally considered less important by recruiters, Raybould and Wilkins (2005) stated that few hotel employers have a higher degree, which could make them undervalue the importance of knowledge taught by tertiary schools. Furthermore, among the few hospitality employers who have advanced degrees, most had specialized in the fields of human resources or marketing. For new graduates, these fields are not as easily accessible as are operational jobs because managerial jobs require a profound understanding of the industry. This makes it difficult for graduates' knowledge or grasp of conceptual ideas to be appreciated and valued by their managers.

As mentioned above, GPA, typically regarded as a major indicator by school administrators, is being questioned in terms of whether they would measure hospitality students' general capacities and potentiality correctly. Meanwhile, leadership, being the most important competency according to Cheung et al. (2010) is difficult to measure by simply looking at a person's GPA. Therefore, hospitality programs need to create more courses that would cultivate students' leadership competency and also find a more effective way to measure this kind of competency. Doing so will allow students to know what recruiters are looking for; this will enable students to better prepare for their future employment. Recruiters would also be able to facilitate their selection process by knowing students' valued competency.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Hospitality programs have a long history of striving to meet the changing needs of the hospitality industry. And researchers have been defining the essence of hospitality

programs and identifying valuable characteristics needed for hospitality graduates (Kaman & Waudou, 2012; Kwok et al., 2011; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Tesone and Ricci, 2012) because hospitality graduates are puzzled about their career options (Zopiatis, 2007). That is to say, the industry's actual needs might be overemphasized or disregarded by graduates. Although most researchers have pointed out this problem, the issue has not been solved thus far. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the gap between recruiters' demands and students' perceptions regarding entry-level managers' requirements in the United States and then find a way to narrow this gap.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study will survey students from major hospitality programs as well as hospitality recruiters who are actively seeking candidates. The specific objectives of the study include:

1. To identify whether there is a gap between recruiters' demands and students' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs.
2. To identify whether there is a gap between Purdue students' and non-Purdue students' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs.
3. To identify whether there are gender differences in students' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs.
4. To identify whether there are differences among students' perceptions, based on the students' academic levels, regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Sandwith (1993) stated that the best way to solve the confusion of hospitality graduates regarding their career options is to make a “comprehensive framework that delineates a distinct hierarchy of skills and knowledge, or competencies, needed by managers in an organization” (p. 43). Furthermore, Assante, Huffman, and Harp (2010) argued that it is necessary to gather information from the industry as to what competencies graduates must have to be successful. Because the dramatic change within the hospitality industry and the trend of globalization, sticking to the past is not a good way to judge current situations and to predict our future. The industry needs to know students’ perceptions of it, and students should know what it takes to gain an entry-level management position upon graduation. In that way, students will be better prepared to be successful in their careers. To prepare students to enter such a rapidly changing industry, students should know what key knowledge, skills, and abilities the industry is looking for. And more importantly, students must know what kind of knowledge, skills, and abilities they as students are overlooking but recruiters recognize.

Besides this mismatch of perceptions between recruiters and students, the ever-increasing tuition of college (Archibald & Feldman, 2012) combined with financial difficulties for higher education (Stuart, 2012) has caused students to hesitate to seek higher educational diplomas and to begin to question the value of higher education. Students are focusing more on the outcomes of chosen programs (Raybould & Wilkins, 2006). If a hospitality program fails to provide a clear picture of a graduate’s future career, university programs and their host school would likely undergo a huge loss of potential candidates. So is the hospitality program.

Finally, most of the previous studies are limited geographically by having studied only one school or one area. This study covered four major hospitality programs in the United States. What is more, the previous literature has not adequately addressed the issue of gender or year level regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs in America. It is necessary to conduct research like this to determine whether gender or year level would make differences regarding what knowledge and abilities are needed to obtain an entry-level management job in the hospitality industry in the United State

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The current chapter reviews the literature concerning knowledge, skills, and abilities highlighted most by recruiters along with knowledge, skills, and abilities highlighted most by students. This is followed by a comparison of their highlighted knowledge, skills, and abilities. Because some researchers argued that an internship would be a good way to narrow the gap between recruiters' and students' perceptions regarding entry-level managers' requirements, the researcher was also going to examine this method in this chapter. Finally, hypotheses of this study are provided at the end of this chapter.

2.1 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Highlighted Most by Recruiters

Researchers have for decades debated the essential hospitality skill set needed by the industry. Chung (2000) stated that required competencies in the hospitality industry have changed over time. In the early 1970s and 1980s, researchers found technical skills would be the most important. Later, the trend became that general management knowledge was mentioned more frequently except for some specific technical skills.

In the late 1980s, Katz (1986) suggested that developing better managers could improve overall business effectiveness. As such, it would be important to develop skill sets that are most needed at the level of responsibility for which an employee being considered. Then Katz introduced his three basic skills, which he perceived as the

cornerstone of future successful managers. They are (a) technical, (b) human, and (c) conceptual. He also stated that technical skills are indispensable to operation-line positions. However, as employees move further and further away from the actual physical operations, the need for technical skills became less important. Human skills include the ability to work effectively as a group member and to build a cooperative effort. He also divided human skills into two parts: (a) leadership ability with the manager's own unit and (b) skill in intergroup relationships. Conceptual skills, as Katz stated, involved the ability to see the organization as a whole, and conceptual skills extended to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces as a whole. Conceptual skills would be much needed in executive-level positions.

Tas (1988) conducted a study to identify the most important competencies for hotel general manager trainees and found six essential competencies for future managers: (a) managing guest problems with understanding and sensitivity; (b) maintaining professional and ethical standards in the work environment; (c) communicating effectively, both in writing and orally; (d) demonstrating professional appearance and poise; (e) developing positive customer relations; and (f) striving to achieve positive working relationships with employees based on the perception of work interaction. From these essential competencies, Tas stated that human relation skills such as dealing with guest problems, employees' professional and ethical quality, effective communications, positive customer relations, and positive working relationships are what are primarily focused on by managers.

The study by Goodman and Sprague (1991) argued that due to more and more reorganizations of hotel properties into international chain hotels, the set of typically required skills has also changed. Candidates needed to have a broader scope of perspective and to understand the trend of globalization. What is more, this study also found hospitality management trainees are expected to understand things such as spreadsheets, psychographics, and strategic planning to meet the rapid changes of this industry.

The study by Sandwith (1993) followed Katz's (1984) work and expanded his three fundamental skill areas (technical, human, and conceptual) into his competency-domain model to identify managerial competencies. The five domains are (a) conceptual-creative, (b) leadership (c), interpersonal, (d) administrative, and (e) technical. The conceptual domain consisted of cognitive skills—understanding key functions of the job. The leadership domain involved the ability to strategically select opportunities and to act by identifying whom to influence and how to effectively influence them. The interpersonal domain focused on the skill sets for effective interactions with subordinates, managers, and customers. The administrative domain involved personal management and financial management in the organization. Finally, the technical domain involved knowledge and skills observed by organizational standards. Sandwith stated that his competency domain could not only be developed for a particular field to describe knowledge and skills required but also provided a comprehensive framework for skill set development in the organization.

The study by Nelson and Dopson (2001) investigated 302 hotel executives from the American membership of AH&MA, 94 human resource specialists, and 250 alumni of

the sponsoring school and found 10 key skills required for successful hospitality managers. The 10 key skills were (a) identifying and solving managerial problems, (b) demonstrating leadership abilities, (c) controlling costs effectively, (d) developing positive customer relationships, (e) adapting the organization to meet customer needs, (f) training and coaching employees, (g) managing crisis situations, (h) solving customer problems, (i) developing positive employee relations, and (j) demonstrating effective oral communication skills.

The study by Chung-Herrera, Enz, and Lankau (2003) used the competency model, which was a descriptive tool identifying the knowledge and abilities needed in the hospitality organization. This competency model consisted of 8 overarching factors, 28 dimensions and 99 specific behavioral competencies. The study investigated 127 hospitality managers and found self-management was the most important factor, while ethics and integrity were the most important dimensions.

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) adopted a generic skills framework, which has been widely accepted in the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia in curriculum analysis and design rather than the management competency model by Sandwith (1993). Kearns (2001) argued that generic skills have been labeled as transferable skills, which are necessary for employability (as cited in Raybould & Wilkins, 2006, p.180). What is more, generic skills have also been described as core skills, key competencies, and more recently, as “employability skills.” Raybould and Wilkins (2006) believed this broader focus would not only meet the changing hospitality industry but also prepare students for their life-long learning outside of their employment. Their study developed nine generic skill areas for hospitality graduates. They were (a) oral communication, (b) written

communication, (c) problem solving, (d) conceptual and analytical, (e) information management, (f) teamwork and leadership, (g) interpersonal, (h) adaptability and learning, and, (i) self-management. Raybould and Wilkins (2005) also expanded nine generic skill areas into 52 detailed descriptors. However, the results of this study showed students and recruiters have the most agreement on generic areas but disagreement on detailed descriptors.

The study by Zapiatis (2007) investigated students, professionals, and educators to acquire the new knowledge, skills, and abilities regarded by these three stakeholders. The author investigated 166 students, 77 hospitality professionals and 10 hospitality educators in Cyprus and found that these 77 hospitality professionals saw (a) positive attitude, (b) communication skills, (c) human skills, (d) self-discipline, and (e) basic hospitality technical skills as the most important.

The study by Tesone and Ricci (2009) investigated 137 experienced lodging and restaurant managers to look for the important competencies when they expect entry-level workers who were graduates of hospitality management programs. The researchers made three categories of competency: knowledge, skills and abilities, and attitude. The top five within the knowledge category are knowledge of (a) grooming and professional image standards, (b) guest services standards, (c) the realities involved in this type of work, (d) business management and ethics, and (e) hospitality products and services. The highlighted factors within skills and abilities are (a) the ability to work as part of a team, (b) effective listening skills, (c) verbal and written communication skills, (d) the ability to project a professional image, (e) the ability to empathize with the guest experience, and (f) the ability to anticipate guest wants and needs to provide service. Concerning attitudes,

the most important factors are (a) taking personal pride in satisfying the needs of others, (b) preferring to help others before satisfying one's own needs, (c) a tendency to move toward possibilities as opposed to avoiding negative outcomes, (d) defining oneself as empathetic to the needs of others, and (e) preferring working with people over working on administrative tasks.

The study by Kwok et al. (2011) investigated 22 recruiters or managers from 14 hospitality companies and found that recruiters highlighted (a) personality, (b) leadership, (c) relevant job experience, (d) PO (personality-organization fit) and PJ (personality-job fit), and (e) flexibility as the top five most important characteristics.

Finally, Tesone and Ricci (2012) investigated 156 managers and executives in Orlando to identify perceptions of attributes preferred for entry-level employees in the hospitality industry. In their study, they found the five most important competencies for hotel staff. These were (a) the ability to work as part of a team; (b) effective listening, verbal, and written communication skills; (c) the ability to project a professional image; (d) knowledge of grooming and professional image standards; and (e) the ability to empathize with the guest experience. Moreover, the study by Kamau & Waubo (2012) investigated 106 human resource managers in Nairobi who mentioned (a) conflict resolution, (b) self-initiative, (c) sales and marketing, and (d) understanding the level of service expected by international guests as the most important skills for employees.

2.2 Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Highlighted Most by Students

There is more literature on recruiters' perceptions of the key knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for employers than there is about students' perceptions of the key knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for them. However, there is still some research

being conducted to compare students with recruiters (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Tesone & Ricci, 2009).

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) investigated 211 undergraduate hospitality management students in Australia and used the term “over qualified but under experienced” (p. 211) to describe most hotel program graduates who have solid academic backgrounds but limited industry exposure. In their study, they generated 52 detailed descriptors of key knowledge, skills, and abilities under nine domains. Students ranked (a) deal effectively with customers’ problems, (b) demonstrate time management skills, (c) operate effectively and calmly in crises, (d) communicate appropriately with other members of a work group, and (e) motivate and encourage employees as the top five most important characteristics.

Tesone and Ricci (2009) additionally investigated 128 graduates from Florida International University about their perceptions of the most important knowledge, abilities, and attitude they needed for entry-level management positions. Tesone and Ricci (2009) generated three domains, which are knowledge, skills and abilities, and attitude. In the knowledge domain, knowledge of (a) guest services standards, (b) grooming and professional image standards, (c) basic terminology used in the industry, (d) the realities involved in hospitality work, and (e) business and management ethics were the top five most valued kinds of knowledge. Concerning skills, the researchers found that (a) the ability to work as part of a team; (b) effective listening, verbal, and written communication skills; (c) the ability to project a professional image; (d) the ability to anticipate guest wants and needs to provide service; and (e) the ability to generate an attitude of trust among coworkers were the top five characteristics. For the attitude

domain, (a) taking personal pride in satisfying the needs of others, (b) believing that hard work is rewarded through promotion, (c) defining oneself as outgoing and social, (d) preferring to help others before satisfying the needs of the self, and (e) preferring to work in pleasant surroundings rather than in clinical environments were the top five characteristics.

2.3 Comparison of Recruiters' and Students' Highlighted Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

The study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) generated 52 skill descriptors under nine generic skill areas for hospitality students' competencies. The nine generic skill areas are (a) oral communication, (b) written communication, (c) problem solving, (d) conceptual and analytical, (e) information management, (f) teamwork and leadership, (g) interpersonal, (h) adaptability and learning, and (i) self-management. The researchers found that among the five biggest differences of skill descriptors, three of them came from conceptual and analytical, one comes from oral communication, and the other from teamwork and leadership. The areas of interpersonal skills, problem-solving skills, and self-management skill contain the top 10 skill descriptors as described by recruiters. No skill descriptors from the conceptual and analytical skill areas appear in the top 20 (total skill descriptor number is 52), and recruiters actually ranked 8 out of 10 descriptors under the conceptual and analytical skill areas in the bottom 20, while students generally ranked these descriptors much higher.

The study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) mentioned that students generally consider conceptual and analytical knowledge to be more important than industry people do. Therefore, after graduation, students have a full desire to apply their class theory to

work. However, the rule of thumb in the hospitality industry is that you cannot walk into a high position without having enough exposure to frontline working experience, even if you have graduated from a highly reputable hospitality program. This is why industry people insist that students begin their hotel careers in basic operations. The mismatch between the students' eagerness to apply their advanced knowledge and the employers' intentions to impose basic operational work on students has frustrated students, making them question the value of hospitality programs. As a result, many students pursue careers in other industries. Moreover, even though students are required to carry a large load of internships or extracurricular activities, most of their daily jobs consist only of low-level operational work. Most students therefore lack supervisory experience and become frustrated when they are on the managerial track in a training program because a managerial position calls for supervisory and leadership competencies rather than operational skills.

The study by Cheung et al. (2010) found that leadership was ranked highest by recruiters, while students only ranked leadership fifth and ranked communication as number one. The author explained that the "leadership" competency is not fully understood by students because it is a more complex concept than is straightforward "communication." Furthermore, leadership qualities are difficult to measure and hard to cultivate in schools. Students believe this industry is still "people-oriented" (p. 29) because they think communication skills serve as the liaison to customers, coworkers, and managers. However, under the leadership domain, both recruiters and students ranked "works as a member of a team" as the top factor because both recruiters and students know that team building is a cornerstone of providing better customer service.

Tesone and Ricci (2009) defined knowledge and skills as “requirements for task performance leading to comprehensive job performance” (p.78), and they defined attitude as “individual preferences for responses to environmental stimuli” (p.79). In their study, they mentioned that recruiters and students agree most with the knowledge section and somewhat agree within the skills and abilities section. It is in the attitude section that students and recruiters show the most disagreement.

Although different researchers have developed their own lists, the one factor that is common among them is that employers seek general aptitude rather than a specific working skill or academic performance. Tesone and Ricci (2009) mentioned that hospitality recruiters prefer attitude-fit over skills-fit when they hire people. Raybould and Wilkins (2005) also concluded that hospitality graduates must have an overall capacity for interpersonal relations. Compared with this generic capacity, technical skills seem less important. Martin and McCabe (2007) defined this generic capacity as being “adaptive and flexible,” and recruiters want employees who “can rapidly integrate into the company and exhibit a range of interpersonal and social skills alongside their education attainments” (p. 31). Martin and McCabe (2007) also used the term “soft skills” to describe an understanding of the service culture and customers’ expectations (p. 30). This kind of social skill has been noted as being more important than any other skill is. Although technical skills can be taught, soft skills cannot be easily obtained. Interestingly, Raybould and Wilkins (2005) found that employers think that adaptation and the ability to learn are more important than students do.

It is difficult to identify competencies (such as interpersonal skills, leadership, problem-solving capacity, and ethical principles) by traditional academic evaluation. This

leads to an interesting conflict regarding use of GPA. In their study, Kwok et al. (2011) found that 12 out of 14 hospitality companies were not concerned about GPA. They would rather look for an overall history of great work experience and involvement in various activities. Two of the 14 companies said that they would prefer students who had a “reasonable” academic performance (3.0 or above). In other words, two companies that did value GPA would consider it only when they found the interviewees to be identical in other major characteristics (such as leadership, personal fit, and job experience). This trend was a big challenge to schools because GPA is always a major indicator of student performance. The study by Ruetzler et al. (2010) also mentioned that from the recruiter’s perspective, GPA is more like a screening tool to select candidates from large pools. However, GPA may be used as a way to judge a candidate’s potential if he or she does not show too many extracurricular activities.

What makes the case more interesting is that it is not always true that employers favor students who have higher GPAs. Kwok et al. (2011) mentioned that students who have only a high GPA without other qualifications were not fully appreciated by the industry. Because students with high academic achievements in their university are usually overly optimistic about their future jobs, they fail to adjust to the volatile hospitality environment. Other students with average or below-average academic performances, however, might pursue a relatively promising and long-term career due to their lower expectations.

Sturman (2001) even identified a trend in which students who have a lower GPA are more likely to accept offers from hospitality operations jobs and earn relatively lower salaries than are students who either get positions in a specialized field (accounting,

human resources, and so on) or similar positions outside the hospitality industry. It seems that hospitality positions are regarded as the least desirable offers, which causes the hospitality industry to lose many potential candidates.

2.4 Is Serving as an Intern a Good Approach to Narrow the Gap?

The study by Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) also found that students with internship experience would have more career intentions within the industry because these experiences provide them more realistic expectations of the industry. Tas (1988) stated that the application of well-structured internship programs within hospitality curriculum provided candidates hands-on experience in a real-world setting. Many hospitality schools incorporated mandatory internship hours into their curriculum design (Tesone & Ricci, 2012). Hospitality educators wanted to use this approach to fully prepare students before they graduate. Thus, internships provided a bridge to connect practice (by internship) to theory (by class) (Zapiatis, 2007).

The study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) noted that today, almost every program in the hospitality school has a part-time or relevant-industry working requirement in the curriculum. The point of an internship was to help students have a smooth transition into the industry. However, researchers have mostly found that internships (or practical working experience) have made students fall into tedious and repetitive frontline work. This not only greatly reduced their passion and enthusiasm for their future careers but also masked the true managerial requirement the industry required (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Zapiatis, 2007). Students assumed that the repetitive and tedious heavy labor represented their future hospitality jobs and that they would not be able to figure out a way to use theories or techniques learned in class to solve problems in their internships.

On the contrary, hotel employers argued that the sufficient frontline working experience is the cornerstone for future managerial environments. One fact that must be mentioned is that most internships do not last longer than a year. After an internship, students returned to campus and failed to get the opportunity to be promoted to a higher level due to the relative short-term period of the internship.

Sobaih (2011) mentioned that employers did not want to invest too much in part-time employees or short-term workers as they might put into full-time employees. The study by Sobaih (2011) investigated 22 hotel and restaurant owners and managers in South Wales, United Kingdom. Two-thirds of hospitality employers said they would give fewer training opportunities to part-time workers because they thought part-time employees would give a relatively low return on investment. According to the human capital theory, business people are reluctant to invest much time and money when they regard something or someone as offering “a lower return on investment.” This theory, combined Zapiatis’s study (2007), seemed to call into question the importance and value of most internship programs.

2.5 Hypotheses

Researchers like Kamau & Waubo, (2012); Kwok et al., (2011); Raybould and Wilkins, (2005); and Zapiatis (2007) have shown there existed difference between recruiters’ demands and students’ perceptions regarding entry-level managers’ requirement. However, Kamau & Waubo conducted their research in Nairobi; Raybould and Wilkins conducted their research in Australia and Zapiatis conducted his research in Crypus. Although Kwok et al. conducted their research in the United States, the recruiters’ demands and students’ perceptions may change over the time. So it would be necessary

to identify the current recruiters' demands and students' perceptions regarding entry-level managers' requirement to reflect the trend. Therefore, the researcher set up research hypothesis one to identify this gap.

Research hypothesis one: There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by recruiters versus students which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry.

Most of the previous literature was investigating hospitality students at one school or in one area. Few researchers have done comparisons between hospitality programs nationwide. To that end, the researcher sampled four top-tier hospitality undergraduate programs nationally to fill in this gap. Therefore, research hypothesis two was established.

Research hypothesis two: There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by Purdue students versus non-Purdue students which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry.

Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) found that female students would have greater retention rate than male students to work in the hospitality industry. Besides that, few of the previous literature addressed the gender regarding their perceptions about entry-level management requirement. And female students outnumbered male students in most hospitality undergraduate programs recently. Therefore, the researcher set up research hypothesis three to test whether there is gender difference between male and female students.

Research hypothesis three: There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by male students versus female students which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry.

Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) argued that different year level students would have different career intentions especially between freshmen and seniors because they are in their “transitional stage and making major academic and career-related decisions”. (p.515) The study by Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins (2010) also found that more senior students were going to quit the hospitality industry than freshmen students. Therefore, the researcher wanted to determine if student perceptions of what it takes to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry changed as they went from being a first year student to a graduating senior. Therefore, research hypothesis four was established to test this gap.

Research hypothesis four: There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by students in different academic years which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry.

Previous studies have investigated the required skill set needed to perform entry-level management positions in the hospitality industry. However, few have conducted a qualitative analysis to determine if there is a gap between students and recruiters in terms of the key strengths needed to get an entry-level management positions. What is more, qualitative approach may explore specific explanations about the different perceptions regarding entry-level managers’ requirement between students and recruiters that may not be found in quantitative data. Therefore, research hypothesis five was established.

Research hypothesis five: There is a significant difference in the qualitative descriptors between recruiters’ and students’ perceptions regarding graduates’ key strengths to be qualified entry-level managers.

There have been limited qualitative studies looking into the weaknesses of graduates who apply for entry-level management positions in the hospitality industry. To determine if there is a gap between students and recruiters in terms of the key weaknesses of students seeking entry-level management positions in the hospitality industry research hypothesis six was established.

Research hypothesis six: There is a significant difference in the qualitative descriptors between recruiters' and students' perceptions regarding graduates' key weaknesses to be qualified entry-level managers.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

This research primarily aims to identify the gap between recruiters' demands and students' perceptions regarding hospitality industry entry-level managers' requirements in the United States. A quantitative approach was adopted in this research. To collect data, the researcher conducted an online self-administered survey for Qualtrics among hospitality undergraduate students in major hospitality programs and recruiters who were actively recruiting graduates recently. In this chapter, participants, materials, procedure and analysis will be discussed.

3.1 Participants

The student sample was drawn from four major undergraduate hospitality programs covering all year levels in the United States.

The recruiter sample was drawn from those who recruited students at Purdue.

3.2 Materials

An online self-administered questionnaire was developed for Qualtrics for this study. It began with a short paragraph briefly explaining the purpose, content, and significance of the survey, followed by a confidentiality guarantee by the researcher. The main instrument consisted of three parts: (a) survey items, (b) demographic background, and (c) open-ended questions. The first part of survey items consisted of 27 statement choice questions measured on 7-point Likert scale from "not at all important" as 1 to

“extremely important” as 7. Out of these 27 statement choice questions, 25 statement choice questions were taken from the study by Kamau & Waubo, (2012); Kwok et al., (2011); Raybould and Wilkins, (2005); and Zapiatis (2007). The remaining two were added by the researcher and the researcher’s advisor to make up the missing part from previous research. The second part of demographic background asked recruiters and students their basic information like gender, age, etc. And students were asked their year level status to test whether different year level students would have different perceptions toward entry-level managers’ requirement. The third part of open-ended questions consisted of three questions to both recruiters and students respectively.

3.2.1 Survey Items

The survey items drawn for this study came from studies by Kamau & Waubo, (2012); Kwok et al., (2011); Raybould and Wilkins, (2005); and Zapiatis (2007). These studies were investigating what key knowledge, skills and abilities recruiters are looking for when they hire potential candidates. The researcher picked these four studies because they are the best studies available in the literature discussing managers’ expectations of entry-level managers’ knowledge, skills and abilities. Three out of the four studies performed a comparison between graduates and employers. Raybould and Wilkins (2005) conducted a comparison among 371 hospitality industry managers and 211 undergraduate hospitality management students about the knowledge, skills and abilities considered to be the most important. Zapiatis (2007) investigated 166 students, 77 hospitality professionals, and 10 hospitality educators to determine the new knowledge, skills, and abilities most highly regarded by these three stakeholder groups. Kamau & Waubo (2012) investigated 106 human resource managers and 56 employees in Nairobi to investigate

the most important skills for employees. Although the study by Kwok et al. (2011) was not doing a comparison between recruiters and students, they investigated 22 recruiters or managers from 14 hospitality companies in the United States in 2011. This study is recent and has the same background as the researcher's study. Moreover, using the survey items from one article could also be biased. The study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) failed to mention the personality fit and knowledge of sales and marketing as expected competencies. The study by Zapiatis (2007) failed to mention ethics and professional manners as expected competencies. The study by Kwok et al. (2011) failed to mention communication skills and self-discipline as expected competencies. Finally, the study by Kamau & Waubo (2012) failed to mention team working, ethics and personality fit as expected competencies.

Although the above-mentioned four studies came from four different areas (Australia, Cyprus, Nigeria and the United States), due to the impact of globalization, the political, geographical and cultural differences may be minimized. Although these four studies used four different statements, the researcher was going to combine similar items, split items which have one more construct and rewrite all the items to keep them consistent. Moreover, the researcher was also going to use the 7-point Likert Scale other than four different measurements as used in these four studies. Therefore, the impact of different statements and measurements could also be minimized.

3.2.1.1 Draft Survey Items

The draft survey items were taken from previous research and the researcher's and his advisor's add to make up the missing part of previous research. Researcher chose the

draft survey items from four different researchers: Raybould and Wilkins, (2005); Zapiatis (2007); Kwok et al. (2011) and Kamau &Waubo (2012).

The first study to provide an item for this study came from Raybould and Wilkins (2005). They adopted their generic skills framework to investigate 371 hospitality industry managers in Australia to look for their expectations of graduate skills. Generic skills have been described as core skills, key competencies and, more recently, as “employability skills.” In their study, they generated 52 detailed descriptors of key knowledge, skills, and abilities under nine generic skill areas. The nine generic skill areas were (a) oral communication, (b) written communication, (c) problem solving, (d) conceptual and analytical, (e) information management, (f) teamwork and leadership, (g) interpersonal, (h) adaptability and learning, and (i) self-management. Raybould and Wilkins (2005) also expanded nine generic skill areas into 52 detailed descriptors. The researcher picked the top 10 skill descriptors reviewed by hospitality managers. These were a) anticipate client needs, (b) maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment, (c) demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff, (d) demonstrate listening skills, (e) work without close supervision, (f) deal effectively with customers’ problems, (g) operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations, (h) demonstrate cultural awareness in dealing with staff and guests, (i) demonstrate time management skills, and (j) communicate appropriately with other members of a workplace.

The second study that provided survey items for this study came from Zapiatis (2007). He investigated students, professionals, and educators to learn of the new knowledge, skills, and abilities regarded by these three stakeholders. The author investigated 166

students, 77 hospitality professionals and 10 hospitality educators in Cyprus. The researcher extracted top five items from those 77 hospitality professionals' perspectives. These were (a) positive attitude, (b) communication skills, (c) human skills, (d) self-discipline, and (e) basic hospitality technical skills.

The third study to provide survey items for this study came from Kwok et al. (2011). They investigated 22 recruiters or managers from 14 hospitality companies in the United States to look for the most important knowledge, skills and abilities these recruiters needed when they seek employees. The researcher extracted the top five items from this study. They were (a) leadership, (b) relevant job experience, (c) PO (person-organization) & PJ (person-job) fit, (d) personality, and (e) flexibility.

Finally, the study by Kamau & Waubo (2012) investigated 106 human resource managers in Nairobi to look for the most important knowledge, skills, and abilities these managers needed their employees to possess. The researcher extracted the top four items from this study. They were (a) conflict resolution, (b) self-initiative, (c) sales and marketing, and (d) understanding the level of service expected by international guests.

The researcher also chose to add statements pertaining to knowledge, skills, and abilities that were missing from these four studies. As a result, "The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team" was added into the survey items because team working spirit is highlighted by many researchers (Cheung et al., 2010; Raybould & Wilkins, 2006; Tesone & Ricci, 2009; Tesone & Ricci, 2012). The researcher's adviser also added "Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking, and the analysis and reporting of financial data" into the

survey items to meet the financial and accounting ability needed by the current hospitality industry.

The researcher utilized the top items from these four studies. The researcher obtained 10 survey items out of 52 from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005), 5 survey items out of 16 from the study by Zapiatis (2007), 5 survey items out of 10 from the study by Kwok et al. (2011), 4 survey items out of 14 from the study by Kamau & Waubo (2012). In addition to these items from previous literature, 2 survey items were added by the researcher and his adviser. The draft survey items consisted of 26 items. (See Appendix A)

3.2.1.2 Revision of Draft Survey Items

Once the draft questionnaire was completed, the researcher began to combine similar items and split one vague item into two or more statements to make them clearer and more explicit. The researcher also rewrote some items into more specific and detailed statements to keep all the statements consistent with each other. By doing these, both recruiters and students could understand them clearly and therefore reduce the error response.

3.2.1.2.1 Combination of Similar Survey Items

The researcher decided to combine some similar items. For example, “work without close supervision” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) would be combined with “self-discipline” from the study by Zapiatis (2007) because both of them referred to the same topic. Human skills from the study by Zapiatis (2007) would be combined with “communication skills” from the study by Zapiatis (2007) because these are a

subcategory of human skills, and using human skills alone carried too many meanings, which could make recruiters and students have different understandings of it, increasing response errors. “Human skills” is also overlapping with other survey items like “Demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff”, “Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealing with staff and guests” and “Communicate appropriately with other members of a work group” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005). “Understanding the level of service expected by international guests” from the study by Kamau and Waudu (2012) was combined with “Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealing with staff and guests” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) because international guests would have different cultural backgrounds, and this difference could be sensed by people who have cultural awareness. “Demonstrate listening skills” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) was combined with “Communication skills” from the study by Zapiatis (2007) because listening skills was one of the subcategories of “communication skills.”

3.2.1.2.2 Split One Survey Items Into Two or More Survey Items

In addition to the process of combining items, the researcher also split some items into two or more statements to make them more explicit so that both recruiters and students could understand the items clearly. Because the one-word item “flexibility” extracted from the study by Kwok et al. (2011) is vague and may cause different perceptions by either recruiters or students, it was decided to turn it into a statement to clarify what is meant by flexibility. The researcher was going to split this survey item into rotation

within one location and rotation to other locations. As a result, the researcher created the following two items:

1. The willingness of the candidate to rotate among different jobs in the organization
2. The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations

The survey item “maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) has three different constructs. These are “professional” (Tas, 1988), “ethical” (Tas, 1988; Chung-Herrera et al., 2003; Tesone and Ricci, 2009) and “work environment.” (Tas, 1988; Nelson and Dopson, 2001). It was decided to split this survey item into three specific statements pertaining to “professional,” “ethical,” and “work environment.” As a result, the researcher created the following three items:

1. The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work
2. The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work
3. The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers

The survey item “communication skills” from the study by Zapiatis (2007) is broad, and therefore both recruiters and students may have different perceptions of it.

“Communication skills” consist of verbal and written skills (Tas, 1988). Besides verbal and written skills, literacy of a second language, especially Spanish, would also be considered because Spanish is the second-most widely used language in America. As a result, the researcher created the following three items to clarify “communication”:

1. The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers

2. The ability to communicate information and ideas through written communication so others will understand
3. Fluency in a second language, especially Spanish (Spanish is the second-most widely used language in America)

3.2.1.2.3 Rewrite Implicit Survey Items

Finally, the researcher also rewrote some items to make them more explicit and consistent. Because the one-word item “personality” from the study by Kwok et al. (2011) is vague and may cause different perceptions by either recruiters or students, it was decided to clarify “personality” to reduce response error. As a result, the survey item created to clarify what is meant by “personality” was as follows: “A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job.”

Because the one-word item “leadership” from the study by Kwok et al. (2011) is vague and may cause different perceptions by either recruiters or students, it was decided to clarify what is meant by “leadership” to reduce response error. As a result, the survey item created to clarify what is meant by “leadership” was as follows: “The leadership skills to direct oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks.”

Because the survey item “relevant job experience” from the study by Kwok et al. (2011) is not very clear and explicit, the researcher decided to rewrite it into “relevant work experience for the job.”

As for the survey item “PO (Person-Organization) & PJ (Person-Job) fit” from the study by Kwok et al. (2011) is vague and may cause different perceptions by either recruiters or students, it was decided to clarify what is meant by “PO fit” and “PJ fit” to

reduce response error. From the literature, PO fit referred to personal-organization fit, and PJ fit referred to personal- job fit. Because there had already been a survey item “a personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job,” it was decided to leave “PO-fit” in the statement. Therefore, the survey item created to clarify “PO-fit” was as follows: “A Personality that matches organizational culture.”

As the survey item “Positive attitude” from the study by Zapiatis (2007) is vague and may cause different perceptions by either recruiters or students, it was decided to clarify what is meant by “positive attitude” to reduce response error. As a result, the survey item created to clarify what is meant by “positive attitude” was as follows: “The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job.”

Because the survey item “Basic hospitality technical skills” from the study by Zapiatis (2007) is vague and may cause different perceptions by either recruiters or students, it was decided to clarify what is meant by “basic hospitality technical skills” to reduce response error. As a result, the survey item created to clarify what is meant by “basic hospitality technical skills” was as follows: “The ability to operate the hardware and software needed to perform the job.”

To emphasize the level of “conflict resolution” ability from the study by Kamau and Waudo (2012), it was decided to rewrite it as follows: “strong conflict management skills.”

Because the survey item “self-initiative” from the study by Kamau and Waudo (2012) is vague and may cause different perceptions by either recruiters or students, it was decided to clarify what is meant by “self-initiative” to reduce response error. As a result,

the survey item created to clarify what is meant by “self-initiative” was as follows: “self-motivation.”

To make the survey item “sales and marketing” from the study by Kamau and Waudo (2012) more explicit to the respondents, it was decided to rewrite it as follows:

“Knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business.”

To make all the survey items consistent with each other, the survey item “Demonstrate time management skills” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) was decided to rewrite as follows: “time management skills.”

To make the survey item “Deal effectively with customers’ problems” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) clearer and emphasize the professional way in dealing with problems, it was decided to rewrite it into “The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner.”

To make the survey item “operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) clearer and therefore reduce response error, it was decided to rewrite it as “the ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations.”

Because the survey item “Demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) does not address internal and external customers, to make the statement clearer and therefore reduce response error, it was decided to rewrite it as “the ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers.”

To address the high-quality life in the work environment via effective communications, it was decided to rewrite the survey item “communicate appropriately

with other members of a work group” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) as follows: “The ability to provide a high quality of work life to staff members.”

For the survey items like “Anticipate client needs” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) and “Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests” from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005), to keep all the statements consistent, it was decided to rewrite it as follows: “the ability to anticipate clients’ needs” and “the ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests.”

3.2.1.2.4 Rewrite Recruiters’ Survey Items Into Students’ Survey Items

By combining items and expanding and rewriting others, the researcher eventually generated 27 distinct survey items. Because the researcher sent out two surveys directed to both recruiters and students, the survey items needed to be slightly rewritten due to the two groups’ different perspectives. For example, “a personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job” (recruiter version) became “personality skills that enable me to be suitable for the job” (student version).

3.2.1.3 Survey Items Measurement

After the final 27 questionnaire survey items for both recruiters and students were completed, all items were scored using a 7-point Likert scale: “not at all important” as 1, “very unimportant” as 2, “somewhat unimportant” as 3, “neither important nor unimportant” as 4, “somewhat important” as 5, “very important” as 6, and “extremely important” as 7.

3.2.2 Demographic Information

3.2.2.1 Recruiters' Demographic Information

The recruiters were asked to identify their role as a full-time recruiter or part-time recruiter, their primary area of expertise (e.g., food service or rooms division), the programs or schools they actively recruit students for (e.g., Purdue University). They were also asked to indicate their years of experience in the hospitality industry, their years worked as a recruiter, and whether they have a hospitality degree. If they had a hospitality degree, they were asked what kind of degree they had earned (e.g., bachelor's). Finally, they were asked about their gender and age.

3.2.2.2 Students' Demographic Information

Students were asked which hospitality program (university) they were attending (e.g., Purdue University). They were also asked their current year level (e.g., freshman) and gender.

3.2.3 Open-Ended Questions

In addition to the survey items and better identifying the gap between recruiters and students, both recruiters and students were being asked about open-ended questions to see whether there were perceived differences of key strengths, weaknesses, and knowledge between recruiters and students regarding obtaining an entry-level management job.

3.2.3.1 Open-Ended Questions to Recruiters

The recruiters were asked the following questions: 1) "What are the three key strengths of hospitality graduates that make them viable candidates for your business?" 2) "What are the three key weaknesses of hospitality graduates that do not make them viable

candidates for your business?” 3) “How easy is it to find qualified students for entry-level management positions for your business?” The recruiters were to explain why they found it easy or difficult to find qualified recruits.

3.2.3.2 Open-Ended Questions to Students

The students were asked the following questions: 1) “What are the three key strengths of hospitality graduates that make them viable candidates for your business?” 2) “What are the three key weaknesses of hospitality graduates that do not make them viable candidates for your business?” 3) “Which three classes in your major do you think will do the best job of preparing you for an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry when you graduate?”

3.3 Procedure

The researcher picked the four undergraduate hospitality programs in this study because they are heavily recruited by recruiters. Using a comprehensive evaluation of curriculum score, faculty score, student score, resources score and alumni score, Brizek and Khan (2002) ranked Purdue University in first place, University of Houston in third, and Pennsylvania State University and Michigan State University tied for fourth among the top 25 hospitality institutions in the United States. Moreover, according to the prestige rankings for hospitality undergraduate programs, which asked the respondents to indicate a prestige rating of the top hospitality programs based on their perceptions of the programs' current activities and ongoing commitment to the field, the University of Houston ranked 3rd, Michigan State University ranked 4th, Pennsylvania State University ranked 5th, and Purdue University ranked 6th.

3.3.1 Pilot Test

The data collection period started on April 1, 2013. A convenience sample of five students chosen by the researcher's adviser, and three recruiters were asked to take the pilot online questionnaire. All the respondents replied that the survey was easy to go through, and they reported that the average time spent on it was 5 to 10 minutes. Responses from the pilot study were combined with the overall responses.

3.3.2 Data Collection of Students' Sample

The researcher's adviser distributed the invitation letter to his Human Resources class of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Purdue University on April 15, 2013, which contains 78 students. The invitation letter for students read as follows:

Dear Undergraduate Hospitality Students:

I am a master's student in the School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at Purdue University. I am conducting research with my adviser, Dr. Mick La Lopa, to determine what undergraduate students believe to be the key knowledge, skills, and abilities they need to secure an entry-level manager position in the hospitality industry after graduation. We are also asking recruiters to indicate the key knowledge, skills, and abilities they are looking for when hiring entry-level managers. The goal of our research is to enable hospitality students to have a more accurate understanding of what is required of them to secure an entry-level management position upon graduation. We are happy to provide an executive summary of the research to those undergraduate students who participate.

To participate in this research, all you need to do is click on the link below. The questionnaire will only take you five or more minutes to complete.

https://purdue.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eJ2KMYfERJ4VxyZ

If you have any questions about the research or the questionnaire, you could reach me by e-mail: huang374@purdue.edu, or you may contact my adviser, Dr. La Lopa, at lalopaj@purdue.edu.

Furthermore, the researcher's adviser asked his students to participate in the survey; if over 95% of the students participated in the survey, those students could get five extra credit points added to their scores. This round generated 77 usable student responses from Purdue University.

One of the researcher's committee members was a former PhD student at Pennsylvania State University. The researcher asked her to forward the invitation letter to the School of Hospitality Management at Pennsylvania State University on April 15, 2013. The invitation letter was nearly the same as the one sent to the researcher's adviser's human resource class. The researcher got a reply from the School of Hospitality Management at Pennsylvania State University asking for an IRB document. After the researcher sent an IRB document to the School of Hospitality Management at Pennsylvania State University, the School of Hospitality Management at Pennsylvania State University promised to disseminate the survey letter to its hospitality undergraduate students. At the end, this study got 28 usable student responses from Pennsylvania State University.

In April, the researcher sent an invitation letter to the secretary of the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management. The invitation letter was almost the same as the one sent to the researcher's adviser's human resource class. However, the

secretary responded that the students were very busy at the end of semester and could not forward my invitation letters to undergraduate hospitality students.

On September 3, 2013, the researcher's adviser approached his introductory class students (240 students) of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Purdue University as he had for his human resource class. The invitation letter was almost as the same as the one sent to the researcher's adviser's human resource class. The researcher's adviser asked his students to participate in the survey; if over 95% of the students participated in the survey, those students could get five extra credits added to their scores. This round generated 237 usable student responses from Purdue University.

On September 9, 2013, the researcher's adviser sent the invitation letter to a former Purdue graduate who is now Associate Dean of Academics at the University of Houston to ask for the favor of distributing surveys to his undergraduate hospitality students. The invitation letter was almost as the same as the one sent to the researcher's adviser's human resource class. After getting his permission, the researcher received a letter from the secretary of department, querying the confidentiality of the survey. The researcher replied that confidentiality related to this survey would be guaranteed. Then the secretary forwarded the researcher's invitation letter with survey links to the undergraduate hospitality students. This round got 46 usable responses from the University of Houston.

The researcher's chair was a former PhD student at Michigan State University. He sent the invitation letter to the School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University on September 13, 2013. The invitation letter was almost the same as the one sent to the researcher's adviser's human resource class. After student survey links were

spread throughout the School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University, the researcher got 19 usable responses from Michigan State University.

3.3.3 Data Collection of Recruiters' Sample

In spring 2013, the researcher sent his business cards to hospitality companies that came to the Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair and explained the content, purpose, and significance of this research. Those who agreed to participate in the study were sent out 15 invitation letters on April, 17, 2013. The invitation letter for recruiters read as follows:

Dear Hospitality Recruiters,

My name is James, and I am a master's student in Hospitality & Tourism Management at Purdue University. As you may recall, we met each other at the career fair on Purdue's campus one month ago. My adviser and I are conducting a study to determine the key knowledge, skills, and abilities you are looking for when hiring entry-level managers. In doing so, we hope to better prepare students for their future jobs. Survey results may also improve your recruitment and selection process. Those who participate in the survey will be sent an executive report of the study findings.

If you are not directly in charge of the hiring process for the hotel, it would be a great help if you could forward this letter to the person who is responsible for recruiting.

To participate, all you need to do is click on the link below. The questionnaire will only take you five minutes.

https://purdue.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_4MCsdbPDVKOWOc5

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, you could reach me by e-mail: huang374@purdue.edu.

Or you may contact my chief adviser, Professor La Lopa, at lalopaj@purdue.edu.

Most of the recruiters replied with the invitation letter saying they would be happy to initiate this study and wanted the final executive report. Others did not respond to the invitation letter but participated in the study. However, the remaining recruiters neither replied to the invitation letter nor participated in this study. After all the intended recruiters participated in this study, the first-round approach for recruiters generated 10 usable responses.

To boost the response rate from recruiters, the researcher's adviser sent a total of 419 (32 undelivered) invitation e-mails to recruiters—whose names were on the Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Program recruiter mailing list—several times from summer to fall. The invitation letter was almost the same as the one sent to recruiters who had come to the Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair in the spring. This round generated 27 usable recruiter responses.

The last round approach for recruiters happened in September 2013. The researcher sent his business cards to hospitality companies that had come to the Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair in the fall of 2013 and had not initiated surveys the last time and explained the content, purpose, and significance of this research. Besides the researcher, the researcher's adviser also solicited recruiters to participate in the study. Those who agreed to participate in the study were sent out nine invitation letters on September 19, 2013. The invitation letter was almost the same as the one sent to recruiters who had come to the Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Management Career Fair in the spring. The last round approach for recruiters generated three usable responses.

3.4 Analysis

The researcher used Qualtrics to generate the questionnaire and IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS Version 22.0) to analyze the data.

Independent sample T-Tests will be used to analyze each statement choice between recruiters and students regarding their perceptions of entry-level managers' requirements, Purdue students and non-Purdue students, and male students and female students using the 0.05 statistics significance level.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA for each statement among different year level students regarding their perceptions of entry-level managers' requirements using the 0.05 statistics significance level. For the open-ended questions, the researcher used counts of qualitative descriptors to test the different opinions between recruiters and students regarding students' key strengths and weakness to be a qualified entry-level manager. These lists of statements made in response to open-ended questions were reviewed to see whether they would be summarized into key themes. The key themes are defined as similar descriptors illustrating the same topic. For example, answers like "passion" and "passionate" would be treated as the same key theme even though they are different descriptors. Recruiters and students were each given three open-ended questions.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of this study. Hypotheses were tested by conducting one-way ANOVA and independent sample T-tests by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 22.0 for Windows). Open-ended questions were tested by key theme counts. To obtain an overall view of the data provided by the sample population, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were employed.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

There were 440 students who started the survey, 407 (92.5%) of them finished the survey item questions. Among all the effective valid responses, 314 (77.15%) of the total responses were from Purdue University, 19 (4.67%) were from Michigan State University, 46 (11.30%) were from the University of Houston, and the remaining 28 (6.88%) were from Pennsylvania State University. Among all the students, 77 (18.92%) were freshmen, 64 (15.72%) were sophomores, 165 (40.54%) were juniors, and 101 (24.82%) were seniors; 106 (26.04%) of them were male, and 301 (73.96%) were female.

A total of 411 recruiter survey letters reached the intended participants, 40 (9.73%) of them started the survey, and 35 (8.52%) of them finished the whole survey (for both survey item questions and open-end questions). Among all the valid recruiter responses, 15 (37.5%) were male, and 25 (62.5%) were female; 16 (40%) of them came from food service, four (10%) came from the room division, three (7.5%) came from sales and

marketing, one (2.5%) came from revenue management, 14 (35%) came from human resources, and two (5%) came from general management. The average age of recruiters was 37.18, the average number of years in the hospitality industry was 14.58, and the average number of years working as a recruiter was 7.85. Among all the recruiters, 21(52.5%) have a hospitality degree. Among those who have hospitality degrees, 20 (95.24%) have bachelor's degrees, and one (4.76%) has a master's degree.

4.2 Research Hypothesis One

Research hypothesis one stated, "There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by recruiters versus students which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry." It was found six out of 27 survey items passed Levene's test as follows:

"The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations", $F(1,466) = 10.152, p = .002$; "The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work", $F(1,457) = 7.926, p = .005$, "Relevant work experience for the job", $F(1,466) = 6.236, p = .013$, "The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work", $F(1,457) = 5.940, p = .015$, "Time management skills", $F(1,450) = 5.001, p = .026$ and "Self-discipline", $F(1,449) = 4.623, p = .032$.

Owing to the same variance assumption, a t statistic was computed. As shown in table 4.2, the gap of "The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations" was supported, as there was a statistically significance different between the mean score of 4.44 by recruiters and the mean score of 5.13 by students at the $p < .05$ level. The gap of "The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work" was supported, as there was a statistically significance different between the mean score of

6.66 by recruiters and the mean score of 6.21 by students at the $p < .05$ level. The gap of “Self-discipline” was supported, as there was a statistically significance different between the mean score of 6.30 by recruiters and the mean score of 5.91 by students at the $p < .05$ level. Therefore, research hypothesis one was rejected. However, there were three out of the 27 statements showing statistically significant difference between recruiters and students at the $p < .05$ level. A table showing the results of this hypothesis is found in Appendix D.

Table 4.1

Item Mean Difference Between Recruiters and Students Regarding What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Entry-level Managers Needed Most

Rank	Statement	Recruiters [^] (N = 40)	Students (N=440)	df	t
1	The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations	4.44 (1.534)	5.13 (1.102)	466	-3.671***
2	The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work	6.66 (.530)	6.21 (1.044)	457	2.741**
3	Self-discipline	6.30 (.464)	5.91 (0.967)	449	2.520*

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses right after means. *= $p \leq .05$, **= $p \leq 0.01$ ***= $p \leq 0.001$, two tailed test. ^Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important)

Johanson et al. (2011) argued that ethics in the hospitality industry have drawn much attention, especially in large corporations. Although in this study students gave ethics a relatively high score ($M = 6.21$, $SD = 1.044$), it is still a comparatively low score compared with the recruiters' score ($M = 6.66$, $SD = 0.530$). Recruiters thought relocation won't be an issue for graduates as they gave a mean score of 4.44 (neither important nor unimportant) while students gave a mean score of 5.13 (somewhat important). The gap of "Self-discipline" between recruiters and students calls for graduates' ability to work without close supervision. As for relevant work experience, though the survey item did not show statistical difference, none of 40 recruiters selected it as extremely important. However, $n = 73$ (17.94%) students thought that relevant work experience is extremely important when applying for an entry-level manager position. This finding contradicted the study by Kwok et al. (2011) in which they found relevant work experience was the second most important item recruiters needed when they look for recruits.

Only three out of 27 survey items were showing statistical difference which indicated the gap between recruiters and students is narrowing. The reason might be academic has tailored a more effective curriculum to cultivate students to meet recruiters' expectations and students also have more realistic expectations due to their internship in the hospitality industry.

In summary, from the 3 survey items showing statistical significant difference in the mean score between recruiters and students related to what skills, knowledge, and abilities entry-level managers need most, one item came from the study by Raybould and

Wilkins (2005), one came from the study by Zapiatis (2007), the remaining one came from the study by Kwok et al. (2011).

4.3 Top 10 Picks of the Survey Items by Recruiters

Although the first hypothesis only discovered three items that were statistically significant it was decided to identify whether there was a difference in the way the items were ranked by students versus recruiters. The top 10 ranked knowledge, skills, and abilities by recruiters are shown in Table 4.3. Out of the top 10, the three most important knowledge, skills, and abilities among recruiters were “the ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work” ($M=6.66$, $SD = .530$), “the degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job” ($M=6.54$, $SD= .596$) and “a personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job” ($M=6.52$, $SD=.634$).

Table 4.2

Item Mean Difference Between Recruiters and Students Regarding What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Entry-level Managers Needed Most

Rank	Statement	Item means (Standard Deviation)*
1	The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work	6.66 (.530)
2	The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job	6.54 (.596)
3	A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job	6.52 (.634)
4	The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work	6.51 (.506)
5	The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner	6.51 (1.003)
6	The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers	6.41 (.805)
7	The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers	6.39 (.919)
8	The ability to anticipate clients' needs	6.34 (.656)
9	The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations	6.32 (.610)
10	Self-motivation	6.32 (.734)

Note: *Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important)

to 7 (extremely important).

The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work” matched the item “maintaining professional and ethical standards in the work environment” from the study by Tas (1988), the item “ethics and integrity” from the study by Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) and the item “business management and ethics” from the study by Tesone and Ricci (2009). The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work” matched the item “maintaining professional and ethical standards in the work environment” from the study by Tas (1988). The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner” matched the item “solving customer problems” from the study by Nelson and Dopson (2001). The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers” matched the item “striving to achieve positive working relationships with employees based on the perception of work interaction the study by Tas (1988) and the item “developing positive employee relations” from the study by Nelson and Dopson (2001). The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers” matched the item “the ability to empathize with the guest experience” from the study by Tesone and Ricci (2009). The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations” matched the item “managing crisis situations” from the study by Nelson and Dopson (2001). The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “The ability to anticipate clients’ needs” matched the item “the ability to

anticipate guest wants and needs to provide service” from the study by Tesone and Ricci (2009).

It was noted that most of the top 10 survey items were found in previous literature and most of them were associated with candidates’ attitude. None of the top 10 skills was associated with knowledge. It was also noted that leadership (Katz, 1986; Kwok et al., 2011; Nelson & Dopson, 2001; Sandwith, 1993), working experience (Kwok et al., 2011) and team working (Tesone & Ricci, 2012) were missing in the top 10 which contradicted many previous literature that argued these three items are one of the most important competencies recruiters are seeking when they hire entry-level managers from college.

In summary, of the top 10 ranked items from recruiters, seven of them came from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005), one came from the study by Zapiatis (2007), one of came from the study by Kwok et al. (2011), and the remaining one came from the study by Kamau & Waubo (2012).

4.4 Top 10 Picks of the Survey Items by Students

It was also decided to identify the top 10 ranked knowledge, skills, and abilities students think they need to get an entry-level manager position in the hospitality industry after their graduation based on the item mean analysis. As shown in Table 4.4, the three most important knowledge, skills, and abilities among students were “time management skills” ($M=6.27$, $SD=.860$), “the ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work” ($M=6.26$, $SD=1.000$) and “the willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner” ($M=6.23$, $SD=.896$).

Table 4.3

Item Mean Difference Between Recruiters and Students Regarding What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Entry-level Managers Needed Most

Rank	Statement	Item Means (Standard Deviation)*
1	Time management skills	6.27 (.860)
2	The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work	6.26 (1.000)
3	The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner	6.23 (.896)
4	The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job	6.22 (1.010)
5	The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work	6.21 (1.044)
6	The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations	6.16 (.883)
7	The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers	6.16 (.951)
8	The leadership skills to direct oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks	6.12 (1.031)
9	Self-motivation	6.09 (1.015)
10	The ability to anticipate clients' needs	6.02 (.933)

Note: *Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important)

to 7 (extremely important).

The survey item of knowledge, skills and abilities from this study “the willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team” (M = 6.02) and “the ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers” (M = 6.02) also tied for 10th position. However, due to its larger standard deviation than was the survey item “the ability to anticipate clients’ needs” (M = 6.02), the first items above were not included as one of 10th ranked items.

Students ranked “Time management skills” as top one. This might be explained by students’ answers to the open-ended question “What three weaknesses do you have that might make it difficult for you to be hired as an entry level manager in the hospitality industry when you graduate?” And students stated lack of time management skills and procrastination is their top key weakness. There are some overlapping survey items in both recruiters’ and students’ top 10 lists. However, recruiters’ item mean scores would be substantially higher than students’ which indicated recruiters would value these survey items more important than students did.

Recruiters ranked the survey item “The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work” as top one while students ranked the survey item “Time management skills” as top one. Besides the difference of top one item, recruiters ranked the survey item “The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers”, “A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job” and “The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers” in their top 10 while students did not rank these items in their top 10 list. Students ranked the survey item “The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers” and “The leadership skills to direct

oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks" in their top 10 while recruiters did not run these items in their top 10 list.

In summary, of the top 10 ranked items from students, six of them came from the study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005), one came from the study by Zapiatis (2007), two of came from the study by Kwok et al. (2011), and the remaining one came from the study by Kamau &Waubo (2012).

4.5 Research Hypothesis Two

Research hypothesis two stated, "There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by Purdue students versus non-Purdue students which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry." It was found four out of 27 survey items passed Levene's test as follows:

"Personality that matches organizational culture", $F(1,405) = 3.904, p = .049$; "My ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work", $F(1,405) = 4.038, p=.045$; "My willingness to rotate to other work locations", $F(1, 405) = 7.422, p=.007$ and "My ability to display a positive attitude toward the job", $F(1, 405) = 4.099, p=.044$.

Owing to the same variance assumption, a t statistic was computed. As shown in table 4.5, the gap of "Personality that matches organizational culture" was supported, as there was a statistically significant difference between the mean score of 5.57 by Purdue students and the mean score of 5.82 by non-Purdue students at the $p < .05$ level.

Therefore, research hypothesis two was rejected. However, it was found one out of the 27 statements was statistically significant between Purdue students and non-Purdue students. A table showing the results of this hypothesis is found in Appendix E.

Table 4.4

Item Mean Difference Between Recruiters and Students Regarding What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Entry-level Managers Needed Most

Rank	Statement	Purdue (N=314) [^]	Non- Purdue (N=93)	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>
1	Personality that matches organizational culture	5.57 (1.032)	5.82 (.920)	405	-2.105*

Note. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses right after means. [^]Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

* $p \leq .05$, two-tailed test

Because only one out of 27 survey items showed statistical significant difference, this study suggests that Purdue students and non-Purdue students have the most same perceptions regarding the skills, knowledge, and capacities entry-level managers need most.

In summary, there was only one item that showed a statistical significant difference in mean score between Purdue students and non-Purdue students related to what skills, knowledge, and abilities entry-level managers need most came from the study by Kwok et al. (2011).

4.6 Research Hypothesis Three

Research hypothesis three stated, “There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by male students versus female students which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry.” It was found only one out of 27 survey items passed Levene’s test as follows:

“Personality skills that enable me to be suitable for the job”, $F(1.405) = 4.604$, $p=.032$.

Owing to the same variance assumption, a t statistic was computed. This hypothesis was rejected given that none out of the 27 statements were statistically significant different between male students and female students at the $p < .05$ level. A table showing the results of this hypothesis is found in Appendix F.

4.7 Research Hypothesis Four

Research hypothesis four stated, “There is a significant difference between the item mean scores of knowledge, skills, and abilities by students in different academic years

which are needed to get an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry.”

It was found three out of 27 survey items passed Levene’s test as follows:

“My knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business”, $F(1, 403) = 2.877, p = .036$, “My ability to anticipate clients’ needs”, $F(1, 403) = 2.870, p = .036$ and “My ability to demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff”, $F(1, 403) = 3.377, p = .018$.

Owing to the same variance assumption, a t statistic was computed. As shown in Table 4.7, the gap of “My knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business” was supported, as there was a statistically significant difference among the mean score of 5.83 by freshman students, the mean score of 5.61 by sophomore students, the mean score of 5.36 by junior students and the mean score of 5.33 by senior students at the $p < .05$ level. Moreover, the gap of “My ability to anticipate clients’ needs” was supported, as there was a statistically significant difference among the mean score of 6.13 by freshman students, the mean score of 5.92 by sophomore students, the mean score of 5.89 by junior students and the mean score of 6.21 by senior students at the $p < .05$ level. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was rejected. However, it was found that two out of the 27 items were statistically significant among different year level students at the $p < .05$ level. A table showing the results of this hypothesis is found in Appendix G.

Table 4.5

Item Mean Difference Between Recruiters and Students Regarding What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Entry-level Managers Needed Most

Rank	Statement	Freshman (N = 77) [^]	Sophomore (N = 64)	Junior (N=165)	Senior (N=101)	Between Groups	Within Groups	<i>F</i>
1	My knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business	5.83 (.818)	5.61 (1.093)	5.36 (1.115)	5.33 (1.050)	3	403	4.704**
2	My ability to anticipate clients' needs	6.13 (.801)	5.92 (1.059)	5.89 (1.059)	6.21 (.653)	3	403	3.053*

Note.* = $p \leq .05$, ** = $p \leq .01$. Standard Deviations appear in parentheses below means. [^]Item means are based on 7-point Likert

Scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

4.8 Research Hypothesis Five

Research hypothesis five stated, “There is a significant difference in the qualitative descriptors between recruiters’ and students’ perceptions regarding graduates’ key strengths to be qualified entry-level managers.”

Using the qualitative data analysis procedure stated in chapter three, the researcher decided to identify the key themes from the open-end questions, which included: “What are the three key strengths of hospitality graduates that make them viable candidates for your business?” from recruiters and “What three key strengths do you have that will get you hired for an entry-level management job in the hospitality industry when you graduate?” from students. The researcher received 35 effective answers from recruiters and 369 effective answers from students regarding this question.

As shown in Table 4.8, both recruiters and students ranked “personality” as the top key strength for graduates. There were three overlapping themes in Table 4.8, namely “personality,” “passion,” and “experience.” Besides “personality,” recruiters and students put “passion” and “experience” in different rankings. Recruiters ranked “passion” second, while students ranked it fourth. Recruiters ranked “experience” third, while students ranked it fifth. Besides these overlapping themes, recruiters ranked “work ethic” fourth and “knowledge of the Industry” fifth, while students ranked “leadership” second and “communication” third. Overall, hypothesis 5 was partially accepted.

Table 4.6

Item Mean Difference Between Recruiters and Students Regarding What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Entry-level Managers Needed Most

	Recruiters (N=35)	Pct.		Students (N=369)	Pct.
1.	Personality	42.86%	1.	Personality	21.68%
2.	Passion	37.14%	2.	Leadership	19.51%
3.	Experience	28.57%	3.	Communication	17.62%
4.	Work Ethic	28.57%	4.	Passion	15.99%
5.	Knowledge of This Industry	25.71%	5.	Experience	15.45%

4.9 Research Hypothesis Six

Research hypothesis six stated, “There is a significant difference in the qualitative descriptors between recruiters’ and students’ perceptions regarding graduates’ key weaknesses to be qualified entry-level managers.”

Using the qualitative data analysis procedure stated in Chapter Three, the researcher decided to identify the key themes from the open-end questions: “What are the three key weaknesses of hospitality graduates that do not make them viable candidates for your business?” from recruiters and “What three weaknesses do you have that might make it difficult for you to be hired as an entry level manager in the hospitality industry when you graduate?” from students. The researcher received 35 effective answers from recruiters and 380 effective answers from students regarding this question.

As shown in Table 4.9, both recruiters and students ranked “lack of relevant experience” as the top one of the key weaknesses for hospitality graduates. Recruiters ranked “poor communication skills” as graduates’ third weakness while students ranked it as their fourth weakness. What is more, recruiters ranked “unrealistic expectations” second, “lack of leadership skills” fourth and “lack of conflict solving skills” fifth while students ranked “lack of good personality” second, “lack of time management” third and “lack of determination” fifth. Overall, hypothesis 6 was partially accepted.

Table 4.7

Item Mean Difference Between Recruiters and Students Regarding What Knowledge, Skills and Abilities are Entry-level Managers Needed Most

Recruiters (N=35)		Pct.	Students (N=380)		Pct.
1.	Lack of Relevant Experience	45.71%	1.	Lack of Relevant Experience	28.68%
2.	Unrealistic Expectations	28.57%	2.	Lack of Good Personality	23.42%
3.	Poor Communication Skills	17.14%	3.	Lack of Time Management Skills	14.21%
4.	Lack of Leadership Skills	14.29%	4.	Poor Communication Skills	8.95%
5.	Lack of Conflict Solving Skills	8.57%	5.	Lack of Determination	8.16%

Besides the themes shown in Table 4.9, students also ranked the theme “lack of conflict solving skills” sixth (7.11%), “too perfectionism” seventh (6.58%), “stress and pressure” eighth (6.05%), “lack of leadership skills” ninth (5.26%), and “poor language” tenth (5.00%) as their key weaknesses.

The phrase “unrealistic expectations” by recruiters consisted of detailed descriptors of unrealistic expectations regarding salary, time until moving into next executive level, and starting point after graduation and career path. Furthermore, in recruiters’ answers, “lack of knowledge about our company,” “lack of time management skills,” “do not show passion toward the hospitality industry,” and “candidates’ immaturity” tied with “lack of conflict- solving skills” as fifth. The key theme “lack of ethical character” was only mentioned once by recruiters. However, recruiters ranked “ethics” as the most important item in the previous survey item test.

There are 89 descriptors about the key theme “lack of good personality” from students’ answers. “Shy” was mentioned 25 times, “impatient” was mentioned 19 times, “lack of confidence” was mentioned 13 times, “timid” was mentioned 6 times, “quiet” was mentioned 5 times and ‘introvert’ was mentioned 4 times.

There are 34 descriptors about the key theme “poor communication skills” from students’ answers. “Being too talkative” was mentioned 9 times while “not being talkative” was mentioned only 4 times.

In students’ responses, the key themes “visa difficulties” is mentioned 12 times, “language” 19 times, “culture shock” 4 times. These key themes could all be explained by the increasing number of international students (Lu & Adler, 2011). Language, culture, and visa status might be a bigger challenge for their future careers in the United States.

However, none of recruiters mentioned visas or international background as key weaknesses. The key theme “GPA” was mentioned 13 times by students. However, none of the recruiters thought GPA was a major weakness for hospitality graduates. This finding reconfirmed previous literature that GPA is not a main criterion for recruitment. The key theme “not able to speak fluent second language” was mentioned 14 times by students. However, none of the recruiters mentioned it as a key weakness for graduates. The detailed descriptors of top five key themes of weaknesses for hospitality graduates by recruiters and students are found in Appendix J and Appendix K, respectively.

4.10 Recruiters’ Opinions Regarding Ease of Finding a Qualified Student

There was one item that let recruiters rate the difficulty of recruiting qualified students for entry-level hospitality management jobs from difficult (1) to very easy (7). Then recruiters needed to explain the reason for their ratings. Of the total 39 responses, the item mean for this statement was 3.44, and the standard deviation was 1.48, which indicates that the average opinion of how easy it is to find a qualified student runs between somewhat difficult and neutral. It should be noted that three recruiters chose very difficult, while none of the recruiters chose very easy.

From this open-ended question, the researcher found that unrealistic expectations were mentioned most frequently and has quoted some comments as follows (the researcher has edited some words to maintain recruiter confidentiality):

Unrealistic expectations of the type of work they are willing to do. (An entry-level housekeeping manager will scrub a few toilets!)

Recent grads are unwilling to work line-level positions in order to gain experience and culture of organization. Instead, they expect to assume a management position immediately following graduation.

Students do not have a realistic expectation of starting wages. A degree doesn't equate to starting salary.

Some students feel that since they have a degree, they deserve to come in making \$50,000 in a mid-level management position.

Hard to find loyal candidates—[they have] expectations that once they have a degree, they should be promoted within months (rather than 2–3 years, which is more realistic).

From time to time, the desired start position for the candidate is not what they had in mind in terms of duties after graduating with a degree.

Besides unrealistic expectations, recruiters mentioned that it was hard to find qualified students because they lack the following characteristics: emotional and professional maturity, leadership, communication skills, work ethic, ambition, willingness to learn, innate understanding of hospitality and professional image, open-mindedness, being goal-oriented, personality fit to organization, motivation, intelligence, willingness to work hard, self-discipline, creativity, willingness to work as part of a team, passion for the industry, work and internship experience, and willingness to relocate.

Comments that show it should be easy for recruiters to find a qualified student:

We have an extensive network of college recruiting and a large candidate pool.

[In the present] economy, there are more available students than positions to fill.

Finding qualified recruits is somewhat easy because there is a large, talented pool out there. New graduates especially, regardless of age, are very eager to devote the time and to develop the skills necessary to be successful.

It is interesting to note that most of the reasons it is easy to find a candidate come from the “large number of candidates.” Only one of the positive reviews mentioned that “graduates are eager to devote their time and develop the skills,” which shows candidates' intrinsic characteristics.

4.11 Three Best Courses from Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Management

Purdue students are being asked “Which three classes in your major do you think will do the best job of preparing you for an entry level management position in the hospitality industry when you graduate?” There are a total of 281 effective answers.

Accounting course was regarded as the most important class by Purdue students followed by Human Resource and Lodging Management.

Table 4.8

Three Best Courses from Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Management

Name	Counts
Accounting	124
Human Resource	102
Lodging Management	89
Quantity Food Production and Service Labs	56
Marketing /Organization and Management in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry	43

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study primarily discussed the gap between recruiters' demands and students' perceptions regarding entry-level managers' requirements. Meanwhile, the study contributed to the existing literature by investigating four major hospitality programs in the United States. Perceptions between male and female students and students from different year levels were also discussed. Finally, discussions about key strengths and weaknesses of graduates between recruiters' and students' perceptions are provided in this chapter. This chapter presents a discussion about the research objectives, implications, limitations, and recommendations for future study.

5.1 Discussion of Key Findings

The goal of this study was to identify key competencies that recruiters are looking for and therefore to facilitate students' preparation for future career. Recruiters and students have their different perceptions regarding entry-level managers' requirements. Furthermore, from the researcher's findings, gender difference between students regarding entry-level managers' requirements is minimal as is the difference between Purdue students and non-Purdue students. However, students from different year levels have different perceptions, and new students tend to rank items higher than do students from the other three year levels. In all, four research objectives were proposed to meet the research goal.

5.1.1 Research Objective One

The first research objective was associated with research hypothesis one to test whether there is a gap between recruiters' demands and students' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills and abilities required of entry-level management jobs. Hypothesis 1 was tested to resolve this research objective.

The gap between recruiters and students, regarding entry-level management positions, exists because recruiters are more in favor of "soft skills" rather than technical skills. They think technical skills can be easily taught, whereas, these soft skills would be hard to inculcate. Therefore, students should cultivate their soft skills along with the knowledge and skills set learned in school. Universities should tailor some classes to focus on these soft skills. For example, content about ethics, professional manner, personality fit and positive working attitude could be added in introductory class is when students first enroll in the hospitality program. Recruiters could use more recruitment selection other than simply looking over students' academic performance and relevant working experience. Marriott is doing "behavior tests" to predict candidates' future capacity by letting them tell stories about their pasts. These stories are not necessarily associated with the candidates' hospitality experience. It could be anything, and therefore Marriott recruiters could predict a candidate's overall aptitude more precisely than simply relying on academic performance and working experience.

This finding calls for students to cultivate empathy, personality fit and high-quality service experience during their undergraduate hospitality programs and internships. Even though there are some survey items shown in both recruiters' and students' top 10 lists, recruiters still tend to rank attitude, personality and ethics much higher than students. The

reason might be explained by Martin & McCabe (2007). In their study, they stated that technical skills can be taught, whereas person-related characteristics like attitude cannot be easily inculcated or embedded. They even argued that the essence of the hospitality program is to inculcate “employability fit” through candidates’ own experience of finding, securing, and executing their positions rather than simply finishing the program (p. 31). Harvey et al. (1997) also mentioned that personal and intellectual character beyond specific skills is urgently sought in the new century. Moreover, recruiters will be more likely to select those candidates who demonstrate adaptive and flexible characters that could easily be a part of the company and to also display interpersonal and social capacities besides their educational achievements. Overall, although knowledge and skills would facilitate working efficiency, recruiters are more likely to look for candidates who show a strong attitude for the job and then train those people (Tesone & Ricci, 2009).

Although previous researchers generated different competencies under different domains, this study matched previous literature on what competencies at large the industry is seeking. Specific skills or technical skills are generally regarded as unimportant even for a position like entry-level manager. Intrinsic characteristics like attitude or personality fit are much appreciated by recruiters. And unfortunately, students tend to rank these intrinsic characteristics much lower than recruiters do

It was also noted that leadership skills were highlighted in previous literature by recruiters’ perceptions and literature has shown recruiters value leadership skills as cornerstone skills when they look for entry-level managers. However, leadership skills were not found in recruiters’ top 10 but in students’ top 10. This needs to be investigated by further researchers.

5.1.2 Research Objective Two

The second research objective was associated with research hypothesis two to test whether there is a gap between Purdue students' and non-Purdue students' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs. Hypothesis 2 was tested to resolve this research objective.

The geographic impact on the differences perceived by students from different undergraduate hospitality programs regarding entry-level management positions might be minimized due to more and more well-known hospitality undergraduate programs sharing the same curriculum value and providing mostly common courses to their students. What is more, the recruiters' demands are relatively fixed, and almost every hospitality program is following recruiters' needs to instruct their students.

5.1.3 Research Objective Three

The third research objective was associated with research hypothesis three to test whether there are gender differences in students' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs. Hypothesis 3 was tested to resolve this research objective. Based on the finding in this research, there is no significant difference in item mean among any of the 27 survey items. Although there is little literature addressing the gender difference of the hospitality students' perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs, this research fills in the gap of previous literature that male and female students do not have a significant difference between their perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs.

The reason that there is no difference between male and female students might be that the gender barrier in the hospitality industry is blurring. More females are taking over the executive positions like general managers or directors while in the past most females were limited to a few areas.

5.1.4 Research Objective Four

The fourth research objective was associated with research hypothesis four to test whether there are differences between students' perceptions based on their year level regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs. Hypothesis 4 was tested to resolve this research objective.

From this research finding, different year level students would have some different perceptions regarding the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of entry-level management jobs especially between the newcomers and seniors.

It was noted that students from different year levels have huge disagreements regarding "knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business." Moreover, there is a declining trend in the rate from freshmen to seniors. The reason might be that newcomers think that these topics are trendy and therefore think them important, while seniors find that these items are not the key characteristics after having had some exposure to the hospitality industry through guest speakers, field trips, internships, and so on.

The differences between students at different year levels, regarding their perceptions about entry-level management positions, might be a consequence of newcomers still having relatively high expectations of this career and not getting enough exposure to the industry. Therefore, newcomers still examine themselves by "soft skills" rather than"

technical skills” like personality, ethics, positive working attitude and professional manners to see whether they fit in this industry.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

From the top 10 survey items named by recruiters, recruiters are more in favor of ethical behavior, positive attitude, and personality match to the job, and professional attitude and professional manner in solving customers’ complaints. Overall, recruiters will prioritize these characteristics over knowledge and skills when looking for entry-level managers.

The survey item “the ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work” was ranked the top one by recruiters. This study confirmed previous literature (Chung-Herrera et al., 2003, Tas, 1988 & Tesone and Ricci, 2009) that recruiters highly value ethical behavior in the hospitality industry. The survey item “the willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner” matched the findings by Tas (1988) and Nelson and Dopson (2001); both studies argued it would be one of the most important competencies for hotel trainees. The survey item “the degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job” is supported by Tas’s (1988) finding that positive attitude is one of the six essential competencies for future hospitality managers. The survey item “the ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations” matched Nelson and Dopson’s (2001) finding that managing crisis situations is one of 10 key skills required for successful hospitality managers. The survey item “the ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers” was supported by the study by Tesone and Ricci (2009). In their study, they thought the

ability to emphasize with guest experience and the needs of others would be the important competency when hospitality recruiters seek entry-level workers. It is interesting to find leadership skill does not make the top 10 picks from recruiters' perspective from this study, which contradicted many previous studies (Nelson and Dopson, 2001, Raybould and Wilkins, 2005 & Sandwith, 1993).

Of the top 10 survey items by students, students are more likely to rank time management skills, professional attitude, professional manner in solving customers' complaints, positive attitude, and ethical behavior. Although there are four overlapping items out of the top five from recruiters' and students' picks, recruiters tend to rank each of these above items much higher than do students, which indicates recruiters emphasize these items more than students do. Besides these four overlapping items, recruiters also highlight personality match to the job, which indicates that students need to examine whether they have the right personality when they are looking for hospitality positions. Finally, students ranked time management skills as the top skill. As in the open-ended questions, the researcher found students would think "lack of time management skills," "procrastination," and "do not finish the task until the last minute" as their key weaknesses.

Although there is not much literature investigating students' perceptions toward the requirements of an entry-level manager, the survey item "the ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work," "The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team," "The ability to anticipate clients' needs," and "the degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers" were supported in the study of Tesone and Ricci (2009). In

their study, management ethics, the ability to work as part of a team, effective verbal communication skills, and the ability to anticipate guest wants were the most important knowledge, skills, and abilities required to be an entry-level manager from graduates' perspectives.

From the item mean difference between recruiters and students regarding what knowledge, skills, and abilities entry-level managers needed most, students tended to rank specific knowledge or skills higher than recruiters did such as the survey item "knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business," "The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations," "The ability to operate hardware and software," and "knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking, and the analysis and reporting of financial data." However, recruiters tended to rank attitude higher than students do such as the survey items "a personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job," "a personality that matches organizational culture," "the ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers," "the ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work," "the degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job," and "self-discipline." Besides these attitude descriptors, recruiters also ranked customer service ability higher than students did such as the survey items "the ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers," and "the ability to anticipate clients' needs." Overall, students tended to rank knowledge and specific working skills higher than recruiters did, while recruiters tended to rank attitude and customer service ability higher than students did. This research finding asks students

to focus on and further develop their attitude toward the hospitality industry rather than the knowledge and skills when preparing for their careers.

From the answers among recruiters and students regarding students' key strengths and weaknesses to be a qualified entry-level manager, it is found that students' results were more likely to generate unique answers than were recruiters' ones, which might be explained by the larger sample size. Even for the relatively small sample size, though, recruiters' answers are more focused and less sporadic. This might indicate that what industry people need is relatively fixed, while students' perceptions might be malleable.

Students ranked "personality" 1st, "communication" 2nd, and "experience" 5th as their key strengths; however, students also ranked "lack of relevant experience" 1st, "lack of good personality" 2nd, and "poor communication skills" 4th as their key weaknesses. It seemed that the answers of key strengths and weaknesses are self-contradictory. This self-contradictory scenario could also be found in recruiters' answers. Recruiters ranked "experience" 3rd as graduates' key strengths, while recruiters also ranked "lack of relevant experience" 1st as their key weaknesses. The inconsistent rank of the theme "experience" by strengths and weaknesses asks recruiters to define "experience" by duration, quality, positions, and so on. Therefore, students could have a more clear idea on whether they are beyond or below the qualification of work experience when they look for an entry-level manager position. Moreover, recruiters also need to define the right personality for the hospitality industry so students will not have any misunderstanding about it.

5.2.2 Practical Implications

The researcher was going to discuss practical implications from three stakeholders' perspective: recruiters, academic professionals and students.

5.2.2.1 Practical Implications for Recruiters

Previous literature found that internships might not be the correct path to take as many people had once thought. Recruiters should play a positive role building healthy internship programs. Internships might have a negative impact on student enthusiasm toward the industry if the internship involves tedious and repetitive work that wastes a student's talents. However, the researcher does not agree that internships play a minimal role in narrowing the gap. The study by O'Mahony, McWilliams, and Whitelaw (2001) found the strength of Victoria University's hospitality program is it could offer a one-year industry internship "providing the opportunity to put theory into practice" (p. 95). Internships give candidates more exposure to the industry, making them apply their class theories with hands-on experience, and provide more realistic expectations of working conditions, salary, and career as long as the internship is continual (students could be promoted to a higher position when they return to the company), applicable (students think the knowledge they learn from class is useful and could be applied in the industry), and rewarding (recruiters highly appreciate students' devotion to the industry rather than simply finding someone to fill the position.)

Moreover, Raybould & Wilkins (2006) stated that there would be a time lag between adjusting curriculum and graduate outcome, so it would be necessary for recruiters to predict future competencies needed by the industry rather than the current needs. As a

result, students would gain more truly needed competencies rather than those disregarded by the industry, which could save a great deal of educational resources and time.

5.2.2.2 Practical Implications for Academic Professionals

The gap between students' perceptions and recruiters' demands calls for universities to focus on more soft skills rather than on technical skills in their curriculum design. Courses can inculcate students with ethical behavior, professional working manners, positive working attitude and the right personality. Hospitality programs are also encouraged to cultivate students more "intrinsic characters" such as "right attitudes", "leadership skills" and "sensitivity to the service industry" other than knowledge (Chuang & Dellmann-Jenkins, 2010).

Academic should also build a bridge to industry which is also a good approach to narrow the gap and is mentioned frequently by previous researchers. At the early time, Tas (1988) mentioned that hospitality courses should use a "lecture-laboratory format" (p. 43) include dining-room service and management, food and beverage management, quantity food production, and rooms-division management. Field trips, guest speakers, or even seminars could bring students closer to the industry.

Raybould and Wilkins (2005) argued the importance by case study:

The use of case studies has long been advocated as a means of replicating reality but they tend to either replicate the complexity of the real world, through the use of extended and detailed information, or the urgency of decision making in practice, through the imposition of time and other constraints . . . to use more "live" case studies based on actual businesses that are willing to reveal a substantial amount of information about their

strategies and operations thereby enabling students to develop a depth of understanding about the business and to observe, or even participate in, “real” business decisions. (p. 213)

Moreover, case studies would be extremely valuable because they present students real problems in which students can utilize class theory.

Ning-Kuang (2010) argued that inviting a balanced number between male and female guest speakers could enhance students’ career decision-making competence and their career development. What is more, a lecture presented by both male and female speakers could instill in students understanding about similarities and differences between genders in their working styles and role players.

The bridge to industry is another way to narrow the gap between recruiters and students. Zopiatis (2007) noted that hospitality program professors must seamlessly incorporate field study learning as an inseparable part of the whole curriculum design while giving students a more realistic vision of their future jobs; also, he called for a preregistration orientation program that could offer potential hospitality students more realistic expectations concerning their schooling and their future industry experience. When students have a true picture of what could happen on a job, the chance of having gaps could be lowered (Lam & Ching, 2007). This might be the reason most of the manager-in-training (MIT) programs at big chain hotels last for 18 months rather than 12 months. People from recruiting and hiring departments said that 18 months would give candidates more exposure to work, a better understanding of their jobs, and more realistic expectations.

Meeting the trend of globalization is another effective way for academic to bridge the gap (Cheung et al., 2010). Johanson et al. (2011) have called for students who can think about questions from a globalization perspective. Smith and Cooper (2000) stated that providing globalization “context bound” rather than “context related” (p. 91) is an urgent need in academics.

5.2.2.3 Practical Implications for Students

Moreover, from the descriptors about the key theme “personality” regarding the question “What three weaknesses do you have that might make it difficult for you to be hired as an entry level manager in the hospitality industry when you graduate?”, introverted descriptors like “shy”, “timid”, “quiet” and “introverted” counted for nearly half of the total responses. So it calls for students to examine their personality to see whether they are the fit person for this industry. Schools are also encouraged to cultivate these introverted students to be outgoing and confident.

Potential hospitality students should examine themselves whether they have the right personality fit to this industry, professional working manners, ethical behavior and positive working attitude before they choose the hospitality program. By doing this, students could change their programs if they find they are lacking of these above-mentioned “soft skills” required by the hospitality industry.

5.3 Limitations

The researcher extracted statements from four studies: The study by Raybould and Wilkins (2005) was conducted in Australia, the study by Zopiatis (2007) was done in Cyprus, and the study by Kamau and Waudu (2012) was in Nairobi. Only the study by

Kwok et al. (2011) was conducted in America. These backgrounds are different from those found in the United States because of geological, political, and cultural differences. However, through the lens of globalization, the studies conducted in other places may still shed light on this research.

Admittedly, the sample size between recruiters and students is not equal. This is due to the fact that students far outnumber recruiters. There are usually hundreds of students in a normal four-year hospitality undergraduate program while the number of recruiters is limited compared to the number of students. In addition, many recruiters are not recruiting students from only one program. They travel around the nation to hire undergraduate hospitality students from different programs in different areas. So it is unlikely to draw an equal sample size between recruiters and students due to this simple fact.

Given the sample size, the valid responses from students were 407, while the valid responses from recruiters were 40. The student number is much higher than the recruiter number is, which may not be the best proportion for gap analysis between students and recruiters; the result analysis could therefore be less reliable. Moreover, the total response rate for recruiters is only 10.46%. However, the low percentage of response rate was due to the fact that most of survey distribution was done to the Purdue Hospitality and Tourism Program recruiter mailing list. The response rate from career fair companies is pretty good (58.33%). This study also got a fairly high response rate from its host school (Purdue University) due to the researcher's chair's five additional credits incentives—314 usable responses from 318 potential targets (98.74%). The response rate from other hospitality programs is not as good as from Purdue University. Finally, although the

researcher conducted this study at four popular hospitality programs in the United States, the researcher contacted recruiters via the Purdue career fair and the mailing list of the Purdue Center for Career Opportunities, which may be biased because of its geographic location and recruiters' preferences.

The comparison between quantitative method and qualitative method might lack support. However, the data received from recruiters is limited and the open-ended questions are not structured to match previous survey item choices. The open-ended questions are asking both the recruiters and the graduates three key strengths and weaknesses while the survey items are asking both recruiters and students to rank 27 survey items from "not at all important" as 1 to "extremely important" as 7. These two different measurements could undermine the validity of the comparison; however, this comparison still sheds light on recruiters' and students' different perceptions regarding the graduates' key strengths and weaknesses and the self-contradictory scenario of the theme "experience".

Regarding the answers of three best courses preparing Purdue students for their career after graduation, the answers might be biased because there are different year level students in the sample and some freshman students only took one or a few classes and did not get the chance to expose to all courses which could undermine the validity of this answer.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Further research could explore why sales and marketing, finance, and accounting are substantially overlooked by recruiters, given that recent research indicates they are hot topics. Furthermore, year level would have an impact on students' perceptions of entry-

level managers' requirements. For example, newcomers would tend to rank statements higher than other students would. This could be investigated by further research.

Researchers could also examine different hospitality programs across the United States, rather than a typical school versus other schools as this researcher did, which could make the results more generalized. Future research could also investigate how to translate key competencies into current hospitality curriculum (Raybould & Wilkins, 2006).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Extracting Statements from Previous Literature

Kwok,L., Adams,C.R., & Price (Peggie), M.A. (2011). Factors Influencing Hospitality Recruiters' Hiring Decisions in College Recruiting. <i>Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism</i> , 10:4, 372-399.	Measuring Scale 10-point Likert Scale
Leadership	8.8
Relevant job experience	8.73
PO(Person-Organization) & PJ (Person-Job) fit	8.67
Personality	9.2
Job pursuit intention	7.8
Intellectual skills	8.13
Flexibility	8.14
Academic performance	4.87
Extra-curricular activities	5.73
Zapiatis, A. (2007). Hospitality internship in Cyprus: a genuine academic experience or a continuing frustration? <i>International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management</i> , 19 (1), 65-77.	Measuring Scale 5-point Likert Scale
Positive attitude	4.65
Communication Skills	4.61
Human skills	4.57
Self-discipline	4.47
Basic hospitality technical skills	4.31
Aptitude skills	4.26
Interpersonal skills	4.13
Work ethic	4.05
Diplomacy skills	3.82
Ability to function autonomously	3.82
Organizational skills	3.77
Theoretical knowledge	3.68
Supervisory/managerial skills	3.66
Prior hospitality experience	3.45
Good academic performance	3.21
Computer skills	3.08

Kamau,S.W., & Waudu,J. (2012). Hospitality industry employer's expectation of employees' competences in Nairobi Hotels. Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism, 3(4), 55-63.	Measuring Scale: 100% as fully expected by employers
Conflict resolution	54%
Self-initiative	38%
Sales and marketing	35%
Understanding the level of service expected by international guests	31%
Self-motivation	29%
Specific technical skills	23%
Good interpersonal skills	22%
Information technology	22.5%
Communication	17.1%
Computer skills	18.4%
Good work habits	15.4%
Customer service	17.1%
Multi-skills	19.4%
Self-discipline	14.6%

Raybould,M., & Wilkins,H. (2005). Overqualified and under experienced: Turning graduates into hospitality managers. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 17(3), 203-216.	Measuring Scale: Ranking from 1 to 52
Apply knowledge to different contexts	29
Use standard office applications, e.g. word processor, spreadsheets, databases	20
Adapt creatively to change	13
Identify facts relevant to particular issues or problems	22
Provide one-on-one staff counseling	32
Develop a personal career plan	21
Plan an employee roster	26
Write a standard operating procedure (SOP)	31
Defend or argue a case convincingly in a small group	42
Provide one-on-one staff coaching	28
Anticipate client needs	6
Maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment	2
Systematically trace and identify operational problems	18
Use electronic communications and data search applications	25
Understand and interpret simple cost benefit analysis	38
Demonstrate file management and data management skills	41
Demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff	4
Demonstrate listening skills	5
Give and receive feedback on performance	15
Write a simple business report	35
Understand and interpret business performance measures and operating reports	37
Conduct a simple strategic analysis for a business unit	45
Set personal objectives	16
Understand and interpret business or economic forecast data	47
Conduct staff briefing	43
Work without close supervision	10
Undertake “off-the-job” learning experiences	36
Deal effectively with customers’ problems	1

Appendix A Continued.

Operate effectively and calmly in crisis situations	3
Communicate effectively and in a businesslike manner using the telephone	12
Design and implement basic primary research	52
Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests	8
Learn independently and as a member of a team	17
Implement internal control systems in response to an identified problem	24
Handle employee grievances and manage employee problems	19
Write effective business communications including business letters, internal memos and e-mails	23
Demonstrate information search skills	48
Use tables, graphs and charts to communicate information	51
Provide effective small group training	33
Demonstrate time management skills	7
Communicate appropriately with other members of a work group	9
Interpret and summarise a business or industry report	39
Motivate and encourage employees	11
Ensure compliance with health and safety, hygiene, licensing and other regulations	14
Develop business unit goals that are congruent with the organisation's goals	34
Conduct and facilitate interviews	50
Delegate responsibility and authority	27
Manage meetings to ensure productivity	30
Understand and interpret legislation relevant to the business	40
Plan a business project including scheduling and resource allocation	46
Prepare an operational budget for a business unit	49
Make a business presentation to internal or external stakeholders	44

Appendix B Refining and Synthesizing the Statements

Synthesizing and revising the list: (Recruiter's Part)

- Personality

A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job

- Leadership

The leadership skills to direct oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks

- Relevant job experience

Relevant work experience for the job

- PO fit & PJ fit
- A Personality that matches organizational culture
- Flexibility
- The willingness of the candidate to rotate to different jobs in the organization
- The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations
- Positive attitude
- The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job
- Maintain professional and ethical standards in the work environment
- The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work
- The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work
- The ability to provide a high quality service experience to external customers
- Communication skills (breaks down into three subcategories)

- The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers
- The ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand through written communication
- Fluency in a second language, especially Spanish (Spanish is the second widely used language in U.S.A.)
- Human skills
- Overlapped by communication skills and following interpersonal relationship descriptors
- Self-discipline
- Self-discipline
- Basic hospitality technical skills
- The ability to operate the hardware and software needed to perform the job
- Conflict resolution
- Strong conflict management skills
- Self-initiative
- Self-motivation
- Sales and marketing
- Knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business
- Understanding the level of service expected by international guests
- Combined with the term “The ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests “.

- Deal effectively with customers' problems
- The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner
- Operate effectively can calmly in crisis situations
- The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations
- Demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff
- The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers
- Demonstrate listening skills
- Overlapped by communication skills
- Anticipate client needs
- The ability to anticipate clients' needs
- Demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests
- The ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests
- Demonstrate time management skills
- Time management skills
- Communicate appropriately with other members of a work group
- The ability to provide a high quality of work life to staff members
- Work without close supervision
- The same as self-discipline
- The researcher also adds these following two into the statements:
- The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team

- Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking and the analysis and reporting of financial data
- The researcher uses the same approach to deal with student's part and generate these following 27 statements
- Synthesizing and revising the list: (Student's Part)
- Personality skills that enable me to be suitable for the job
- The leadership skills needed to motivate employees to do their jobs
- My relevant work experience for the job
- Personality that matches organizational culture
- My willingness to rotate to different jobs in the organization
- My willingness to relocate to other work locations
- My ability to display a positive attitude toward the job
- My ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work
- My ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work
- My ability to provide a high quality service experience to external customers
- My verbal communication skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers
- My written communication skills to share information and ideas to others
- My fluency in a second language, especially Spanish
- Work without close supervision
- My ability to operate the hardware and software needed to perform my job
- My conflict management skills

- My self-motivation
- My knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business
- My willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner
- My ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations
- My ability to demonstrate empathy in dealing with customers and staff
- My ability to anticipate clients' needs
- My ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests
- My time management skills
- My ability to provide a high quality of work life to staff members
- The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team
- Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking and the analysis and reporting of financial data

Appendix C Recruiter Questionnaire Structure

Construct	Survey Questions	Measurement
Section 1: Introduction of the survey	Dear recruiters, we are conducting a study to determine the key knowledge, skills and abilities you are looking for when hiring entry level managers. In doing so, we hope to better prepare students for their future jobs. And the survey result may also improve your recruitment and selection process. Those who participate in the survey will be sent an executive report of the study findings.	N/A
Section 2: Confidentiality of the survey	All of the information you provide will remain confidential. The results will be reported as group data without any way to determine individual contributions. All data, including questionnaires, will be kept in a secure location, and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them.	N/A
	I agree to participate in this survey, as long as my information is kept confidential.	1. Yes 2. No
Section 3: Statement Choice	Please indicate the level of importance you place on the following knowledge, skills, abilities, etc., when you recruit and select graduating students for an entry level manager position.	7-point Likert scale: 1. not at all important 2. very unimportant 3. somewhat unimportant 4. neither important nor unimportant 5. somewhat important 6. very important 7. extremely important

Appendix C Continued.

Section 4: Demographic Characteristics:	Which one of the following best describes your role as a recruiter? <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Hold a full-time management position and recruit part-time 2. Hold a full-time position as a recruiter for the company
	What's your primary area of expertise?	1. Food Service 2. Rooms Division 3. Sales and Marketing 4. Revenue Management 5. Human Resource 6. General Manager
	Please check those programs where you actively recruit students for your company	1. Purdue University 2. Michigan State University 3. Pennsylvania State University 4. University of Houston 5. University of Nevada, Las Vegas
	How many years have you experienced in the hospitality industry?	Category that answer belongs
	How many years have you worked as a recruiter?	
	Do you have a hospitality degree? <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Yes 2. No
	If you have a hospitality degree, what kind of degree do you have?(Skip this question if you do not have a hospitality degree) <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Bachelor 2. Master 3. Doctoral
	Your gender	1. Male 2. Female
	Your age	Category that answer belongs

Appendix C Continued.

Section 5:Ease of Finding a Qualified Student	How easy is it to find qualified students for entry-level management positions for your business?	7-point Likert scale: 1. Very Difficult 2. Difficult 3. Somewhat Difficult 4. Neutral 5. Somewhat Easy 6. Easy 7. Very Easy
	Please explain why you find it easy/difficult to find qualified recruits	Open-ended
Section 6: Key strengths, weakness and key knowledge, skills and abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the three key strengths of hospitality graduates that make them viable candidates for your business? 2. What are the three key weaknesses of hospitality graduates that do not make them viable candidates for your business? 	Open-ended
Section 7: Acknowledgement and access to final executive report	Thank you for your participation of this survey. The study findings will benefit recruiters and students. If you would like an executive report of the study findings please send an e-mail to huang374@purdue.edu or my chief advisor, Professor La Lopa, lalopaj@purdue.edu .	N/A

Appendix D Student Questionnaire Structure

Construct	Survey Questions	Measurement
Section 1: Introduction of the survey	Dear hospitality students, we are conducting a study to determine the key knowledge, skills and abilities you think you will need to obtain an entry level management position upon graduation. The study results will benefit you by alerting faculty to the knowledge, skills, and abilities recruiters are looking for when hiring entry level managers.	N/A
Section 2: Confidentiality of the survey	All of the information you provide will remain confidential. The results will be reported as group data without any way to determine individual contributions. All data, including questionnaires, will be kept in a secure location, and only those directly involved with the research will have access to them.	N/A
	I agree to participate in this survey, as long as my information is kept confidential.	1. Yes 2. No
Section 3: Statement Choice	Please indicate the level of importance you think recruiters place on the following knowledge, skills, abilities & etc. when hire you for an entry level management job.	7-point Likert scale: 1. not at all important 2. very unimportant 3. somewhat unimportant 4. neither important nor unimportant 5. somewhat important 6. very important 7. extremely important

Appendix D Continued.

Section 4: Demographic Characteristics:	Which hospitality program (University) are you in? <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Purdue University 2. Michigan State University 3. Pennsylvania State University 4. University of Houston 5. University of Nevada, Las Vegas
	Your current status	1. Freshman 2. Sophomore 3. Junior 4. Senior
	Your gender <input type="checkbox"/>	1. Male 2. Female
Section 5: Key strengths, weakness and key knowledge, skills and abilities	1. What three key strengths do you have that will get you hired for an entry level management job in the hospitality industry when you graduate? 2. What three weaknesses do you have that might make it difficult for you to be hired as an entry level manager in the hospitality industry when you graduate?	Open-ended
Section 6: Three most important hospitality classes	Which three classes in your major do you think will do the best job of preparing you for an entry level management position in the hospitality industry when you graduate?	Open-ended
Section 7: Acknowledgement and access to final executive report	Thank you for your participation of this survey. The study findings will benefit recruiters and students. If you would like an executive report of the study findings please send an e-mail to huang374@purdue.edu or my chief advisor, Professor La Lopa, lalopaj@purdue.edu .	N/A

Appendix E Rank of gap between recruiters and students regarding what skills,
knowledge, and abilities entry-level managers need most

Rank	Statement	Recruiters (N=40)^	Students (N=440)	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
1	Knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business	4.73 (.949)	5.48 (1.057)	-.751	-4.379 (.000)	451
2	The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations	4.44 (1.534)	5.13 (1.102)	-.687	-3.671 (.000)	466
3	A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job	6.52 (.634)	5.91 (1.304)	.618	3.034 (.003)	477
4	Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking, and the analysis and reporting of financial data	4.78 (.909)	5.39 (1.109)	-.608	-3.397 (.001)	450
5	A personality that matches organizational culture	6.22 (.759)	5.63 (1.020)	.587	3.590 (.000)	466
6	The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers	6.39 (.919)	5.93 (.891)	.456	3.117 (.002)	450
7	The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work	6.66 (.530)	6.21 (1.044)	.453	2.741 (.006)	457
8	The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers	6.41 (.805)	6.02 (.970)	.393	2.508 (.012)	453
9	Self-discipline	6.30 (.464)	5.91 (.967)	.390	2.520 (.012)	449
10	The ability to operate hardware and software	5.27 (.807)	5.64 (1.027)	-.369	-2.235 (.026)	453

Appendix E Continued.

11	The ability to anticipate clients' needs	6.34 (.656)	6.02 (.933)	.324	2.173 (.030)	450
12	The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job	6.54 (.596)	6.22 (1.010)	.316	1.971 (.049)	457
13	Relevant work experience for the job	5.22 (.791)	5.53 (1.057)	-.310	-1.826 (.068)	466
14	The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner	6.51 (1.003)	6.23 (.896)	.286	1.931 (.054)	451
15	My fluency in second language	4.17 (1.138)	4.44 (1.208)	-.274	-1.391 (.165)	453
16	The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work	6.51 (.506)	6.26 (1.000)	.249	1.574 (.116)	457
17	Strong conflict management skills	5.76 (.734)	5.99 (1.001)	-.234	-1.459 (.145)	453
18	Self-motivation	6.32 (.734)	6.09 (1.015)	.222	1.378 (.169)	451
19	The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team	6.22 (.613)	6.02 (.965)	.195	1.269 (.205)	450
20	The leadership skills to direct oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks	6.20 (.601)	6.12 (1.031)	.164	2.680 (.665)	466
21	The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations	6.32 (.610)	6.16 (.883)	.156	1.109 (.268)	450
22	The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers	6.29 (.642)	6.16 (.951)	.137	.903 (.367)	457
23	The willingness of the candidate to rotate to different jobs in the organization	5.32 (.960)	5.45 (1.076)	-.133	-.760 (.448)	466

Appendix E Continued.

24	Time management skills	6.20 (.601)	6.27 (.860)	-.077	-.562 (.574)	450
25	The ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests	5.73 (.975)	5.80 (1.011)	-.069	-.420 (.675)	451
26	The ability to provide a high quality of work life to staff members	5.83 (1.093)	5.89 (.996)	-.057	-.348 (.728)	453
27	The ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand through written communication	5.68 (.789)	5.70 (1.009)	-.013	-.082 (0.935)	457

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means and p-values appear in parentheses below t-values. ^Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

Appendix F Rank of gap between Purdue students and non-Purdue students regarding
what skills, knowledge, and abilities entry-level managers need most

Rank	Statement	Purdue (N=314) [^]	Non- Purdue (N =93)	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
1	Knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business	5.54 (1.069)	5.26 (.999)	.287	2.303 (.022)	405
2	The ability to anticipate clients' needs	5.96 (.958)	6.24 (.813)	-.281	-2.568 (.011)	405
3	Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking, and the analysis and reporting of financial data	5.44 (1.113)	5.18 (1.099)	.258	1.961 (.051)	404
4	A personality that matches organizational culture	5.57 (1.032)	5.82 (.920)	-.250	-2.105 (.036)	405
5	The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers	5.89 (.915)	6.11 (.787)	-.222	-2.121 (.035)	405
6	The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work	6.15 (1.088)	6.34 (.903)	-.191	-1.544 (.123)	405
7	The leadership skills to direct oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks	6.07 (1.050)	6.26 (.931)	-.185	-1.528 (.127)	405
8	A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job	5.90 (1.290)	6.08 (1.135)	-.177	-1.195 (.233)	405
9	The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers	6.11 (.992)	6.29 (.815)	-0.176	-1.559 (.120)	405

Appendix F Continued.

10	The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team	6.05 (.989)	5.95 (.889)	.108	.945 (.345)	405
11	The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner	6.20 (.919)	6.30 (.831)	-.100	-.945 (.345)	405
12	The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations	5.10 (1.146)	5.19 (.888)	-.092	-.711 (.478)	405
13	The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations	6.14 (.915)	6.23 (.782)	-.086	-.819 (.413)	405
14	Strong conflict management skills	5.97 (1.026)	6.05 (.937)	-.086	-.720 (.472)	405
15	The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers	6.01 (.966)	6.09 (.985)	-.080	-.695 (.487)	405
16	The ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand through written communication	5.68 (1.037)	5.75 (.940)	-.078	-.646 (.518)	405
17	The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job	6.24 (1.043)	6.16 (.924)	.074	.619 (.536)	405
18	Time management skills	6.25 (.893)	6.32 (.754)	-.068	-.665 (.506)	405
19	The willingness of the candidate to rotate to different jobs in the organization	5.46 (1.069)	5.40 (1.054)	.061	.483 (.630)	405
20	Self-motivation	6.11 (1.015)	6.05 (1.036)	.055	.453 (.651)	405
21	My fluency in second language	4.43 (1.229)	4.48 (1.176)	-.054	-.375 (.708)	405

Appendix F Continued.

22	The ability to operate hardware and software	5.64 (1.005)	5.60 (1.115)	.041	.338 (.735)	405
23	The ability to provide a high quality of work life to staff members	5.87 (1.013)	5.90 (.945)	-.031	-.260 (.795)	405
24	The ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests	5.81 (1.018)	5.78 (.987)	.024	.201 (.841)	405
25	Relevant work experience for the job	5.53 (1.055)	5.55 (1.058)	-.023	-.184 (.854)	405
26	Self-discipline	5.91 (1.005)	5.92 (.850)	-.017	-.149 (.882)	405
27	The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work	6.26 (1.005)	6.26 (1.020)	.000	-.001 (.999)	405

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means and p-values appear in parentheses below t-values. ^Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

Appendix G Rank of gap between male and female students regarding what skills, knowledge, and abilities entry-level managers need most

Rank	Statement	Male (N=106) [^]	Female (N=301)	Mean Difference	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
1	The ability to provide a high quality of work life to staff members	5.72 (.974)	5.94 (1.000)	-.220	-1.961 (.051)	405
2	Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking, and the analysis and reporting of financial data	5.52 (1.084)	5.34 (1.121)	.188	1.494 (.136)	404
3	The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work	6.07 (1.157)	6.24 (1.009)	.176	-1.489 (.137)	405
4	A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job	6.07 (.988)	5.89 (1.337)	.172	1.215 (.225)	405
5	The willingness of the candidate to rotate to different jobs in the organization	5.35 (1.147)	5.48 (1.035)	-.129	-1.076 (.283)	405
6	Knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business	5.57 (1.104)	5.45 (1.043)	.118	.982 (.327)	405
7	The leadership skills to direct oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks	6.05 (1.045)	6.14 (1.020)	-.092	-.797 (.426)	405
8	A personality that matches organizational culture	5.69 (.909)	5.60 (1.046)	.087	.764 (.445)	405
9	The ability to operate hardware and software	5.70 (1.006)	5.61 (1.038)	.087	.0746 (.456)	405
10	Strong conflict management skills	5.92 (1.039)	6.01 (.995)	-.085	-.752 (.345)	405
11	The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers	5.96 (.945)	6.05 (.979)	-.084	-.769 (.442)	405

Appendix G Continued.

12	The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner	6.17 (.899)	6.24 (.901)	-.073	-.715 (.475)	405
13	The ability to anticipate clients' needs	5.97 (.990)	6.04 (.914)	-.065	-.615 (.539)	405
14	The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work	6.22 (.995)	6.27 (1.013)	-.055	-.487 (.627)	405
15	The ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests	5.76 (.981)	5.82 (1.021)	-.053	-.465 (.642)	405
16	The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations	5.08 (1.147)	5.14 (1.073)	-.051	-.416 (.678)	405
17	Time management skills	6.30 (.841)	6.26 (.871)	.043	.438 (.661)	405
18	Self-motivation	6.07 (1.124)	6.11 (.981)	-.040	-.350 (.727)	405
19	The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team	6.00 (1.060)	6.04 (.934)	-.040	-.365 (.716)	405
20	The ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand through written communication	5.72 (1.021)	5.68 (1.015)	.033	.284 (.777)	405
21	Relevant work experience for the job	5.51 (1.140)	5.54 (1.024)	-.029	-.241 (.809)	405
22	The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers	5.92 (.896)	5.94 (.891)	-.028	-.282 (.778)	405
23	The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job	6.20 (1.018)	6.23 (1.018)	-.028	-.242 (.809)	405
24	My fluency in second language	5.81 (1.018)	5.78 (.987)	-.025	-.246 (.806)	405

Appendix G Continued.

25	The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations	4.42 (1.287)	4.45 (1.192)	-.024	-.274 (.841)	405
26	Self-discipline	5.90 (.955)	5.92 (.978)	-.021	-.189 (.850)	405
27	The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers	6.16 (.863)	6.15 (.988)	.008	.070 (.944)	405

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means and p-values appear in parentheses below t-values. ^Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

Appendix H Rank of gaps between students from different year levels regarding what skills, knowledge, and abilities entry-level managers need most

Rank	Statement	Freshman (N = 77)^	Sophomore (N = 64)	Junior (N=165)	Senior (N=101)	<i>F</i>	Between Groups	Within Groups
1	Knowledge of the marketing and sales function of the business	5.83 (.818)	5.61 (1.093)	5.36 (1.115)	5.33 (1.050)	4.704 (.003)	3	403
2	My fluency in second language	4.74 (1.271)	4.58 (1.245)	4.25 (1.166)	4.45 (1.196)	3.258 (.022)	3	403
3	The ability to anticipate clients' needs	6.13 (.801)	5.92 (1.059)	5.89 (1.059)	6.21 (.653)	3.053 (.028)	3	403
4	The ability to remain calm and operate effectively in crisis situations	6.34 (.736)	6.11 (1.025)	6.02 (.981)	6.28 (.680)	3.028 (.029)	3	403
5	Knowledge of economic and accounting principles and practices, the financial markets, banking, and the analysis and reporting of financial data	5.60 (.990)	5.58 (1.036)	5.33 (1.170)	5.19 (1.125)	2.782 (.041)	3	402
6	A personality that matches organizational culture	5.52 (1.034)	5.44 (.941)	5.61 (1.022)	5.84 (.997)	2.594 (.052)	3	403
7	Self-discipline	5.94 (.894)	5.77 (1.244)	5.85 (.991)	6.09 (.763)	1.866 (.135)	3	403
8	A personality that enables the candidate to be suitable for the job	5.81 (1.136)	5.92 (1.325)	5.87 (1.300)	6.17 (.991)	1.605 (.188)	3	403

Appendix H Continued.

9	The ability to demonstrate empathy when dealing with internal and external customers	6.04 (.768)	5.91 (1.003)	5.84 (.987)	6.03 (.714)	1.349 (.258)	3	403
10	The ability to operate hardware and software	5.71 (.958)	5.83 (1.047)	5.56 (1.032)	5.56 (1.062)	1.328 (.265)	3	403
11	Time management skills	6.31 (.765)	6.22 (1.031)	6.19 (.943)	6.40 (.649)	1.284 (.280)	3	403
12	The willingness of the candidate to relocate to other work locations	5.12 (1.124)	5.20 (1.115)	5.03 (1.134)	5.23 (.979)	0.821 (.483)	3	403
13	The leadership skills to direct oneself and one's coworkers to accomplish tasks	6.25 (1.002)	6.08 (1.028)	6.05 (1.075)	6.15 (.963)	.716 (.543)	3	403
14	The willingness of the candidate to rotate to different jobs in the organization	5.57 (.992)	5.52 (1.084)	5.39 (1.074)	5.40 (1.096)	.683 (.563)	3	403
15	The willingness to learn independently and as a member of a team	6.13 (.923)	6.09 (1.035)	5.96 (1.044)	6.03 (.818)	.673 (.569)	3	403
16	Self-motivation	6.21 (.800)	6.09 (1.151)	6.02 (1.110)	6.13 (.924)	.615 (.606)	3	403

Appendix H Continued.

17	The ability to demonstrate cultural awareness in dealings with staff and guests	5.86 (.969)	5.91 (1.050)	5.78 (1.020)	5.74 (1.007)	.455 (.714)	3	403
18	The ability to provide a high-quality service experience to external customers	6.05 (.972)	5.97 (1.140)	5.98 (.940)	6.11 (.904)	.451 (.717)	3	403
19	Relevant work experience for the job	5.57 (.952)	5.61 (1.002)	5.46 (1.079)	5.56 (1.126)	.433 (.730)	3	403
20	Strong conflict management skills	6.01 (.925)	5.92 (1.145)	5.95 (1.017)	6.07 (.962)	.398 (.754)	3	403
21	The willingness to address and resolve customer complaints in a professional manner	6.22 (.788)	6.30 (1.049)	6.18 (.897)	6.26 (.891)	.343 (.794)	3	403
22	The degree to which the candidate is able to use verbal skills to convey information effectively to customers and coworkers	6.14 (.996)	6.13 (1.062)	6.14 (.930)	6.21 (.909)	.142 (.935)	3	403
23	The ability to provide a high quality of work life to staff members	5.92 (0.900)	5.92 (1.103)	5.85 (1.022)	5.87 (.966)	.140 (.936)	3	403

Appendix H Continued.

24	The ability to communicate information and ideas so others will understand through written communication	5.70 (.947)	5.75 (.943)	5.67 (1.038)	5.69 (1.084)	.105 (.957)	3	403
25	The ability to maintain ethical standards no matter the circumstance at work	6.16 (0.974)	6.19 (1.097)	6.19 (1.081)	6.24 (1.041)	.091 (.965)	3	403
26	The degree to which the candidate displays a positive attitude toward the job	6.21 (1.043)	6.27 (1.027)	6.22 (.988)	6.20 (1.049)	.062 (.980)	3	403
27	The ability to maintain a professional attitude no matter the circumstances at work	6.29 (1.011)	6.27 (1.027)	6.25 (.984)	6.25 (1.043)	.029 (.993)	3	403

Note: Standard deviations appear in parentheses below means, and significance appears in parentheses below F values. .

^Item means are based on 7-point Likert Scale of 1 (not at all important) to 7 (extremely important).

Appendix I Descriptors of key themes of strengths for hospitality graduates make them viable candidates in the hospitality industry by recruiters' standpoints from the open-ended question "What are the three key strengths of hospitality graduates that make them viable candidates for your business?"

The top 5 mentioned key themes are "Personality", "Passion For the Industry", "Working Experience", "Work Ethic" and "Knowledge of This Industry".

There are 15 key themes regarding "Personality" from the open-end question as follows:

1) assertiveness, 2) warm, genuine & open personality, 3) outgoing confident personality, 4) dynamic personality, 5) confidence, 6) confidence without arrogance, 7) compassion, 8) a helpful, hospitable personality (the willingness to serve both pleasant and unpleasant customers without losing his/her sense of hospitality), 9) hospitable, 10) personality, 11) showing true personality and passion for people and being able to provide examples of how they would impact our guests experience as a manager ,12) their confidence & presentation, 13)have the hospitality "gene" and truly like serving people ,14) outgoing, energetic approach to service, 15) intense

There are 13 key themes regarding "Passion For the Industry" from the open-end question as follows:

1) passion, 2) passion, 3) passion/drive,4) passion,5) high energy/enthusiasm ,6) desire. Hospitality graduates as a group portray strong ambition; desire to initiate change, 7) high energy/enthusiasm , 8) They seem to have a passion for the industry, 9) Someone with passion/dedication to want to be in hospitality and learn about the industry, 10) they are truly committed to a career in the hospitality industry, 11) ambition, 12) Their desire,

drive & passion for the hospitality business, 13) They are hungry and want to take over the world!

There are 10 key themes regarding “Working Experience” from the open-end question as follows:

1) well rounded exposure to the industry, 2) front desk hotel experience ,3) held in previous jobs or extracurricular activities, 4) experience, 5) experience, 6) hourly Experience, 7) I think hands on experience is very valuable. 8) work experience,9) experience. The finest hospitality graduates have hands-on experience in the field, 10) Most have some hotel experience

There are 10 key themes regarding “Work Ethic” from the open-end question as follows:

1) moral compass, 2) work ethic, 3) strong work ethic, 4) good work ethic, 5) work ethic, 6) Probably the most important - someone who has integrity, 7) work ethic, 8) work ethic, 9) work ethic,10) work ethic

There are 9 key themes regarding “Knowledge of This Industry” from the open-end question as follows:

1) They have a better understanding of the overall operations. 2) They have taken the necessary classes to give them an idea of what part of the hospitality world they want to be in. 3) someone with general knowledge of how the industry works and ability to understand why we do things the way we do, 4) Most hospitality grads not only have an idea of what's going on within an operation... 5) knowledge of the industry - they are able to succeed since they are trained in the area of hospitality, 6) knowledge base of the

industry, 7) overall knowledge of industry , 8) understanding of basic hospitality principles, 9) better understanding of work hour expectations (although still an issue)

Appendix J Descriptors of key themes of strengths for hospitality graduates make them viable candidates in the hospitality industry by students' standpoints from the open-ended question "What three key strengths do you have that will get you hired for an entry level management job in the hospitality industry when you graduate?"

The top 5 mentioned key themes are "Personality", "Leadership", "Communication", "Passion" and "Experience".

There are 80 key themes regarding "Personality" from the open-end question as follows:

1) personality, 2) my personality ,3) personality,4) personality,5) I think I have a good personality. 6) I have the personality to work in this field. 7) personality, 8) personable, 9)personable, 10) I am personable. 11) personality,12)personality, 13)personality, 14)my personality (I possess and open-mind and bubbly personality), 15) personable, 16) good personality, 17) personable, 18)personality,19)good personality,20) I have a good personality. 21) personable, 22)I am personable. 23) I am very outgoing. 24) I am an outgoing person. 25) personable, 26) persistence, 27) endurance, 28) confidence, 29) self-confidence, 30) confidence, 31) outgoing / confidence / polite, 32) smiling, 33) approachable, 34) friendly personality, 35) happy, 36)my smile, 37) I'm friendly. 38) I think that I have a great personality. I love meeting new people and making people happy.39) the right personality and confidence, 40) patient, 41) confidence, 42) patient, kindness, confidence, 43) personality, 44) personable, 45) personable, 46) strong yet welcoming personality, 47) social and outgoing, 48) I am personable. 49) I am outgoing and friendly. 50) outgoing personality, 51) My personality is probably my best feature. 52) very good patience with many different types of situations, 53) constantly maintaining a

positive and friendly character, 54) kind, 55) amiable, 56) I'm extremely nice and almost always get along with everyone. 57) outspoken, 58) confidence, 59) friendly, kind, and polite, 60) kind, 61) patient, 62) affinity, 63) I am very personable. 64) patience, 65) self-confidence, 66) confidence, 67) personality, 68) We should be patient. 69) personable, 70) I believe I come off as friendly and open, but through my grades and past experience I am obviously a determined person. 71) A positive personality, 72) confident, 73) self-confidence, 74) confident, outgoing, 75) personable, 76) positive personality, 77) positive personality and mindset, 78) more outgoing personality, 79) I have a great personality. 80) conscientious, 81) patience

There are 72 key themes regarding "Leadership" from the open-end question as follows:

1) The most key strength to attain an entry level management position is the ability to lead. Not just on paper or from behind the scenes, but have a contagious personality where you are able to motivate fellow employees and help people lead themselves. 2) leadership, 3) I am a leader. 4) king, 5) leadership experience, 6) I have strong leadership experience on campus here at Purdue. 7) leadership, 8) leadership, 9) my leadership skills, 10) leadership, 11) leadership skills, 12) leadership, 13) lead by example, 14) leadership skills, 15) delegates work and is a leader, 16) leadership skills, 17) leadership traits, 18) leadership, 19) I have strong leadership skills. 20) leadership, 21) leadership, 22) I am a leader who is good at keeping things running and leading by example. 23) leadership skills, 24) leadership, 25) leadership/supervisory experience, 26) leadership skills, 27) leadership experience, 28) Penn State highly stresses leadership so I also feel that I will

have a good understanding of how to apply that on the job. 29) I have a large amount of leadership experience, 30) leadership, 31) leadership roles, 32) I have experience with leadership positions. 33) leadership, 34) a strong leader, 35) leadership skills, 36) leadership, 37) leadership, 38) leadership, 39) I am a leader. 40) leadership, 41) the ability to take direction, 42) leadership qualities, 43) I like to take a leadership role, 44) good leadership skills, 45) I have leadership experience. 46) the ability to lead, 47) a leader, 48) leadership, 49) leadership skills, 50) I am a good leader. 51) leadership roles outside of classes, 52) leadership, 53) leadership ability, 54) leadership, 55) I have great leadership skills, 56) leadership, 57) leadership, 58) leadership, 59) leadership skills, 60) often takes leadership role, 61) leadership skills, 62) leadership experience, 63) I also have very good leader/managing skills. 64) leadership skills, 65) leadership skills, 66) leadership, 67) leadership, 68) leadership, 69) leadership, 70) proven leadership ability, 71) my leadership skills, 72) leadership

There are 65 key themes regarding “Communication” from the open-end question as follows:

1) I have great communication skills with people from everywhere. 2) communication, 3) I have great communication skills. 4) I have incredible listening skills, 5) I can communicate well with others, 6) communication skills, 7) strong communication skills, both verbal and writing, 8) good at communicate, 9) good communication skills, 10) communication skill, 11) good communication skills, 12) communication, 13) I am good at communicate with people. 14) communication skills, 15) I have learned how to communicate with employees so they know what I need from them

and what they need to do to improve their productivity. 16) I am good at communication. 17) I have the ability to speak confidently and professionally with recruiters/my authorities/adults. 18) I am good at communicating with people. 19) good communication skills - written and verbal , 20) verbal communication, 21) love to communicate with people and make new friends, 22) communication skills, 23) communication, 24) communication skills, 25) communication, 26) strong communication skills, 27) communication skill ,28) good oral communication, 29) verbal communication, 30) skills in communicating with others, 31) good communication skills, 32) communication skills, 33) communicate , 34)good communication skills,35) speaking skills, 36) good communicate skill, 37) be able to communicate, 38) communication, 39) communication, 40) the ability to listen, 41) I have good communication skills. 42) communication, 43) listen well, 44) very good communication skills, 45) communication skills, 46) communication, 47) good communication skill, 48) communication skills, 49) excellent communication skills, 50) communication skills, 51)I have very good communication skills. 52) communication, 53) communication skills, 54) excellent communication skills, 55) ability to communicate to others, 56) communication, 57) good listening skills, 58) be able to communicate with people, 59) communication, 60) communication skills, 61) a good listener to be able to react to situations, 62) good communication skills, 63) my communication skills, 64) communication skills, 65) communication skills

There are 57 key themes regarding “Experience” from the open-end question as follows:

1) my past experiences, 2) my past experience, 3) experience, 4) experience in the industry, 5) working experience, 6) I have almost six years of experience in the restaurant industry, front and back-of-house. 7) experience in different areas of the industry, 8) relevant experience outside the classroom, 9) experience, 10) experience, 11) work experience, 12) experience, 13) internship experience, 14) experience, 15) work and campus involvement experience, 16) I'm going to be doing an internship next summer, and I am in a couple extra curriculums where I am part of e-board. 17) I have experience in the hospitality. 18) experience, 19) broad experience, 20) internship/work experience, 21) work experience my organization, 22) experience, 23) work experience, 24) experience from doing internship, 25) experience, 26) Internship experience, 27) work experience, 28) I have worked in the hotel for half a year in three departments: kitchen, reception and housekeeping. 29) experience, 30) experience, 31) experience, 32) I have a lot of experience in this industry from previous jobs. 33) I have job experience. 34) experience, 35) experience and exposure to the service industry, 36) previous experience, 37) experience, 38) internship experience, 39) strong internship experience, 40) some work experience, 41) experience, 42) experience in the industry, 43) I have work experience. 44) quality work experience, 45) experience in the field, 46) I have experience that I have learned so much from that will benefit me in my future. 47) I have service experience in the industry. 48) hospitality industry experience, both in entry-level and management roles, 49) internship experience, 50) similar experience in service industry, 51) I have experienced entry level management job in Human Resource. 52) experience, 53) previous experience, 54) work experience, 55) professional experience related to the job, 56) experience, 57) I have experience.

Appendix K Descriptors of key themes of weaknesses for hospitality graduates make them not viable candidates in the hospitality industry by recruiters' standpoints from the open-ended question "What are the three key weaknesses of hospitality graduates that do not make them viable candidates for your business?"

The top 5 mentioned key themes are "Lack of Relevant Experience", "Unrealistic Expectations", "Poor Communication Skills", "Lack of Leadership Skills" and "Lack of Conflict Solving Skills".

There are 16 key themes regarding "Lack of Relevant Experience" from the open-end question as follows:

1) relevant industry experience, 2) lack of exposure to the business, 3) lack of industry experience, 4) lack of experience, 5) little related work experience, 6) belief they have all the answers without the practical experience, 7) lack of on the job experience, 8) lack of experience, 9) lacking experience. 10) lack of experience, 11) They often lack practical experience. 12) lack of experience, 13) lack of experience, 14) no experience in industry, 15) haven't gotten practical experience in their desired field to understand their long term viability, 16) lack of direct related experience in hospitality

There are 10 key themes regarding "Unrealistic Expectations" from the open-end question as follows:

1) unrealistic expectations of the type of work they will be doing upon completion of their degree, 2) unrealistic expectations to start as a manager when they've held no experience the department they aspire to manage, 3) salary expectations are unrealistic, 4) unrealistic expectations as to how quickly they will move into an executive level role, 5) Impatience. Ambition leads to very high expectations, and recent grads can prove to be

very impatient. 6) unrealistic salary expectations, 7) high salary expectations, 8) They have unrealistic salary and career path expectations. 9) not having realistic expectations of their starting point post college, 10) wanting everything (big title, big money) right now

There are 6 key themes regarding “Poor Communication Skills” from the open-end question as follows:

1) poor communication skills, 2) poor communication skills, 3) poor communication skills, 4) lack of verbal communications skills, 5) lack of written communications skills, 6) inability to communicate effectively

There are 5 key themes regarding “Lack of Leadership Skills” from the open-end question as follows:

1) need more supervisory experience, 2) lack of experience in leadership, 3) lack of confidence (from lack of leadership experience), 4) lacking in leadership/management skills, 5) inability to lead others

There are 3 key themes regarding “Lack of Conflict Solving Skills” from the open-end question as follows:

1) lack of experience in conflict resolution, 2) inability to resolve conflict, 3) problem solving abilities

Appendix L Descriptors of key themes of weaknesses for hospitality graduates make them not viable candidates in the hospitality industry by students' standpoints from the open-ended question "What three weaknesses do you have that might make it difficult for you to be hired as an entry level manager in the hospitality industry when you graduate?"

The top 5 mentioned key themes are "Lack of Relevant Experience", "Lack of Good Personality", "Lack of Time Management Skills", "Poor Communication Skills" and "Poor Communication Skills".

There are 109 key themes regarding "Lack of Relevant Experience" from the open-end question as follows:

1) not too much work-related experience, 2) Less experience, 3) lack of work experience, 4) no hotel experience, 5) not enough experience, 6) no experience, 7) little previous experience, 8) lack of experience in the specific position, 9) not enough relevant experience outside the classroom, 10) As of right now my main weakness is work experience, however by the time I graduate that should change. 11) I don't have too many experiences. 12) experience, 13) experiences, 14) lack of hands on experience, 15) not enough experience, 16) lack of sufficient or relevant work experience, 17) lack of experiences, 18) experience, 19) minimal experience, 20) more experience, 21)not as much experience as other candidates, 22) not enough experiences, 23) less working experience, 24) inexperienced, 25) lack of experience, 26) lack of experience, 27) lack of experience, 28) experience, 29) lack of experience, 30) lack of relevant experience, 31) I do not have enough experience in several different fields of the industry. 32) I don't have a lot of experience in the industry. 33) experience, 34) not enough job experience, 35) not

many past experiences, 36) just coming out of school--lack of entry level jobs, 37) experience, 38) no experience, 39) new to the field, inexperienced, 40) not much experience in event planning, 41) lack of work experience, 42) lack of relative career experiences, 43) low experiences, 44) small internship experience so far, 45) little internship experience, 46) experience, 47) I'm lacking previous experience in the industry. 48) no prior experience, 49) not enough experience, 50) lack of experience, 51) lack of experience, 52) experience, 53) less hands on experience, 54) I do not have a lot of experience that I can put down on my resumes. 55) no previous experience, 56) lack of experience, 57) I have little experience. 58) only one internship, 59) lack of work experience, 60) as of now no internship, lack of experience, 61) lack of experience, 62) experience, 63) not enough experience in all of the aspects of a hotel, 64) little experience, 65) no much experience, 66) short work experiences, 67) not enough work experience, 68) front-line experience and broader experience (experience in different positions and areas), 69) I don't have any experience in sales (which is what I'm most interested in), I don't have much experience in full service properties. 70) lack of experience in some areas, 71) maybe not enough experience, or the "right experience, 72) not having too much experience, 73) lack of relevant work experience, 74) experience, 75) my level of experience in the industry, 76) some experience, 77) lack of experience, 78) lack of experience for the position that I am applying for, 79) possibly not enough experience, 80) lack of experience, 81) not the most experience is my biggest weakness, 82) I just need more experience in general. 83) not a large variety of hospitality experiences, 84) actual experience in the industry, 85) not enough business experience (office experience), 86) not enough quantitative experience at hotels, 87) lack of experience, 88) my lack of

experience, 89) my lack of experience, 90) I have no experience with hotels/lodging. 91) not having enough experience, 92) Inexperienced, 93) lack of experiences, 94) lack of experience, 95) maybe not enough experience depending where, 96) I might have less experience than the others. 97) experience, 98) little working experience, 99) less working experiences, 100) experience, 101) not as much experience as the other candidates, 102) experience, 103) I only have work experience in restaurants, which could hurt my chances of getting a job as a hotel manager. 104) experience, 105) experience, 106) not enough experience, 107) not enough experience, 108) experience, 109) I don't have enough experience in a certain part of hospitality.

There are 89 key themes regarding “Lack of Good Personality” from the open-end question as follows:

1) patience, 2) my personality, lack of confidence, 3) sometimes shy, 4) personality, 5) impatient, 6) I believe I am not as stern as I should be. 7) personality, 8) too accommodating, 9) grow restless when there is nothing to do, 10) shyness, 11) I'm shy.12) control freak, 13) patience, 14) I tend to be on the quiet side and am not incredibly extraverted. 15) I'm a bit impatient, controlling, 16) shyness, patience, 17) I am shy at first approach. 18) stubbornness, 19) shy, introvert, 20) quiet, 21) I can be shy at first. timid, hard time being strict, 22) low confidence, 23) endurance, 24) introverted personality, 25) I'm stubborn. I give people rude looks if they make me mad. 26) too active, 27) lack of self-confidence, 28) looks confident, 29) I am shy at first. 30) control freak, 31) shyness, confidence, and speaking my mind,32) impatient, 33) too friendly, 34) sometimes to strict, too confident, 35) can be impatient, too bossy, 36) shy, 37) not very

patience, 38) stubborn / blunt / opinionated, 39) shy / rude, 40) defensive and stubborn, 41) defensive, 42) impatient, timid, 43) stubbornness, 44) lack of patience, 45) rude, 46) confidence in my ideas , I can be shy around others. 47) I am not good at confronting people on things that are stern. 48) meet new people, 49) reserved, and quiet character, 50) type b personality, I am stubborn. 51) shy, 52) impatience, lack of confidence, 53) shyness, 54) my patience is very thin, 55) shy at first, can be impatient, 56) timid / shy / kind, 57) Introvert, 58) my timidity, 59) be more extrovert, 60) I can be shy in new situations. 61) I'm quiet, 62) takes me time to open myself to others, 63) shyness, lack of confidence, 64) not always patient, 65) I also can come off very shy which would make people assume I wouldn't be a good manager. 66) shy, 67) shy, 68) shyness, 69) lack of patience, 70) personality, 71) I can be a somewhat stubborn person at times which is unnecessary in some situations. 72) impatient, 73) control freak, 74) too timid at times, 75) my confidence level, 76) I am not a very persuasive person. I may seem more reserved when I first meet people. 77) introverted, 78) being too friendly can sometimes be a setback to not take leadership, 79) I might be less confident when I first meet the recruiters. 80) I lack patience, I tend to be Type A. 81) introverted personality, 82) not enough patience, 83) shyness, timidity, 84) I can also be very shy at first. 85) I have no patience sometimes. Stubbornness: Sometimes I can only see things from my perspective and not the perspective of others. 86) I can be quiet sometimes as a relater. 87) Type A personality- at time I don't know how to handle people who have a type B personality. 88) come off shy and quite, sometimes can lack confidence, 89) confidence

There are 54 key themes regarding “Lack of Time Management Skills” from the open-end question as follows:

1) time management, 2) I used to leave assignments to the last minute but I have learned not to procrastinate. 3) procrastinate, 4) I can run late sometimes. 5) time management skills, 6) I can be a procrastinator but no matter what I always get my work done on time and put all of my effort into it but usually just not until the last minute, 7) time management / procrastinate, 8) time management, 9) procrastination, 10) time management, 11) time management, 12) doing work last minute, 13) I have to work on my time management skills. 14) procrastination, 15) procrastination, 16) low time management, 17) time management, 18) time management, 19) I also need to work on my time-management skills. 20) time management, 21) I sometimes struggle with time management. 22) time management, 23) poor time management, 24) not enough time management, 25) always late, 26) procrastinate, 27) not good with managing my time, 28) time management, 29) time management, 30) time management skills, 31) time management could be better. 32) time management, 33) time management, 34) lack of sense of time, 35) bad time management, 36) time management, 37) time management, 38) my time management, 39) time management, 40) time management, 41) sometimes can't make good schedule, 42) lose track of time, 43) time management issues, 44) time management, 45) time management, 46) procrastinator, 47) my time management skills, 48) time management, 49) time management, 50) slight lack of time management skills, 51) my time management is not the greatest, 52) procrastination, 53) I procrastinate. 54) time management

There are 34 key themes regarding “Poor Communication Skills” from the open-end question as follows:

1) not being talkative, 2) can be too talkative at times, 3) verbal communication, 4) I talk too much sometimes. 5) talk too much, 6) communication, 7) not the best at written communication, 8) I have a tendency to talk too much. 9) not good at communicate with other because I am not a socializer. 10) communication skills, 11) not good listener, 12) not talkative, 13) I may talk too much, 14) wanting to socialize and talk too much with workers, 15) I talk fast sometimes. 16) I don't have good written communication skills. 17) I also need to listen more to others. 18) talkative, 19) talk too much, 20) non-talkative, 21) communication skill, 22) communication skills, 23) communication skills, 24) communication skill, 25) insufficient communication skills, 26) Sometimes I over speak. 27) small talk with guests, 28) poor communication, 29) It is sometimes hard to hear people. 30) I can be too outgoing and have the tendency to speak more than I should. 31) I sometimes have a hard time expressing what I want to say with words and I get nervous. 32) bad communicative skills, 33) I am really social and love to talk a lot. 34) not being able to communicate my strengths well enough to recruiters

There are 31 key themes regarding “Lack of Determination” from the open-end question as follows:

1) I'm not very good at making decisions, 2) not very assertive, and soft spoken, 3) I tend to double guess myself which can lead to problems I have to work on being more assertive. 4) my indecisiveness (all I can say is that I have been working on it). 5) decision making, 6) I am indecisive. 7) Indecisive, 8) I tend to say yes to a lot of projects.

9) I can't say no to things. 10) I will hesitate to make a decision, 11) hard time say no, 12) I can be too soft and lenient sometimes. 13) I should get a backbone so that I can have a more domineering role in the workplace. 14) exclude feelings from decisions, 15) I have a hard time saying no to people. 16) hard to say no in situations, 17) I'm not good at saying no, 18) hard to say "no", 19) my hesitation when making decisions, 20) hesitation, 21) the fear of big decisions and how my decisions will affect the company, 22) indecisiveness, 23) cannot say 'no' easily, 24) hard time expressing opinions/ saying no, 25) decision making, 26) being assertive, 27) decision making, 28) I need to learn to say no, 29) slower at making decisions, indecisive, 30) my first weakness is my inability to say no, 31) I struggle to say "no" to guests.