



Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

**The importance of utilising selection tools in the student selection
process in hospitality training institutions in Cape Town**

by

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ABSTRACT

In the light of the growing hospitality industry on one hand, and the limited space available at hospitality training institutions on the other, hotel schools are faced with the challenge of being able to identify students who will most likely be able to complete their courses and thus serve the industry. The practical element of hospitality studies is a defining characteristic that differentiates the subject from other business and management courses. Hotel schools therefore are required to be able to select students that are able to cope with the academic and practical requirements of hospitality courses.

This research focused on analysing the current selection practices used by hospitality training institutions when selecting entry level students. The purpose was to identify success predictors and thus formulate an effective selection programme that incorporates the student's academic and vocational skills in order to reduce the student drop-out rate and increase the number of graduates entering the job market.

The target population used for this research was hospitality management students. The criteria used were hospitality management students enrolled for courses with a qualification that is in accordance with NQF level 6 in Cape Town. The two schools that were used as the sample for this study were the IHS (International Hotel School) and the CTHS (Cape Town Hotel School), as they were found to be the only two schools that fit the criteria. The purposive sampling method was used in the form of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with the four academics involved in the student selection process at both institutions. Questionnaires were sent out to students and hospitality industry professionals to be completed. Information was also derived from the IHS and CTHS's data-bases to determine what the drop-out rates were at each institution.

The findings revealed that the student drop-out rate was up to a significant 30%. A number of students were not well informed of the nature of the hospitality industry and the career path to which it lead when applying to study courses in hospitality. The findings also revealed that each school used different assessment criteria during the selection process. The selection process ranged from being a purely academic exercise to being a very extensive interview and assessment programme that tested both academic and vocational skills. Realising that it is vital to determine industry fit, the researcher made recommendations on tools that could be used during the selection process that would allow access to as many students as possible without resulting in a high drop-out rate. Utilising effective selection tools in the student selection process not only ensures a steady flow of suitable candidates, but also will ensure efficient hospitality professionals in the future to continuously supply the growing hospitality and tourism industry.

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviations

Explanation

IHS	International Hotel School
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
CTHS	Cape Town Hotel School
NSC	National Senior Certificate
HE	Higher Education
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NBT	National Benchmarking Test
KSAOs	Knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics
HCS	Hospitality Culture Scale
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Hospitality professionals often say that being a hotelier runs in a person's blood, meaning that, people who work in the industry become one with the industry (Walker, 2009:4). Michael Gary, winner of the title of hotelier of the year 2007 believes that the essence of a great hotelier is a relentless and dogged passion for the attention to detail (Lewis, 2008). Marriott and Brown (1997:31) believe that successful hoteliers are driven by their affection for perfection. In the light of these view points, a career in the hospitality industry is not necessarily the best choice for everyone.

A report by Higher Education South Africa (2010:2) revealed that many people have inaccurate and romanticised ideas about what certain jobs entail due to their lack of research before entering their field of study. The report further stated that many university students were ill-informed because of a lack of research. These students therefore make the wrong assumptions about the nature of the courses they apply for and about where the study will lead them in life. As a result, students encountered boredom, difficulty or unexpected obstacles, which resulted in dropping out, failure, depression or feeling that they have to continue with a second-best choice (Higher Education South Africa, 2010:2).

Selecting employees for the hospitality industry is difficult and selection of students wanting to undertake courses in preparation for entry to the industry is more complex as applicants in general tend to have a low level of knowledge and experience. The implementation of the new National Senior Certificate (NSC) has necessitated the setting of new admission criteria for higher education (HE), both nationally and at institutional level (Koch & Dornbrack, 2008:333). Academic institutions therefore are required to be able to determine a profile of those students who are likely to succeed, both academically and in their careers (Slater, 1988:113).

A study by Macgregor (2007), found that a shocking 40% of students drop-out of university in their first year. Poor career choice, among others, was listed as a factor contributing to the high drop-out rate. Exit interviews with students who had dropped out from the tourism, hospitality and sport courses at the School of Tourism, Hospitality and Sport at the Central University of Technology in the Free State revealed disillusionment with the hands-on nature of the tourism, hospitality and sports industries (Van Lill, 2005:971).

Parliament was warned by the chairman of HESA (Higher Education South Africa), Professor Theuns Eloff, that there would be a higher than usual failure and drop-out rate among the 2009 first-year intake, as these students were the first to have written the new NSC (National Senior Certificate) after studying under the new outcomes-based curriculum throughout their twelve years at school. Eloff said these students were less prepared for higher education than their seniors (Blaine, 2009).

The hospitality industry is experiencing a skill shortage and desperately need qualified, reliable, hardworking and friendly professionals to enter the workforce (Kunert-Lee, 2009). Utilising effective selection tools therefore becomes a crucial part of ensuring that the appropriate people are selected for the industry (Hospitality Crew, 2009).

According to Airey and Tribe (2000:281), the common aim of the courses in hospitality studies offered at higher education institutions is to equip students with the understanding and skills required to be effective managers in a specific catering context and to be adaptable members of society. Hospitality courses offered at higher education institutions also aim to impart students with a clear understanding of the competencies needed especially self-management, critical thinking, communication and industry knowledge. Airey and Tribe (2000:281) further comment that most hotel and catering courses share an emphasis on the management of practical food preparation, food service and accommodation operations, and all courses are set in an appropriate framework of applied business studies. The practical element of hospitality studies is a defining characteristic that differentiates the subject from other business and management courses.

Koen (1996:1) points out that training opportunities at tertiary institutions are limited by the lack of appropriate facilities, staffing shortages/cut-backs and limited state funding, which make it impossible to accept all candidates applying to study towards specific qualifications. Koen goes further to say that tertiary education demands a great deal from the individual, and it therefore would be a disservice to the individual and to the country to admit candidates who do not possess the skills and abilities to succeed and cope with independent study. Hospitality training institutions face the challenge of identifying students who are most likely to complete the courses they enrol for and thereby to supply the hospitality industry with a skilled work-force (Koen, 1996:2).

The selection system implemented in some hospitality training institutions is a purely academic exercise, as students selection is done solely on a candidate's school performance.

However, while school performance cannot be overlooked, it is argued that it is necessary to consider the individual beyond the context of a set of numbers (Koen, 1996:3-4). The original rationale for hospitality management education lay with management preparation for the industry, and the vocational orientation and links with industry remain strong (Airey & Tribe, 2000:290). A suitable selection package should therefore take into consideration both the academic and vocational skills of the candidates in order to be more effective.

This research study will focus on analysing current selection practices used by hospitality training institutions to ascertain how these can be improved. The purpose was to identify the main reasons that cause students to drop-out and thus formulate an effective selection programme that incorporates the student's academic and vocational skills in order to reduce the drop-out rate and increase the number of graduates entering the job market.

1.2 Research problem

Main Problem

The main problem was:

Why are the selection/assessment tools currently used by hospitality training institutions in Cape Town not effective in identifying the most suitable candidates for training in the National Diploma course in Hospitality Management?

Sub-problem 1

Why are there a substantial number of students dropping out of hospitality courses?

Sub-problem 2

Why are some students not well informed of the nature of the hospitality industry and the career path to which it leads, which then leads to students dropping out?

Sub-problem 3

Why is there an absence of a comprehensive assessment programme used by hospitality training institutions that tests both the academic and vocational skills of students to identify students who will study successfully, and most likely complete the courses they enrol for?

1.3 Research objectives

The researcher aimed to identify success predictors and thus formulate an effective assessment programme that incorporated the students' academic and vocational skills in

order to reduce the number of students dropping out and increase the number of graduates entering the job market.

The sub-objectives were as follows:

Sub-objective 1

The first sub-objective was to make recommendations on how to reduce the student drop-out rate being experienced by hospitality training institutions.

Sub-objective 2

The second sub-objective was to make recommendations on which assessment tools should be used in the selection of entry-level Hospitality Diploma students.

Sub-objective 3

The third sub-objective was to demonstrate the importance of testing students' academic and vocational skills during the selection of entry-level students to ensure that the most suitable students are chosen for enrolment and training in hospitality management courses.

1.4 Hypotheses

The researcher was of the opinion that some hospitality training institutions base their selection decision primarily on academic achievements only, with little or no emphasis being placed on the student's vocational skills or other characteristics. While academic performance cannot be overlooked, it may be necessary to consider other success factors when selecting students for hospitality courses. The hypotheses were:

- I. There is a relationship between the assessment of both academic and vocational skills at entry level.**
- II. A better selection of candidates for hospitality management training will result in a lower drop-out rate.**

1.5 Purpose of the study

This research is significant, as hospitality training institutions have the responsibility to produce the next generation of hoteliers. If the student selection process is not effective in identifying the most suitable candidates for training in hospitality courses, the result is a high number of drop-outs and fewer graduates entering this rapidly growing industry.

The researcher examined the selection tools currently used by hospitality training institutions in Cape Town. Selection tools can be defined as instruments used to assess entry-level candidates before they are accepted to enrol for a course in hospitality studies.

These tools can include, but are not limited to, interviews, assessment centres, psychometric tests, hospitality-related work experience or job shadowing, motivation letters, written tests, references and matriculation results. These tools are of particular interest, as they test the candidate's verbal and non-verbal skills as well as other attributes that determine suitability for the hospitality industry.

The study aimed to show the importance of utilising suitable selection tools in the assessment of entry-level students before they are accepted to enrol for hospitality courses. The researcher wanted to show how utilising a comprehensive selection programme that tests both academic and vocational skills could help hospitality training institutions identify those students who have a greater potential to complete the course and succeed in the hospitality industry. Making this decision effectively at the application level should result in a lower drop-out rate and greater number of graduates serving the hospitality industry.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

This study focussed on hospitality training institutions in Cape Town which offer National Diplomas in Hospitality Management at NQF (National Qualifications Framework) level six. The study was therefore limited to the Cape Town Hotel School, which is part of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and the International Hotel School. The study focussed on determining whether utilising suitable assessment tools when selecting students at hospitality training institutions will reduce the dropout rate and contribute towards a greater number of graduates entering the job market.

1.7 Clarification of concepts

1.7.1 Hospitality

The principal meaning of hospitality focuses on a host who receives, welcomes, and caters to the needs of people who are temporarily away from their homes. The requirements of a guest in these circumstances have traditionally been food, beverages, and lodging or shelter (Dittmer & Griffin, 1997:5). A wider understanding of hospitality defines it as a contemporaneous human exchange, which is voluntarily entered into, and which is designed to enhance the mutual well-being of the parties concerned through the provision of accommodation, and/or food, and/or drinks (Brotherton & Wood, 2000:142). Hospitality refers to the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors and strangers with liberality and good

will (Powers & Barrows, 1999: 4). The researcher therefore understands hospitality to be the act of providing food, beverages and lodging or shelter to guests who are away from home.

1.7.2 Selection

Selection refers to a combination of processes that lead to the choice of one or more candidates over others for one or more jobs or roles (Edenborough, 2005:2). Schreuder and Coetzee (2006:197) defines selection as a process that identifies and matches the qualifications and characteristics of the applicant to the requirements of the job, with the objective of choosing the most competent candidate. Selection therefore can be explained as the process of choosing from a number of alternatives.

1.7.3 Structured interviews

Structured interviews involve questions, answers and listening to the relevant parties. These interviews require pre-planning and structure and take the expectations of the parties involved and the skill levels of the interviewer and the interviewee into account (Edenborough, 2005:2). Cogger (1985:427) similarly defines structured interviewing as a conversation with the particular purpose of determining qualifications for employment, bearing in mind the needs of the applicant as well as those of the employer. A structured interview can also be defined as an interview in which the principal questions or areas for questioning are pre-determined in line with the selection criteria to be addressed in the interview (New South Wales Government, 2009).

The researcher therefore understands structured interviews to take the form of a conversation that takes place between an interviewer and an interviewee, based on pre-planned questions with the aim of determining the suitability of the candidate. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:351) state that the researcher decides the sequence and wording during the interview with the respondents. Open-ended semi-structured interviews were relevant to this study, because the researcher was able to rearrange and further probe questions during the interview from questions outlined in advance whilst building rapport with the respondents.

1.7.4 Assessment centre

The assessment centre method involves multiple exercises covering situations of relevance to the role concerned, using multiple assessors, different exercises and interpretations based on a model of competency developed by a formal job analysis (Edenborough, 2005:7). An assessment centre is a method, not a place. Assessment centre participants engage in a variety of job-related stimulations designed to bring about behaviour relevant to skills or dimensions determined by the organisation to be critical to success in a target job (Burley-Allen, 1985:40). The New South Wales Government (2009) in Australia defines an

assessment centre as an approach to assessing candidates. It is based on using a number of assessment tools and activities, usually including such things as work-sample tests, group discussions and simulations, in which candidate performance is observed and rated by a team of assessors. According to Beal (2004), the assessment-center system is considered to be extremely reliable, although it is also an expensive selection tool, not least in terms of senior-management time. The researcher concludes that an assessment centre is a process in which a variety of activities are used to determine an applicant's behavioural traits in relation to the specific job being applied for.

1.7.5 Psychometric tests

Psychometrics literally means mental instrument; it is the application of statistical methods to the resulting data in pursuit of the objective measurement of human variability (Rowntree, 1981:234). Psychometrics are measurement devices that are used to gain an understanding of an individual so as to predict behaviour and provide a basis for future action (Edenborough, 2005:2). Psychometric tests are designed to measure various aspects of a person's skills, abilities and personality, including cognitive abilities and personality traits. They are developed by psychologists and are usually standardised, pen-and-paper tests scored and compared against norms established for particular groups. Examples of groups include university graduates, or a particular job grouping for which norms have been established (New South Wales Government, 2009). The researcher therefore understands psychometric tests to be assessment tools used to measure a candidate's knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and personality traits.

1.7.6 Academic versus vocational skills

When comparing academic and vocational skills, it is important to understand that academic refers to the world of study, while vocational refers to the world of work (Airey & Tribe, 2000: 285). According to Rowntree (1981:2), academic refers to scholarly activities relating to education or study and is theoretical. Vocational, on the other hand, relates to a particular occupation and its skills or knowledge (Soanes, Hawker & Elliott, 2005:1034). The researcher therefore understands academic skills to be those skills that are learned at academic institutions through studying while vocational skills are learned through training that relates to a specific job.

1.8 Literature reviewed

The literature reviewed enabled the researcher to find the information that was used to conduct this study. The researcher found the following information relevant to the study.

Airey and Tribe (2000:277-291) look at the theoretical perspective of hospitality education and discusses issues such as the hospitality curriculum, hospitality knowledge and the future direction and dangers of hospitality management studies.

An article by Blaine (2009) discusses why it is imperative for universities to test student skills using tools such as the National Benchmarking Test (NBT), which is aimed at assisting higher education institutions make sense of the new National Senior Certificate (NSC). The test can be used to assess entry-level academic proficiency, determine the relationship between higher education entry-level requirements and matriculation marks, help higher education institutions place prospective students in programmes that meet their educational needs (whether this means they go straight into a first year programme or into a bridging programme) and help institutions develop and adapt their curricula.

Chon and Maier (2010:5-35) introduce the hospitality industry and identify the basic components of the industry. The writers also identify the skills and abilities required for candidates interested in pursuing a career in the industry. An overview of the various means of acquiring the skills and knowledge required for taking advantage of opportunities in the hospitality industry and tourism network are discussed. Reference is made to formal and informal education, industry associations and lifelong learning.

Edenborough (2005:2-8) discusses psychometric assessment centres and structured interviews in detail, with emphasis placed on the benefits and shortcomings of each as well as the best use of each in relation to the selection process in organisations.

A study by Koen (1996:140-142) recommends that the student selection process should:

- involve three selection methods, namely the Senior Certificate results, a structured interview and a personality test;
- include a simple co-ordination test that could be administered during the structured interview;
- take cognisance of school performance in the subjects English, Home Economics, Biology and possibly Afrikaans; and
- include the expertise of the recruitment personnel from the related industry.

Koen (1996:140-142) also recognises a growing need for good computer and communication skills in hospitality management students. The need for further study was indentified in the area of:

- the relationship of academic predictors as a means for selecting successful students;
- identifying predictor elements at high school level that would identify students who would be successful in management programmes;
- establishing the most suitable methods for measuring performance with regard to the vocational skills indentified in the study as being necessary for hospitality management students; and
- ascertaining which personality test is most suitable for using as part of a comprehensive selection programme.

Kunert-Lee (2009) explains the correct manner in which an interview should be conducted, including the types of questions to be asked and the correct people necessary for the process.

Lockyer and Scholarios (2004), analyse the different selection tools used by hotel establishments, the different role players in the selection process and the impact of the changing labour market. Their article also looks at the social context of selection as opposed to the technical validity of the selection methods used.

Powers and Barrows (1999:4-22) define the hospitality industry, as well as management and its role in the industry. The writers also look at the reasons why students select hospitality management programmes. The book also covers ways of obtaining the necessary skills and education required for success in the hospitality industry. The book concludes with an employer's view of job placements of graduates.

Schreuder and Coetzee (2006:197-204) describe the selection process and the different tools used by organisations, as well as the purpose of each tool in the selection process.

Van Lill (2005:969-987) looks at the different aspects that contribute towards graduate success for students entering the hospitality and sports industries. The study examines how access criteria, emotional intelligence and academic success define highly sought-after graduates.

The researcher made use of the relevant websites, books, journal articles, official reports and academic papers to conduct this study.

1.9 Limitations to the study

According to Truell and Woosley (2008:2), there still are gaps in the literature related to admissions criteria other than high school variables and standardised test scores, to specific disciplines, and to outcomes that extend beyond the first year of college. This statement is true pertaining to the field of hospitality. Professor Carrim (2012) from the University of the Western Cape noted that an attempt to construct an integrated curriculum and the NQF in the field of hospitality education and training in South Africa has not been successful or effective. This means that the types of assessments to be used to test knowledge and skills are not clear.

The booking of appointments to conduct interviews with hoteliers and academics in order to gain meaningful information for the study was difficult because of their demanding work schedules. Receiving a sufficient amount of completed questionnaires back from this group was challenging, as they found it difficult to make time in their schedule to complete questionnaires. There was not much literature available regarding the selection process of hospitality training institutions in South Africa, which also posed a limitation to the study.

1.10 Research methods

The researcher made use of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups to conduct this study. The researcher aimed to find ways of improving the student selection process, with the hope of reducing the student drop-out rate and thus producing a greater number of graduates entering the industry.

Questionnaires were sent to students and hospitality professionals. Stratified random sampling and purposive sampling were used to select the participants for completing the questionnaires and conducting the interviews. Sampling refers to the act or technique of selecting a representative part of the population for determining the parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Coldwell & Herbst, 2004:74). Students were questioned in order to gain insight into their knowledge of the hospitality industry and the reasons they chose to do a course in hospitality. Hospitality professionals were questioned to obtain their input of what assessment tools should be used in the student selection process. Academics at hospitality training institutions were interviewed to determine which methods they currently are using in the students selection process, and which of these methods prove to be most effective in selecting the most suitable candidates for training in hospitality. Suggestions were requested from all three target groups on how the student selection process can be improved.

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research methods. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:315) state that qualitative research is inquiry by which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations during which they interact with selected people in their surroundings. According to Coldwell and Herbst (2004:15), quantitative research generally involves the collection of primary data from large numbers of individual units, frequently with the intention of projecting the results to a wider population. Quantitative research usually aims for larger numbers of cases and the analysis of results is usually based on statistical significance. Qualitative research, on the other hand, involves small samples of people, studied by means of in-depth methods (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:9).

1.11 Overview of the study

The study was conducted as follows:

Chapter 1- Orientation and background to the study

This chapter includes the problem statement and sub-problems, the hypothesis, the objective and the sub-objectives, the significance of the study and a clarification of the concepts used.

Chapter 2 - Literature overview

Chapter 2 details the literature reviewed that forms the main body of the research paper. This research focused on analysing current selection practices used by hospitality training institutions to ascertain how these could be improved upon. The intention was to identify success predictors and thus formulate an effective selection programme that incorporated the student's academic and vocational skills in order to reduce student drop-out rate and increase the number of graduates entering the job market.

Chapter 3 - Research methodology

The three research instruments used were questionnaires, interviews and formal data-bases. The researcher analysed the questionnaires that were sent out to students and hospitality professionals, which are discussed in terms of the structure of the questionnaires, the source of information for the questionnaires and the data collection methods used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process at both the IHS and the CTHS. Information on the student drop-out rate was also derived from both school's formal data-bases. The researcher used a combination of probability and non-probability sampling methods. The stratified random sampling method was used as a form of probability sampling, while purposive sampling was used as a form of non-probability sampling. Stratified random sampling was chosen to ensure that a fully representative sample was obtained from the target groups. Purposive sampling was chosen due to the

researcher's experience in the hospitality industry in general and specifically in hospitality training at higher institutions.

Chapter 4 - Data analysis of questionnaires

The results of the research are discussed in terms of their relation to the main and sub-problems of the research. The researcher discusses how the data were collected and interpreted from the questionnaires and data-bases. A breakdown is given of each question that was asked, including the rationale for the question. Graphs are used to display the feedback received from the respondents, including a detailed explanation of the findings.

Chapter 5 – Analysis of interviews

Chapter 5 provides details on the information derived from the interviews conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process at the IHS and the CTHS. The information on the student drop-out rate received from both schools' formal data-bases is also included in this chapter. The derived data were then used to make recommendations on how the student selection process could be improved, based on the findings.

Chapter 6 - Findings and recommendations

In Chapter 6, the researcher discusses the research findings, hypothesis and objectives and makes recommendations based on the findings.

Chapter 7 – Concluding remarks

The final chapter provides a summary of the research findings and corresponding recommendations from the study. The challenges that were experienced whilst conducting the research are also detailed in this chapter. Future research possibilities are included, and concluding remarks are made.

1.12 Summary

The researcher has highlighted the key issues to be discussed in this study, namely the research problems and objections in relation to the research hypothesis. The purpose and delimitation of the study are also outlined. Key research concepts have been clarified, followed by a summary of the literature reviewed in preparation for this study. Possible limitations to the study were also noted followed by an explanation of the research methods that were used in conducting this study. An overview of the current and proceeding chapters was also included.

The following chapter contains a literature review of the information obtained on the characteristics of the hospitality industry and the student selection process at hotel schools. The emphasis was on discovering the relationship between the selection tools used during the student selection process and the drop-out rate of students at hospitality training institutions. An overview of a variety of selection tools was done, highlighting their advantages and disadvantages. The chapter concludes with recommendations on how these tools can be used to attract and retain suitable applicants for training and service in the hospitality industry.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (n.d.), candidates interested in the hospitality industry require the intellectual capacity to cope with the academic demands of a challenging programme and the motivation and potential to succeed in a complex and dynamic industry. In addition to academic qualifications, candidates will need to demonstrate a mix of the artistic and scientific skills that are essential for hospitality management. Candidates should be able to show that they are both creative and business focused. Most important of all is a strong customer-service orientation (Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne, n.d.). Hospitality management is characterised by a core that addresses the management of food, beverages and/or accommodation in a service context. Personal skills such as communication, team working and self-confidence, which have implications also for recruitment to higher education courses, are fundamental (Airey & Tribe, 2000:282).

This research focussed on analysing current selection practices used by hospitality training institutions to ascertain how these could be improved. The aim was to identify success predictors and thus formulate an effective selection programme that incorporated the student's academic and vocational skills in order to reduce the number of student dropouts and increase the number of graduates entering the job market.

2.2 Academic requirements

Although more students than ever before are studying at higher education institutions, the number of people who apply for entry into universities is still more than the number of available places (Higher Education South Africa, 2010:15). Higher Education South Africa (HESA) reported in 2009 that the student drop-out rate had grown alarmingly and had reached 35% at some universities, with the bulk of those leaving being first year students. This trend had reportedly continued, with major reasons behind the high drop-out rates being given as inadequate finances, failure to cope with university life and academic under-preparedness (Makoni, 2010).

Van Lill (2005:973) reported that undergraduate admissions were increasingly being confronted with rising applicant numbers, entry qualifications different from the traditional Matric certificate, and the uneven playing field for candidates from different schools.

This means that institutions of higher education needed a mechanism to choose the most suitable candidates from the pool of people who apply for limited places. One way to do so was to set entry requirements (Higher Education South Africa, 2010:15). Several universities in South Africa, worried that continuing high failure rates among students would erode their global competitiveness, raised admission requirements for 2011 (Makoni, 2010). Some academic institutions considered tighter admission requirements for 2012, believing that poor student pass rates were partly attributable to lax selection criteria (Makoni, 2010). However, entry requirements could exclude some from higher education, and this has given these requirements a negative slant (Higher Education South Africa, 2010:15). Ineson and Kempa (1997:130) found that, in the United Kingdom, the excess of applicants for places resulted in an inflation of the entry qualifications. Tests were often used as a barrier to admission, rather than as guidance for selection. Ineson and Kempa (1997:130) further found that it was debatable how far the qualifications were inherently necessary, and how far they were being used to control numbers.

Higher Education South Africa (2010:15) argues, however, that the positive side to entry requirements, if they are met, is that they provide a good indication that a student has the potential to complete his or her studies successfully. Students therefore can take confidence from this, particularly if they are a bit doubtful about whether or not they should be studying at a university (Higher Education South Africa, 2010:15). It is wholly in the interest of universities to promote access to higher education if they are to survive and meet their commitments to society and the state (Ratangee, 2007:10).

According to Ratangee (2007:14), good access testing should enable decisions about admission to a particular faculty, and should facilitate specific decisions about placement in foundation or similar programmes. Ratangee (2007:14) further states that good access tests should enable those making admission decisions to consider the potential of a candidate without relying solely on Matric performance, and further should not disadvantage those who have had a less than exemplary school experience.

Ratangee (2007:15) summarises a good access test as being characterized by the following:

- Content should not be curriculum based so that the effects of different teaching practices in schools are limited and so that the test is useful across a range of disciplines.
- Use should be made of practices such as scaffolding in testing to mediate prior instructional experience (scaffolding provides contextual keys and steps to the cognitive process, which the candidate then has to apply).

- Test items should be of real and significant complexity so that they are useful indicators of cognitive ability.
- The test should be able to stand up to legal and academic challenges to its validity and reliability, and should be supported by evidence of its usefulness.

Similarly, a study by Van Lill (2005:972) states that access criteria need to be open, objective, evidence based and non-discriminatory. Van Lill (2005:972) makes reference to a report published in the United Kingdom stating that applicant qualities that could predict undergraduate success include: possessing intellectual skills, being self-organized, having the ability to work independently, having motivation to learn, and having interest in the chosen subject.

In the United Kingdom, an independent review of their admissions policy was commissioned in 2003 by the secretary of state for education and skills (Adolphus, n.d.). A report was published in 2004 known as the Schwartz Report of 2004, which set out five general principles that still are considered the cornerstone of good admissions policies and are listed as follows (Adolphus, n.d.):

- Transparency – applicants should be provided with the information necessary to help them make informed choices.
- Reliability and validity – methods of assessment should conform to good practice and research.
- Selection for merit, potential and diversity.
- Barriers must be minimised – particularly in relation to disability, and non-professional qualifications.
- A professional approach should be taken towards admissions, with appropriate training for staff, and a move towards centralisation.

The researcher therefore concludes that selection decisions should be based on a set of reliable and valid criteria as also noted by Ineson and Kempa (1997:130). The researcher further concludes that a suitable selection procedure should test the candidates' ability to cope with the academic work-load, as well as their suitability for the industry in which they will be seeking employment on completion of their course.

A comparative study was done of the entry requirements for the Cape Town Hotel School (CTHS) and the International Hotel School (IHS), as these are the only two institutions in Cape Town that offer a Hotel Management Diploma at NQF level six.

The NQF level six diploma focuses on developing students with focused knowledge and practical skills in a particular career field, including experiential learning (Higher Education South Africa, 2010:19).

2.3 Admission requirement for each institution

In this section the admission requirements that the Department of Higher Education requires from institutions, as well as the admission requirements of the CTHS and the IHS were discussed.

2.3.1 The requirements of the Department of Higher Education

In 2008, South Africa's new Grade 12 school-leaving qualification, the National Senior Certificate (NSC), replaced the Senior Certificate, or what was known as "matric" (Higher Education South Africa, 2010:10). According to the Higher Education Act 1997 (Act 101 of 1997), the minimum admission requirement for the diploma is a National Senior Certificate (NSC) with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution as certified by Umalusi, who is the council for assurance in general and further education and training in South Africa, coupled with an achievement rating of 3 (moderate achievement, 40-49%) or better in four recognised NSC 20-credit subjects. Institutional and programme needs may require appropriate combinations of recognised National Senior Certificate subjects and levels of achievement.

2.3.2 The Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT):

The minimum admission requirements of the Faculty of Business at CPUT are discussed in this section.

Faculty of Business Minimum Requirements

Hospitality Studies is listed under the Business Faculty and therefore holds the following minimum requirements; (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2010:15)

Required/recommended subjects and ratings for:

- Diploma in Hospitality Management: Accommodation
- Diploma in Hospitality Management: Food & Beverage
- Diploma in Hospitality Management: Professional Cookery

Required for all Hospitality programmes (minimum requirements):

English Home Language or English First Additional Language (50-59%),

Mathematics (30-39%) or Mathematical Literacy (50-59%), as well as one of the following:

- Accounting (40-49%),
- Economics (50-59%),

- Hospitality Studies (50-59%),
- Life Sciences (40-49%),
- Tourism (50-59%)

Work experience is recommended. Students may be required to submit a motivational letter/essay explaining why they want to study a specific course. Where learners do not offer subjects in the Business, Commerce and Management category, subjects in other categories may be considered at the discretion of the dean of the faculty, on condition that the required achievement ratings have been met for all of the above programmes (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2010:15).

2.3.3 The International Hotel School (IHS)

The enrolment requirements of the IHS for the following courses (IHS, 2010:1) are as discussed below:

- Diploma in Hospitality Management
- Diploma in Professional Cookery & Kitchen Management

These three-year diploma courses are aimed at 18-to-23-year-olds, with a particular focus on recent school leavers. Preference is given to students with a National Senior Certificate with a minimum admission points score of 25. The IHS also requires that English be taken as a first or second language. Students need to score at least 4 points in English to qualify for entry into the IHS's full-time diploma programmes. However, the Hotel School will consider candidates with lesser qualifications based on an entry exam, interview and approval of the Academic Board.

The International Hotel School (2010:2) looks for students who have the ability to succeed in the tough hospitality industry. There is also strong emphasis on good interpersonal and communications skills. Accounting is an advantage but not a prerequisite. Previous practical experience in the industry is advantageous. Applicants are required to complete an application form and return it to the campus of their choice with the following (The International Hotel School, 2010:2):

- Copies of school certificates and reports for both Grade 11 and 12
- Two passport or ID sized photographs
- Two references reflecting personal abilities, achievements, social and interpersonal traits.

The applicants undergo a thorough screening procedure, including interviews, assessments and evaluations, before being accepted. Successful applicants will be offered places in writing within two weeks of the final interview (The International Hotel School, 2010:2).

2.4 Assessment tools used in the selection process

A number of assessment tools that can be used during the student selection process are discussed, with emphasis placed on the role and function of each.

Dittmer and Griffin (1997:21) noted that some of the factors commonly considered when assessing potential candidates include grades, outside interests, participation in organisations, past employment records, ability to communicate effectively, attitudes, and interpersonal skills. Each employer will weigh them differently – some emphasise good grades, others will emphasise past employment record, and others will stress good communication skills. Good grades demonstrate dedication to achievement and willingness to work hard, as well as ability. A broad range of interests in sports, music, drama and other areas normally indicates that the applicant is well rounded.

Participation in organisations such as student government, and professional groups gives the employers some idea of a person's social skills and leadership abilities. Past employment is examined to see if the applicant has a stable work record, which can be indicative of future reliability. Employers also assess the attitudes of applicants, looking for those who are willing to devote the necessary time and effort to tasks, even if it means temporarily sacrificing other activities. They look for applicants who are willing, cooperative workers, able to do the work required of them. Finally, employers search for those with good interpersonal skills. During the course of a typical work day, hospitality employees are likely to come into contact with a diverse population. It therefore is critical that employees are able to communicate effectively with a diverse population.

According to Ryan and Tippins (2009:30), a good selection system:

- Is aligned with defined selection objectives
- Starts with gathering information about the job and the organisational context
- Involves careful development of each and every tool used
- Takes into account how information will be combined and integrated
- Is demonstrably effective
- Is not biased
- Is efficient
- Fits the staffing environment and uses staffing resources efficiently
- Can be marketed easily to key stakeholders
- Integrates the selection system with processes for monitoring implementation
- Is supported by effective recruitment practices

2.4.1 Interviews

The selection interview has one primary purpose: to provide both the interviewer and the applicant with the opportunity to obtain the information they need to make the best possible decision. Since the time spent with any particular candidate is limited, a well-organised approach helps make the most of that time, yielding more and better information (Cappelli, 2002:10).

Adolphus (n.d.) notes that interviews constitute an important element in the holistic assessment of candidates, providing the latter with an opportunity to display their communication and analytical skills, as well as their motivation. Interviews should, however, be conducted in accordance with admissions policies. A review of admission practice was undertaken by the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions in 2008 which recommended, that at least two interviewers be present, that questions be open-ended, and that responses are scored against specific criteria on a standardised form (Adolphus, n.d.).

2.4.2 Structured versus unstructured interviews

Ryan and Tippins (2009:30) state that structured interviews measure a wide variety of characteristics that are required to perform the job tasks such as knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics (KSAOs), using a standard set of questions and rating scales to evaluate the applicant. Structured interviews are almost always administered orally by an individual interviewer or a panel of interviewers, although occasionally a written interview requiring written responses can be administered via the internet. Unstructured interviews measure a variety of KSAOs, using questions that vary from applicant to applicant and from interviewer to interviewer for the same job. Typically, the unstructured interview does not use rating scales for evaluations and is almost always administered orally. Although commonly used, unstructured interviews are not as good a predictor of job performance as structured interviews (Ryan and Tippins, 2009:30-31).

According to Harvard (in Cappelli, 2002:3-4), all the candidates are asked the same question so as to compare answers in a structured interview. Structured interviews are used in order to be fair and objective, but they may not elicit as much information from the candidates. Unstructured interviews are individual conversations that do not necessarily cover all the same questions with every candidate. Instead, they follow lines of inquiry that appear promising. One may learn more about the candidates, but it will be more difficult to compare their responses. Key information that is needed in order to make a decision may be missed. It is probably a good idea to steer a middle path between these two approaches, that is, be flexible in the line of enquiry, but be sure that all interviewees respond to a core set of questions. By preparing a core set of questions in advance, the interviewer and the decision-

making team can be sure that all key points are covered, and that all candidates respond to them. The unstructured element of the interview opens the doors to productive areas of enquiry that neither the interviewer nor their colleagues may have anticipated (Cappelli, 2002:11-12).

2.4.3 Reference checks

According to Ryan and Tippins (2009:31), reference checks gather information about past performance from those with previous experience with the individual. Harvard (in Cappelli, 2002:11-12) states that reference checks verify claims made by the candidate during the interview process and fill in information gaps. They can also provide valuable outside perspectives on the candidate and his or her potential fit with the position. Checking references fulfils two aims. Firstly, they verify what the applicant has told you about his or her work experience: where, how long, last position held, and particular assignments (Cappelli, 2002:11-12). The second aim is to learn about the applicant's success and failures, work habits, strengths and weaknesses and so forth. The business of reference checking is critically important since it helps assure the interviewing organisation that the applicant has truthfully represented his or her position, work experience and accomplishments. The comments of a reference can also provide another slant on the candidate's persona.

On the other hand, getting straightforward comments from some references may be difficult as some employees are wary about commenting on current or former employees for fear of being sued for libel or slander, especially in the United States. Checking references via the telephone may be a better option. Since nothing is written down, employees may be more likely to give a candid response. Letter references may not give much information (Cappelli, 2002:11-12).

2.4.4 Education and experience

Past education and experience measure KSAOs indirectly by inferring that people with certain education credentials or work experience have certain KSAOs. For example, people with accounting degrees are believed to have knowledge of accounting principles (Ryan & Tippins, 2009: 31).

According to Harvard (in Cappelli, 2002:3-4), education and experience are the two most critical background characteristics to consider when evaluating candidates. The education level must be specified and one should determine whether the specified education level is truly necessary, or whether flexibility can be exercised in this area. One should determine whether relevant experience can be substituted for a certain educational background.

Experience requirements should be based on a thorough analysis of the specific tasks and responsibilities of the position. It should be determined whether industry or functional experience is most desirable. If a good candidate has not been exposed to everything required, it should be considered whether the candidate can learn what is needed and how long that learning will take (Cappelli, 2002:3-4).

2.4.5 Personal characteristics

Personal characteristics can indicate how the candidate will approach the job and how he or she might relate to co-workers. A candidate's analytical and creative abilities for example, determine how the candidate assesses problems and comes up with new approaches to solving them (Cappelli, 2002:4).

2.4.6 Decision-making style

Decision making style is very individual. Some people are extremely structured, analytical, and fact based; others rely more on intuition. Some make decisions quickly, while others ponder them for a long time. Some people depend on consensus, while others seek their own council. It is critical to determine whether a particular style is required for success in a job and, if so, what it is (Cappelli, 2002:4).

2.4.7 Interpersonal skills

Since interpersonal skills and behaviour are intimately connected, understanding a candidate's interpersonal skills is an important part of the selection process. To determine which interpersonal skills are most appropriate for a given position, the set of tasks that will be performed in the position must be considered carefully. The assessor should determine which traits will translate into good performance, especially in view of the supervisors, peers and people with whom the person directly reports to or interacts with (Cappelli, 2002:4).

2.4.8 Motivation

The candidate's personal goals, interests, energy levels, and job progression often demonstrate his or her level of motivation.

The assessor should decipher what the candidate's personal aspirations are and determine whether the candidate will do the job with enthusiasm and energy (Cappelli, 2002:5).

Other selection tools that are available and may be used effectively in the student selection process include, but are not limited to (Ryan & Tippins, 2009:31):

- Cognitive ability tests, which measure mental abilities such as verbal or mathematical reasoning, reading comprehension, perceptual or analytical abilities.

- Cognitive abilities, which can be measured in a variety of ways; however, they typically are measured via written questions with multiple choice response options.
- Personality inventories measure a variety of traits related to job performance, turnover, and other outcomes of interest. Personality tests are often multiple choice instruments requiring the test taker to indicate the extent to which he/she agrees with a statement or the degree to which a statement represents his/her behaviour
- Integrity tests, which measure attitudes and behaviour regarding honesty, reliability or acceptable behaviour, typically via multiple choice or true-false measures.
- Biographical information (sometimes called biodata), which measures different KSAOs through questions about past experiences, education and interests. Biodata are often collected through multiple choice tests although sometimes accomplishment records based on application data sometimes are used.
- Situational judgement tests, which measure a variety of KSAOs by presenting individuals with job-related scenarios (either in written or video form) and multiple responses to the situation, then asking for the most likely or most effective response, the best or the worst response, or the likelihood of doing each response.

Dawson, Abbott and Shoemaker (2011:299) developed a quantitative instrument called the Hospitality Culture Scale (HCS), which measures a person's understanding of the culture of hospitality organisations and determines if a particular individual's values are in line with those currently working in the industry. The HCS can be used by high school counsellors and university recruiters to determine if a student is a potential candidate for the hospitality industry. Although the high school student may not have experience in dealing with customers or possess leadership skills, the scale offers a tool to determine if the student has the propensity to develop and value these traits in the future.

2.4.9 The National Benchmark Test

According to Braaf (2010:1), the National Benchmark Test (NBT) is an assessment for prospective first-year entry students into higher education. The assessment was designed to measure a prospective student's levels of proficiency in Academic Literacy, Quantitative Literacy and Mathematics as related to the demands of tertiary study. The NBT also provides information to assist in the placement of students in appropriate curricular routes (e.g. regular, augmented, extended, bridging or foundation programmes) and with the development of curricula for higher education programmes. In addition, it assists the Department of Higher Education to interpret school-leaving results, such as those of the National Senior Certificate (NSC).

The researcher focused on the mentioned assessment tools, as they were the most suitable and could be used by hospitality training institutions in the student selection process.

Ryans and Tippins (2009:33) note that a scenario that repeats itself in many organisations is the hope of a new selection system fixing all employee problems. Unfortunately, no matter how good the selection system, it cannot correct problems of poor supervision, inadequate training, lack of proper equipment, or inconsistent performance management, for example. Efforts to create a new selection system should include an honest assessment of what problems need to be resolved and what the real causes are. The best designed and implemented system will not help an organisation achieve its objectives without a holistic assessment of the root causes of performance failures.

2.5 Why selection and retention matter

Retention is the converse to turnover (turnover being the sum of voluntary and involuntary separation between the employee and his or her employer). The retention of good employees matter for three important bottom-line reasons: (Cappelli, 2002:60)

- the growing importance of intellectual capital (the unique knowledge and skills a company's work force possess) ;
- a causal link between employee tenure and customer satisfaction;
- and the high cost of employee turnover.

Similarly, when it comes to the retention of students, hospitality training institutions need to bear the same factors in mind.

According to Gouws and Wolmarans (2002:106-107), the following are the most important arguments in favour of a retention strategy:

- Working in a zero-defect quality framework will ensure that the greatest possible number of students that enrol will complete their studies in the minimum time.
- If a student fails during a particular year, it involves wastage of the money that is spent by the community (the students' sponsors) and the government (in the form of subsidy), which ultimately affects taxpayers.
- A failed student also represents a loss of or at least a postponement of, potential income for the university in future years.
- If a student takes one more year to graduate, it implies that the student loses potential income for a year while not being an economically active worker for the year that is lost.

2.6 The characteristics and culture of the hospitality industry

According to Barrows and Powers (2009:7), Dittmer and Griffin (1997:19-20) and Lundberg (2004: 9) most hospitality managers traditionally learned their work through apprenticeships. The hospitality business was learned by working in it and acquiring the necessary skills to operate the business. In earlier times, hospitality education was largely centred on skills. Today, knowledge is crucial to success, and studying is a necessary part of the overall preparation for a career as a supervisor or manager.

The hospitality industry is a service industry, which differs vastly from business administration, which is principally concerned with the manufacturing and marketing of a physical product in national markets. Food may be the primary product of a restaurant, but most of the “manufacturing” is done in the same place that offers the service. The market is often local, and the emphasis is on face-to-face contact with the guest. The product of the hospitality industry is really the guest’s experience (Barrows & Powers, 2009:7-8).

Similarly, Dittmer and Griffin (1997:14-15) emphasise the direct dealing with customers and the face-to-face contact with customers on an on-going basis as a distinguishing factor of the hospitality industry versus the manufacturing industry, for example. For many customers, the level of service is defined by a specific event or by contact with a particular member of staff. Hoteliers strive to meet or exceed their customers’ expectations and the staff training is aimed at uniformity. On the other hand, service need not be exactly the same for every customer. Service should be of a high quality, but some have found it advantageous to tailor service to the specific needs and perceptions of individual customers.

The hospitality industry is labour intensive and the starting salaries for recent university graduates with majors in hospitality management tend to be average when compared with similar jobs in other industries (Dittmer & Griffin, 1997:2; and Lundberg, 2004:8).

Most hoteliers work weekends and odd hours (Barrows & Powers, 2009:7). Except for some resort properties, hotels are open and staffed twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. New employees, including managers, are often required to work evenings and weekends and are usually likely to get one or two days off during the week. Weekends off are usually reserved for employees with seniority. According to Dittmer and Griffin (1997:25), new managers in the hospitality industry are often asked to work longer hours than they would in other industries. The hospitality industry is not unique in this respect, however as anyone aspiring to a successful career in management in any field must recognize that long hours are likely to be among the requirements.

The hospitality industry is a people-oriented industry and virtually all its managers are in constant contact with people, meeting their needs and solving their problems (Dittmer & Griffin, 1997:27). Employees are expected by both fellow workers and guests to be friendly and cheerful, and to care what happens to the guest (Barrows & Powers, 2009:8). According to Dittmer and Griffin (1997:27), social skills and the ability to communicate with others effectively, in writing and in speech, are therefore important. In addition, one should understand that facial and other physical expressions have meaning and should learn how to use these effectively. In summary, reliability, dedication and willingness to work hard, an interest in meeting customers' needs and solving their problems are the primary requisites for success in this field.

According to Marriott and Brown (1997:16-17), attention to detail and consistency are the name of the game. Success in the hospitality trade requires a commitment to the right way of doing things, including taking care of the smallest of details and consistently providing guests with service that is free from hassles and surprises.

According to Dawson, et al. (2011:290), the hospitality industry is often characterised by notoriously poor wages, low job security, long working hours, limited opportunities for personal development and seasonality. High staff turnover is also prevalent and a huge problem. Hospitality organisations are given the challenge of finding and hiring personnel who strive towards exceptional customer service, and are able to both manage people and the service process under difficult circumstances. A person's match to the culture of the industry in which they work is important because the organisational culture is strongly influenced by the characteristics (shared meanings) of the industry in which the company operates. Attributes that make up factors that capture the uniqueness of the hospitality industry include values such as: "treating others as I wish to be treated", having an "entrepreneurial spirit", customer relationships in terms of "creating a home away from home for guests and helping guests celebrate milestones in their lives" (Dawson, et al., 2011:290).

According to Guerrier and Adib (2000:260-262), hospitality work involves the production and serving of food and drinks and the provision and servicing of accommodation in an activity that mirrors the domestic. It is often claimed that people dislike the notion of giving service: doing the best for the customer implies a status difference between the service provider and the customer, which people in egalitarian cultures may find uncomfortable. Working class men associate masculinity with "toughness, gruffness and pride" (Guerrier & Adib, 2000:261). For such men, deferential behaviour and forced amiability are often associated with servility, and occasions that call for these attitudes may feel humiliating.

However, the requirement to be polite to customers and guests is no different in the hospitality industry than in the retail industry, for example. One distinction is that the hospitality sector is much more concerned with the guests' intimate bodily functions: eating, drinking and sleeping and the cleaning up after those activities. Hospitality workers are also required to confront certain aspects of life that are often taboo.

Many hospitality jobs also involve working unsociable hours when other people are at leisure (Guerrier & Adib, 2000:261). It is sometimes argued that hospitality employees see themselves as part of an occupational community in which work merges into leisure and one's identity as a hospitality worker is central to one's life. The relationships between co-workers may be more intense than in other work settings. Being a hotelier is also about representing a company, and hospitality organisations are concerned with every detail of the behaviour and attitudes of their staff: selecting staff who can project the right image, choosing their uniforms, scripting their behaviour (Guerrier & Adib, 2000:262).

Another issue to consider may be the status of hospitality jobs. Guerrier and Adib (2004:260) note that being employed as a hospitality worker, compared with running one's own hospitality business, is regarded as undesirable because generally, hospitality workers are poorly paid. A report by Suncorp Bank (2012:17) noted that wage and wage growth for the hospitality industry for the period 1996 – 2011 was low when compared across other industries and the national average. This may be a response to the market conditions. In situations where labour market conditions are better, one might expect to see hospitality work as having a higher status. On the other hand, according to Lundberg (2004:7), the status of managers varies widely, depending in part on the status of the establishment and its position within the community. Generally speaking, managers of large, luxurious hotels have the most status, whereas the operator of a small restaurant has less status.

Programmes that are focused specifically on hospitality management are usually made up of students who are interested in the hospitality industry. Hospitality management students tend to be highly motivated, lively people who take pride in their future in a career of service (Barrows & Powers, 2009:10).

There is a clear difference between the hospitality service system and the typical manufacturing company – between the hospitality product and the manufacturer's product. For this reason, hospitality management programmes provide a distinct advantage for students interested in the industry and may not be suitable for someone interested in liberal-arts or business administration education, for example (Barrows & Powers, 2009:9).

Barrows and Powers (2009:7) note that people become hardworking students in a career oriented program that interests them, whether that is in the hospitality industry or some other profession. An important task of both schooling and work experience, then, is that of acculturating people to the work and life of hospitality industry professionals (Barrows & Powers, 2009:7-8). Barrows and Powers (2009:9) give a few reasons why students select hospitality management programmes. The reasons are tabled below in order of frequency.

Table 2.1: Reasons students select hospitality management programmes, cited in order of frequency

Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal work experience Family background in the industry Contact with other students and faculty in hospitality management programmes
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy working with people Enjoy working with food Enjoy dining out, travel, variety
Ambition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for employment and advancement Desire to operate own business Desire to travel Desire to be independent

Source: Barrows and Powers, 2009:9.

The conclusion is made that the hospitality industry, like other industries, is a unique industry. It therefore is highly important that students entering the industry understand the nature and culture of the industry and where the career path leads, in order to retain them and to ensure a sufficient number of graduates entering the industry.

2.7 Industry requirements

According to Chon and Maier (2010:27), the United States Department of Labour established a commission in 1990 to examine the demands of the workplace and to determine whether the current and future workforce is capable of meeting those demands. The commission, under the Secretary of Labour, was asked to define the skills needed for employment and the proposed acceptable levels of achievement in those skills. In Chon and Maier (2010:27), the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) identified two types of skills: competencies and foundations.

Competencies are the skills necessary for success in the workplace, and foundations are skills and qualities that underlie the competencies. The foundational skills are seen as relevant for the purpose of this study and are listed in Table 2 below.

Table 2.2: SCANS Foundation Skills

Basic skills	Reading Writing Arithmetic Mathematics Listening Speaking
Thinking skills	Creative thinking Decision making Problem solving Seeing things in the mind's eye Knowing how to learn Reasoning
Personal qualities	Responsibility Self esteem Social Self-management Integrity/honesty

Source: Chon and Maier, 2010:29.

Hospitality Crew (2007) lists the following as the personal skills and attributes required to work in the hospitality industry:

- Reliability - as simple as turning up for work on time!
- Commonsense - taking a logical approach to tasks, thinking before acting, not being impulsive.
- Initiative - ability to make informed decisions when faced with a new situation.
- Honesty - being trustworthy, acting with integrity.
- Enthusiasm - having a positive attitude and being motivated to work.
- Commitment - taking the responsibility of work seriously, turning up for shifts, and being focused when at work.
- Well-groomed appearance - dressing neatly (polished shoes!), keeping clean hair and nails, practicing good hygiene.
- Positive self-esteem.
- Sense of humour - ability to see the light side of things.
- Adaptability - being flexible - every customer and every day is different!
- Loyalty - respecting employer and workmates, respecting confidentiality (such as not giving trade secrets to the competition).
- Customer service - it's what hospitality is all about: attending to the needs and wants of customers - exceed their expectations.
- Communication skills - ability to communicate clearly with customers, workmates, and employer and understanding what each one needs and wants.
- Teamwork - being able to work as part of a team - in some positions, the ability to lead will be required.

- Problem solving - problems arise daily and need to be solved swiftly and to the satisfaction of customer and employer.
- Organisation and time management - ability to plan, prioritise, and manage time effectively.
- Ability to work under pressure - ability to multi-task and work quickly in hospitality "peak hour" with a lot of activity taking place simultaneously.
- Ability to learn – being able to listen and learn, ask questions, and try not to make the same mistake twice.
- Computer skills - technology plays a bigger and bigger role in hospitality - in hotel receptions (reservations, check-ins, check-outs), on the restaurant floor and in kitchens (meal orders), and in the office (stock levels, financial reports).

According to Lundberg (2004:11), the hotel industry looks for management people who are highly presentable and personable, who speak well, are secure in interpersonal relations, and display great self-confidence. Lundberg (2004:11) also refers to a study of management recruitment done at the Florida International University and Purdue University, which found that all hospitality industry segments hiring graduates ranked articulation, confidence, eye contact, and poise at or near the top of their list of desirable traits. Work experience in the industry was ranked as number one in importance for table service restaurants. Age and athletic participation were ranked as unimportant by recruiters from all industry segments.

In a study by Tesone (2005:4), the practitioner participants in the study noted knowledge, skills, and attitudinal qualities that indicate worker success in the industry. More specifically, dominant skills and abilities were noted in the areas of teamwork, communications (listening skills, verbal and writing skills, and empathy with others), and guest/customer services. Other job-related requirements were found in general knowledge, professional image (grooming, attire and demeanour), comprehension of performance standards, and realistic job/career expectations. Tesone (2005:4) learned from this study that, in practice, hospitality managers hire primarily for attitude and secondarily for specific knowledge and skills.

It therefore can be concluded that hospitality training institutions should bear in mind all the personal skills and attributes noted previously when selecting hospitality students.

These personal skills and attributes should be assessed in conjunction with school-leaving certificates and other predictors of academic capability during the student admission process in order for the selection process to be most effective.

2.8 Finding common ground

Traditionally, the selection of students for admission to undergraduate courses has relied predominantly on criteria based on prior academic attainment and the projected examination performance at matric level (Ineson & Kempa, 1997:128).

According to Ineson and Kempa (1997:128), it is not inappropriate to divide undergraduate courses into two broad categories:

- those courses that are essentially non-vocational, i.e. that provide general education, albeit in particular disciplines or fields, for example mathematics, history or economics, but are not linked directly to subsequent employment of any specific nature;
- those courses that have both educational and vocational aims, i.e. in fields such as medicine, education or hospitality management, which are recognised as providing a direct route into particular professions and occupations.

Ineson and Kempa (1997:129) further state that one might assume that a student who can sustain a course and produce a reasonably high level of performance has a better chance of obtaining employment than a poor academic performer. This assumption may not always be justified, as a student's success on an academic course does not guarantee that the student will be successful in obtaining and sustaining employment (Ineson & Kempa, 1997:129).

One might argue that the selection of students for the second category above should be based on criteria that do not reflect solely the qualities expected for successful completion of the course of study, but should focus also on those competencies that are expected and required for success in their chosen careers (Ineson & Kempa, 1997:129).

Similarly, Koen (1996:3) argues that student selection cannot be made a purely academic exercise, as it is necessary to consider individuals beyond a set of numbers recorded on a school-leaving certificate. Koen recommends that the student selection process should: (Koen, 1996:140-141):

- involve three selection methods, namely the Senior Certificate results, a structured interview and a personality test;
- include a simple co-ordination test that could be administered during the structured interview;
- take cognisance of school performance in the subjects English, Home Economics, Biology and possibly Afrikaans;

- include the expertise of the recruitment personnel from the related industry.

Koen (1996:140-141) also recognised a growing need for good computer and communication skills in hospitality management students.

Ratangee (2007:11) concurs that school-leaving certification cannot be used as the sole criterion for selection to higher education, as there is a serious possibility of excluding some talented students who have not had adequate opportunities to demonstrate their potential for higher education study on the basis of school-leaving results alone.

An article by Lefever (1989:44) likewise states that the hospitality students of the future should meet more stringent admission requirements that include not only scholastic achievement, but industry commitment as well.

Lundberg (2004:7) pointed out that academic achievement as such are not as important for many entry-level jobs as emotional stability, personal organisation, energy and tact.

However, Lundberg (2004:9-10) also refers to research conducted with hospitality students at Michigan State University that aimed to establish if college grades predict career success in the hospitality business. The study showed a positive correlation. Performance in elective courses correlated higher than in required courses. On the other hand, there are examples of dropouts and poor students who went on to do exceptionally well. According to Lundberg (2004:10), some were so ambitious that long hours in outside jobs left little time for academic achievement. Yet, on the whole, grades seem to make a difference.

According to Dittmer and Griffin (1997:120), potential employers are typically more inclined to offer good starting jobs to students with valid work experience. For example, a student who has worked at the front desk of a local hotel while earning a degree is much more likely to obtain a favourable position in the front office of hotel upon graduation than one who has not had front-office experience.

A study by Hsieh and Hu (2005:1) found that, traditionally in the UK, the admission decision has been exercised by the university's academic staff in a framework provided by academic criteria and expectations concerning the qualities that produce a successful college student.

The former criteria were predominantly the results of the high school exit examination, while the latter qualities were measured by non-academic information revealed in a student's application and less commonly in recent years, personal interviews. Hence, in addition to

considering an applicant's academic success, success in employment is also a factor in the selection process (Hsieh & Hu, 2005: 1).

Ratangee (2007:10) defines access to higher education and training as providing learners with the possibility of gaining access to educational institutions in which high quality education and training is provided, preparing them for the world of work. Reichel and Milman (1996) examined the objective and subjective admission criteria used by the Department of Hotel and Tourism Management at Ben-Gurion University in Israel. To complement the objective admission criteria of three exams, personal interviews are also conducted to collect information regarding applicant personal information, appearance, interpersonal skills, listening and verbal ability, self-confidence, knowledge of foreign languages, and knowledge of the hospitality industry. The results showed that there were no statistically significant correlations between admission scores and the personal interview. This finding indicates that interviewing is a complementary activity in the decision process of hospitality management programme admission. Both interviews and the objective admission tests are essential in evaluating different skills and abilities (Hsieh & Hu, 2005:6). A comprehensive approach that incorporates both objective factors, such as exam scores and academic standings, and subjective criteria, such as interviews, study plans and letters of recommendation should be employed to select qualified students (Hsieh & Hu, 2005:13).

Newstrom (1985: 242) found that many organizations are faced with the impossible task of trying to develop unsuitable people into efficient managers. Organisations should select future managers carefully, on the basis of more and better criteria than past performance, seniority and cooperation. Qualification criteria might include such identifiable qualities as a desire to be a manager, communications skills, intelligence, desire to work with people, emotional stability, and demonstrable leadership effectiveness. Newstrom (1985:242) is clearly referring to senior organisational employees, rather than students and entry level managers. The researcher feels, however, that the qualities referred to by Newstrom (1985:242) should be encompassed in the admission criteria of institutions that train managers, as this is what the students are aspiring to.

Adolphus (n.d.) noted that a former director of undergraduate admissions at the University of California had proposed that the objectives of an admissions policy should be to enrol a class of freshmen who are academically bright, will benefit from learning, contribute to their community, be likely to graduate, reflect the state's ethnic diversity, and become loyal alumni, providing financial support to the organisation. A range of criteria should be used – high school grades, test scores, as well as "intellectual curiosity and accomplishment,

extraordinary talent, leadership, service to others, motivation, tenacity, and demonstrated ability to overcome hardship" (Adolphus, n.d.).

Success in vocational factors is likely to depend not only on intellectual factors, but also on qualities pertaining to temperament, interests, personality and environment (Ineson & Kempa, 1997:129). In theory, perhaps the undergraduate selectors should make their judgment with two sets of criteria in mind, i.e. those that pertain to the likelihood of students succeeding in undergraduate courses and those that are matched to the requirements and expectations of employers (Ineson & Kempa, 1997:129).

2.9 Summary

It can be concluded that hospitality training institutions should focus on those characteristics required by the hospitality industry, and not only on those that predict academic suitability when selecting students. The focus should be placed on ability to complete the course, as well as on successful employability and sustainability within the industry thereafter.

According to Lane and Duprè (1997:446), the hospitality job market is a promising one with a bright future. There are opportunities to satisfy a diverse set of interests and abilities. The hospitality industry strives to have professional educated employees who can manage the multitude of challenges in the next era. Hospitality training institutions can therefore play their role in supporting the industry by finding the most effective means of identifying students who will benefit the most from a course in hospitality and thus go on to enjoy a successful career in the industry.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter comprised a literature review, highlighting the importance of utilising effective selection tools during the student selection process in hospitality training institutions in Cape Town. The researcher detailed the admission requirements of the IHS and the CTHS, as well as the assessment tools currently used in the students' selection process. Issues such as the characteristics and culture of the hospitality industry were also discussed, including the importance of the selection and retention of students. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the different research methods and instruments used to conduct this study.

The two major types of sampling methods, namely probability and non-probability sampling, were used. According to Babbie (1998:68 & 71), probability sampling is based on the basic principle that a sample will be representative of the population from which it is selected if all members of the population have equal chances of being selected in the sample. The probability sampling method was used in the form of the questionnaires that were distributed to the students and hospitality industry professionals. The same students were questioned to ascertain their view of the student selection process and their expectation of their course of study. Hoteliers, on the other hand, were questioned on their expectations of the students applying to study courses in hospitality and whether they felt that the current selection tools were effective in assisting hospitality training institutions obtain suitable candidates.

Despite the accepted superiority of probability sampling methods, purposive or judgemental sampling was used as a type of non-probability sampling (Babbie, 1998:97). Interviews were conducted with two staff members involved in the student selection process at the IHS and the CTHS, based on the researcher's knowledge of the population. All three target groups were also requested to make suggestions on how the selection process could be improved. Information on past students who had dropped out was extracted from the IHS and CTHS databases and used for analysis.

3.2 Research methods

There are two main approaches to research, the positivist approach, also known as the quantitative approach, and the anti-positivist approach, also known as the qualitative approach (Welman et al., 2005:6). According to Welman et al. (2005:8) and Bernard (2006:451-452), the purpose of quantitative research is to evaluate objective data consisting of numbers, while qualitative research deals with subjective data that are produced by the

minds of respondents or interviewees. Qualitative data are presented in language instead of numbers. The researcher tries to understand the significance respondents attach to their environment (Flick, Von Kardorff & Steinke, 2004:3).

Similarly, Bryman and Bell (2007:28) describe quantitative research as a research strategy that emphasises quantification in the collection and analysis of data. By contrast, qualitative research can be construed as a research strategy that usually emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data.

Cooper and Schindler (1998:134) and Rubin and Babbie (2008:417) differentiate qualitative and quantitative research in the following manner. Quality is the essential character or nature of something, while quantity is the amount. Quality refers to the 'what', while quantity refers to the 'how much'. Qualitative refers to the meaning, which is the definition or analogy or model or metaphor characterising something, while quantitative assumes the meaning and refers to a measure of it.

The researcher therefore understood qualitative research as involving the analysis of data such as words (e.g. from interviews), pictures (e.g. video), or objects (e.g. an artefact), while quantitative research involves the analysis of numerical data. The researcher used both the qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct this study. The qualitative method was used in the form of the interviews that were conducted with the two staff members from each institution, namely the IHS and the CTHS.

3.3 Sampling methods

Probability and non-probability sampling methods were used to conduct this study. A distinction can be made between probability and non-probability samples. According to Cooper and Schindler (1998:218), Welman et al. (2005:56), Bryman and Bell (2007:182) and Rubin and Babbie (2008: 362), the members of a sample are selected either on a probability basis or by another means. Probability sampling is based on the concept of random selection – a controlled procedure that assures that each population element is given a known non-zero chance of selection. In contrast, non-probability sampling is non-random and subjective. Each member does not have a known non-zero chance of being included. Allowing interviewers to choose sample members 'at random' (meaning as they wish or wherever they find them) is not random sampling. Only probability samplers provide estimates of precision.

The researcher used a combination of probability and non-probability sampling methods. The stratified random sampling method was used as a form of probability sampling while purposive sampling was used as a form of non-probability sampling. Stratified random sampling was chosen to ensure that a fully representative sample was obtained from the

target groups. Purposive sampling was chosen due to the researchers experience in the hospitality industry at large, and specifically in hospitality training at higher education institutions.

3.3.1 Stratified random sampling

Stratified random sampling ensures that key subpopulations are included in the sample. The population is divided into subpopulations, based on key independent variables, and then a random, unbiased sample is taken from each of the subpopulations (Bernard, 2006: 153). In order to draw a representative stratified random sample, the following two aspects must be borne in mind (Welman et al., 2005:56):

- The various strata must be identified according to one or more variables; and
- A random sample should be drawn from each separate stratum.

The researcher will be more certain of obtaining a representative sample from a population with clearly distinguishable strata than with simple random sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2007: 182; and Rubin & Babbie, 2008:354; and Welman et al., 2005: 61).

According to Cooper and Schindler (1998:238), there are three reasons why a researcher chooses a stratified random sample. The reasons are as follows:

- To increase a sample's statistical efficiency;
- To provide adequate data for analysing the various subpopulations; and
- To enable different research methods and procedures to be used in different strata.

Stratified random sampling requires smaller samples than simple random sampling in order to obtain valid results (Welman et al., 2005:62).

The students and hospitality professionals that completed the questionnaires were selected according to the stratified random sampling method. The researcher used stratified random sampling to make sure that she obtained a representative sample of the population. The mentioned sampling method was also chosen to increase the sample's statistical efficiency and to guarantee representativeness.

3.3.2 Purposive sampling

According to Welman et al. (2005:68), purposive sampling is the most important type of non-probability sampling. Researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population. The problem with this kind of sampling is that different researchers may proceed in different ways to obtain

such a sample. It therefore is impossible to evaluate the extent to which such samples are representative of the relevant population.

Bryman and Bell (2007:500) state that purposive sampling is done purposively on the basis of the sample's likely ability to contribute to the theoretical understanding of a subject. Cooper and Schindler (1998:245) advise that purposive sampling is a good choice when one wishes to select a bias group for screening purposes. Bernard (2006:198), as well as Rubin and Babbie (2008:342), note that purposive sampling is also known as judgment sampling as the researcher decides on the purpose he or she want informants to serve and then goes out to find candidates that fit the specific criteria, as done by the researcher in the case of this study.

The staff members from the IHS and the CTHS who are involved in the student selection process were chosen according to the purposive sampling method. The researcher chose purposive sampling because she has been lecturing at the hotel school and therefore has experience of the hospitality industry. Her past experience could guide her to know what an appropriate sampling method was in terms of the problem.

3.4 The research instruments

Questionnaires, interviews and formal databases were the research instruments used to conduct this study.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed to and collected from the students at the IHS and the CTHS. The IHS (in 2011) had 100 students, of whom 60 were first- and second-year students and 40 were third-year students. Questionnaires were distributed to the 60 first- and second-year students at the IHS, as the third-year students were doing their experiential training in the industry and therefore were not available to participate.

The CTHS (in 2011) had 359 students, of whom 220 were first- and second-year students and 139 were third-year students. Questionnaires were distributed to all 220 first and second-year students. The 139 third-year students were excluded from the study, as they were also completing their experiential training in the industry and therefore were unable to participate. The questionnaires were handed out to the participating students in their classrooms. Students were given 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The collection of the questionnaires was done immediately thereafter. The second set of questionnaires was sent to hospitality professionals at several hospitality establishments in Cape Town via e-mail. The hoteliers were given two weeks to complete and return the questionnaire via e-mail. A

follow-up e-mail was sent at the end of the original two-week period, giving the candidates a further two weeks to complete and return the questionnaires. No questionnaires were accepted or included in this study after the second due date.

3.4.1.1 Source of information for the questionnaires

Information for the questionnaires was obtained through focus groups held with academics and hoteliers. A few of the questions were also derived from questionnaires that had previously been sent out with little or no valuable feedback derived. The poor response attained previously made it necessary for similar questions to be asked in this questionnaire with the hope of receiving a better response from the respondents in this attempt.

3.4.1.2 Structure of the questionnaires

Two questionnaires were compiled. One questionnaire was distributed to hospitality students at the IHS and the CTHS. The second questionnaire was distributed amongst hospitality professionals in Cape Town. The hospitality professional included lower, middle and senior level managers from restaurants and hotels at different star ratings and grades. Combinations of open- and closed-ended questions were used. Brynard and Hanekom (2005:38-39) and Sinclair (1975:76) and Welman et al. (2005:174) advise that researchers choose judiciously between open- and closed-ended (multiple-choice variety) questions. Open-ended questions in a questionnaire or interview schedule allow respondents to formulate their responses themselves. Alternatively, the questions can be presented as multiple-choice questions in which respondents have to select the response that best applies to them from among two or more alternative responses.

An open-ended question is one in which the interviewer asks a question without any prompting with regard to the range of answers expected. The respondent's reply is noted verbatim. In a self-completed questionnaire a line or space is left for the respondent to write his or her own answer and there is no prior list of answers (Brace, 2008:46; and Foddy, 1993:7; and Gillham, 2000:63; and Welman et al., 2005:174).

The advantage of open-ended questions is that the respondent's answer is not influenced unduly by the interviewer or the questionnaire, and the verbatim replies from respondents can provide a rich source of varied material that might have been untapped by categories on a pre-coded list (Welman et al., 2005:175).

A closed or pre-coded question, in contrast, is one that offers the respondents a range of answers to choose from, either verbally or from a show card. In the case of a self-completed questionnaire, a range of answers is set out in the questionnaire and the respondent is asked

to tick the appropriate boxes or give a 'yes' or 'no' answer (Brace 2008:46; and Foddy, 1993:7). The categories reflected in the alternatives should be mutually exclusive and exhaustive in order to make provision for each and every possible response, although not simultaneously so in more than one category (Welman et al., 2005:175).

Welman et al. (2005:175) further note that what may count as an advantage to open-ended questions may represent a drawback to multiple-choice items, and vice versa. Some respondents may feel irritated because multiple-choice items restrict them to particular responses that may not make provision for their unique situation. As a result, they may prefer the freedom to express themselves in the way that is allowed by open-ended questions. Foddy (1993:8) also presents some criticism, pointing out that respondents are more likely to endorse a particular option if it has explicitly been listed for them than if they have to spontaneously think of it for themselves. Foddy (1993:8) says further that it has been found that respondents often give different types of answers to open-ended questions than they do to congruent, closed questions. Simultaneously, this advantage of open-ended questions may be a drawback in that they require a better ability to express themselves and usually a higher level of education on the part of the respondent than with multiple-choice items (Welman et al., 2005:175).

The student questionnaire comprised twenty-two questions, of which twenty-one were closed ended and one was open ended. The questionnaire that was sent to the hospitality professionals consisted of nineteen questions, of which seventeen were closed-ended and two were open-ended. The researcher included the category "other" when it was difficult to anticipate all possible responses, or when there were too many possible responses to list. The researcher ended each questionnaire with an open-ended question to allow the respondents to include information that may be relevant to the study but may have not been covered in the questionnaire (Cooper and Schindler, 1998:416; and Welman et al., 2005:175).

The researcher favoured closed-ended questions to open ended questions for the following reasons (Brace, 2008:47; and Cooper and Schindler, 1998:416):

- they are easy to administer and cheap to process;
- they allow the respondents to access the data directly from the questionnaire;
- they are efficient and specific; and
- they are easier to measure, record, code and analyse.

Even though the questions in both questionnaires consisted mainly of multiple-choice items, the researcher concluded each questionnaire with an open ended-question with a view to

determine whether anything of importance to the respondent had been omitted. The combining of open and closed-ended elements in one question through the use of the option “other” also allowed the researcher to steer clear of the possible pit fall associated with closed-ended questions.

3.4.2 Interviews

Three types of interviews are used in research: structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Brynard and Hanekom, 2005:32; and Welman et al., 2005:165-167). The researcher used semi-structured interviews to conduct this study. According to Flick (2009:150), semi-structured interviews have attracted interest and are widely used. This interest is linked to the expectation that the interviewed subjects’ viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardised interview or a questionnaire.

3.4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Welman et al. (2005:166) explain that various degrees of structuredness are possible between the completely structured interview on the one hand, and the completely unstructured interview on the other hand. Interviews between these two extremes are usually called semi-structured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from one interview to the next. Instead of an interview schedule, interview guides are used. An interview guide involves a list of topics and aspects of these topics that have a bearing on the given theme that the interviewer should raise during the interview (Bernard, 2006:212; and Hopf, 2004:204).

Interviews were conducted with two academic and administrative staff members involved in the students selection process at each institution. The researcher used semi-structured interviews because, unlike completely structured interviews, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to use probes in order to clear up vague responses, or to ask for elaboration of questions that may have been answered partially. The nature of the questions asked in the interviews and the ensuing discussions meant that data had to be recorded by note-taking and by tape-recording the conversations.

3.4.3 Secondary survey data: formal data bases

Secondary analysis is a special case of existing statistics; it is the reanalysis of previously collected surveys or other data that were originally gathered by others. As opposed to primary research, the focus is on analysis, rather than on collecting data (Neuman: 2006:333). The researcher used information derived from the application forms and files of

past students who had dropped out of the selected institutions for analysis in this research. Statistics were received from the IHS, stipulating the number of students enrolled for 2010 and the number of students who had completed by the end of the year. Information regarding reasons for dropping out of the course was also obtained for those students who had not completed the course.

The CTHS, on the other hand, provided statistics of students who had enrolled over the period 2006 to 2008, which was then compared to the statistics on the students' enrolment and drop-out rate for the period 2009 to 2011. The analysis of these two groups was important as the CTHS conducted interviews with students who enrolled over the period 2006 to 2008. The interview process was done away with for the period 2009 to 2011. The IHS, on the other hand, has always conducted interviews as part of their student selection process. The researcher wanted to determine whether there had been any significant change in the drop-out rate over these periods.

3.5 Process for data analysis

The researcher made use of a statistical process using computer software to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires. The software program used was SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version II. SPSS version II was chosen because it provides statistical analysis of data. The program also allows for in-depth data access and preparation, analytical reporting, graphics and modelling.

3.6 Target population

Neuman (2006:224) defines a target population as the specific pool of cases to be studied. Babbie (1998:72), on the other hand, uses the term survey population, which is defined as that aggregation of elements from which the survey sample is actually selected.

The target population used for this research was students studying hospitality management at NQF level six in Cape Town. The two schools that were used as the sample for this study were the IHS and the CTHS, as they were found to be the only two schools that fit the criteria. These two institutions can further be broken down into two categories: private and public institutions. The IHS is a private institution while, the CTHS is a public or government institution. The two institutions both offer a National Diploma in Hospitality Management at NQF level 6 and their courses are structured in a similar manner, although they differ in governance, as will be explained in the following section.

3.6.1 Private higher education

Approximately 30 000 students attend about 100 private higher education institutions in South Africa, which offer education and training in fields such as information technology,

management studies, secretarial studies, public relations and marketing, communications, religion, beauty and skincare, and design. Unlike their public counterparts, private institutions get no money from the government. They are owned by private companies or individuals. Private institutions are required by law to register with the Department of Higher Education and Training and their educational programmes must be accredited by the Council on Higher Education. To achieve this, they have to meet the standards of a body called the Higher Education Quality Committee (National Information Service for Higher Education, 2008-2011).

3.6.2 Public university education in South Africa

According to the National Information Services for Higher Education (2008-2011), South Africa had 21 universities and 15 technikons in 1994. By 2005, as a result of the social transformation drive, this was reduced to six comprehensive universities, six universities of technology and 11 universities. South Africa has an estimated 750 000 students who attend the 23 universities across the country. South African research is the strongest on the continent, with thousands of scholars conducting studies to advance knowledge and drive development. South Africans have been awarded six Nobel prizes in scholarly fields, as well as four Nobel peace prizes. South African higher education institutions have opened the doors of learning since 1994.

In 1993, only 40% of students were African; today, 60% - over 400 000 students are African. White students make up 27% of enrolments, coloured students 6% and Indian students 7%. More than half of all students are now women. South Africans from all walks of life - rich and poor - can attend university. The government's National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) provides study loans and helps thousands of bright young people from poor families to pursue their university ambitions. South African institutions attract many foreign students, especially from other countries in Africa. About one out of every 15 of our students is from another country. Foreign students pay fees and levies. By opening South African campuses to the world, universities give the country's students an opportunity to learn about other cultures and viewpoints. Nearly one in five school-leavers who pass matric attends university.

In terms of the student selection process, public higher institutions are subject to the criteria as stipulated by the Higher Education Act, detailed below.

Admission to public higher education institutions is (South Africa, 1997:29):

Subject to this Act,

- the council of a public higher education institution, after consulting the senate of the public higher education institution, determines the admission policy of the public higher education institution;

- the council must publish the admission policy and make it available on request;
- the admission policy of a public higher education institution must provide appropriate measures for the redress of past inequalities and may not unfairly discriminate in any way.

Subject to this Act, the council may, with the approval of the senate-

- determine entrance requirements in respect of particular higher education programmes;
- determine the number of students who may be admitted for a particular higher education programme and the manner of their selection;
- determine the minimum requirements for readmission to study at the public higher education institution concerned; and
- refuse readmission to a student who fails to satisfy such minimum requirements for readmission.

Private schools and higher education institutions, on the other hand, have a fair amount of autonomy, but are expected to abide by certain government non-negotiables, for example, no child may be excluded from a school on the grounds of his or her race or religion.

3.7 Summary

The researcher has discussed the different research methods used to conduct this study, namely questionnaires, interviews and information obtained from formal databases. The difference between qualitative and quantitative research was also discussed, with the emphasis being on stratified random sampling and purposive sampling, as these were the specific methods used in this study.

The IHS and the CTHS were discussed briefly in terms of their governance, as these are the tertiary institutions that were used as the sample for this study.

The next chapter will comprise an analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the questionnaires sent out to the students, hospitality institutions and hoteliers. The results of the interviews conducted with these three groups will be discussed in detail. Information received from the formal databases of the IHS and the CTHS will also be included as part of the analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the different research methods used to conduct this study were discussed in detail. The researcher also explained the manner in which the data were processed, as well as the different sampling methods used. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The quantitative method was used in the form of the questionnaires that were sent to the two sample groups, namely students and hospitality professionals. Statistics of students who had dropped out of hospitality courses at the IHS and the CTHS over a specific period were also obtained from each school's database and analysed. The qualitative method was used in the form of the interviews that were conducted with a randomly selected sample of students and hoteliers. Each institution had two people involved in the student admission and selection process, and all four were interviewed.

The researcher will now proceed with a discussion of how the data were collected and interpreted from the questionnaires and databases. A breakdown is given of each question that was asked, including the rationale for the question. Graphs are displayed reflecting the feedback received from the respondents, and there is a detailed explanation of the findings.

4.2 Target sample

The target sample used for this research was students studying hospitality management at NQF level 6 in Cape Town. The International Hotels School (IHS) and the Cape Town Hotel School (CTHS) were used in this study, as they were the only two schools offering a National Diploma in Hospitality at NQF level 6 in Cape Town. The two institutions can further be broken down into two categories: private and public institutions. The International Hotel School is a private institution, while the Cape Town Hotel School is a public or government institution. The two institutions offer the same qualifications and their courses are structured in a similar manner, although they differ in governance, as detailed in the previous chapter.

The International Hotel School (IHS) has a total of 100 students, of which 60 were a combination of first and second year students. These were included in this study. The Cape Town Hotel School (CTHS) has a total of 361 students, of which 225 were a combination of

first and second year students and were included in this study. The third year students from both institutions were not included, as they were completing their experiential learning programme in the industry. Questionnaires were also sent to several hospitality establishments to gain feedback from hoteliers in Cape Town. The IHS and the CTHS each had two members involved in the student selection process. All four members were interviewed.

4.3 Sources of information for the questionnaires

Information for the questionnaires was obtained through focus groups held with a students, academics and hoteliers, while a few of the questions were also derived from questionnaires that had previously been sent out to members of the hospitality industry, although little or no valuable feedback had derived from these. The poor response attained previously made it necessary for similar questions to be asked in the questionnaire for this study, with the hope of receiving a better response.

4.4 Structure of questionnaires and interviews

The researcher used the following types of questions in the questionnaire (Welman et al., 2005:152):

- **Biographical** – The students were asked what age group they fell into, their gender and the hospitality institution at which they were registered. The hoteliers were asked their age, gender, position they held at the institution where they were employed and the grading of their institution. The academics involved in the student selection process were asked their age, position and the name of the establishment by which they were employed.
- **Typical behaviour** – The students, hoteliers and academics were all asked which selection tools they thought were most effective in selecting the most suitable candidates to study hospitality.
- **Opinions, beliefs, and convictions** – The students and academics were asked to comment on their opinion of the selection process currently used at their institutions. The hoteliers were also asked to comment on how they think the selection process should be conducted. All three target groups were asked to make recommendations on how the student selection process could be improved.
- **Attitudes** – Attitude scales were used to determine the extent to which the respondents agreed or disagreed with a particular statement. Four-and five-point Likert scales were used in this regard, as they are easier to compile than any other attitude scale (Welman et al., 2005:156). The Likert scale was also used because it allows for the interpretation of multidimensional attitudes (Welman et al., 2005:157).

Combinations of open and closed-ended questions were used in the questionnaire. The student questionnaire was made up of twenty-two questions, of which twenty-one were closed ended and one was open ended. The questionnaire that was sent to the hoteliers consisted of nineteen questions, of which eighteen were closed ended and one was open ended. The category "other" was included when it was difficult to anticipate all possible responses, or when there were too many possible responses to list. The researcher also ended each questionnaire with an open-ended question to allow the respondents to include information that may be applicable to the study but may have not been covered in the questionnaire.

The researcher favoured closed-ended questions to open-ended questions for the following reasons (Cooper & Schindler, 1998:416):

- they allow respondents to access the data directly from the questionnaire;
- they are efficient and specific; and
- they are easier to measure, record, code and analyse.

Semi-structured interviews were used in the interview process. The researcher used semi structured interviews because, unlike completely structured interviews, the semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to use probes with a view to clearing up vague responses, or to ask for elaboration of questions which could not be answered completely in the questionnaires. The nature of the questions asked in the interviews and the ensuing discussions meant that data had to be recorded by note-taking and by tape-recording the conversations.

4.5 Data collection methods

Questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain primary data, while information derived from the formal databases of the IHS and CTHS was used for the secondary data analysis. Questionnaires were sent out to a total of 282 students and 96 hoteliers. The student questionnaires were hand delivered to the students at each institution in their classrooms. The students were given 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire, which was collected immediately. The hoteliers' questionnaires were distributed via e-mail, with the return date clearly stipulated. Follow up e-mails and telephonic follow-ups were also made to encourage the respondents to complete and return the questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with two representatives from each institution that were involved in the student selection process. A pilot study was also conducted with hospitality professionals. The questionnaire that was distributed to the hoteliers and the interview questions that were used to obtain information from the academics involved in the student selection process were first administered to the hospitality professionals. The pilot study was conducted in order to (Welman et al., 2005:148):

- detect possible flaws in the measurement procedures;
- identify unclear or ambiguously formulated questions; and
- give an opportunity for researchers and assistants to notice non-verbal behaviour which reveal areas of concern that were addressed.

4.6 Analysis of data

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:411), most data analysis today is conducted with computers. A computer can go beyond simple counting and sorting to perform intricate computations and provide sophisticated presentations of the results. Popular computer programs examine variables simultaneously and can compute a variety of statistics. The researcher used a computer program to analyse the data collected for this study. The computer program made the data analysis process faster and more accurate than a manual system.

4.6.1 Program used for analysis of data

The computer program that was used was one of the most popular: SPSS version II. The researcher chose to use SPSS version II because it proved to be user friendly and allowed for the interpretation of questions with multiple variables, ranging from agree to strongly disagree. The program also made it easy to record the respondents' comments in a logical manner. Other programs made the input and interpretation of such variables complicated.

4.6.2 Analysis of student questionnaire

4.6.2.1 Question 1 – What is your gender?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to obtain demographic information regarding the students.

The results represent a respondent profile of 64.2% female versus 35.8% male.

4.6.2.2 Question 2 - What is your age?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to obtain demographic information regarding the age of the students.

The data is contained in Table 4.6.2.2.

Table 4.6.2.2: Age of respondents

Age group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 20 years	95	59.4	64.2	64.2
	21 - 25 years	49	30.6	33.1	97.3
	26 - 30 years	3	1.9	2.0	99.3
	31 - 40 years	1	0.6	0.7	100.0
	Total	148	92.5	100.0	
Missing	System	12	7.5		
Total		160	100.0		

The majority of the students were between 18 and 25 years of age, with an average age of 21.5 years at the first-and second-year level.

4.6.2.3. Question 3 – Which hospitality training institution are you currently registered? Rationale for the question

Students from both the IHS and CTHS were handed questionnaires to complete. The researcher wanted to know what the response rate was from each institution.

The results revealed the following:

- IHS = 23% of respondents questioned in this study.
- CTHS = 77% of respondents questioned in this study.

IHS is a private institution, comprising a total of 60 first-and second-year students, versus the CTHS, which is a public or government institution with a total of 225 first- and second-year students. Public institutions are more easily accessible to students due to the financial aid provided through government, which makes government institutions more attractive to students who experience financial difficulty. Research has shown that financial difficulty has an influence on the student drop-out rate.

4.6.2.4 Question 4 - Why did you choose to study at the institution at which you are registered as opposed to any other?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to know what reasons influence students the most in terms of which institutions they choose to study at. These reasons reveal whether students base their decisions on what they believe or what is most convenient/easily accessible. Table 4.6.2.4 provides a breakdown of the reasons given by the respondents for choosing to study at the particular institution.

**Table 4.6.2.4: Reason for choosing to study hospitality
Affordability**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Of high importance	28	17.5	22.6	22.6
	Of moderate importance	46	28.8	37.1	59.7
	Not sure	14	8.8	11.3	71.0
	Of low importance	22	13.8	17.7	88.7
	Not considered	14	8.8	11.3	100.0
	Total	124	77.5	100.0	
Missing	System	36	22.5		
Total		160	100.0		

Reputation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Of high importance	99	61.9	73.9	73.9
	Of moderate importance	25	15.6	18.7	92.5
	Not sure	5	3.1	3.7	96.3
	Of low importance	2	1.3	1.5	97.8
	Not considered	3	1.9	2.2	100.0
	Total	134	83.8	100.0	
Missing	System	26	16.3		
Total		160	100.0		

Location

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Of high importance	52	32.5	41.9	41.9
	Of moderate importance	38	23.8	30.6	72.6
	Not sure	5	3.1	4.0	76.6
	Of low importance	21	13.1	16.9	93.5
	Not considered	8	5.0	6.5	100.0
	Total	124	77.5	100.0	
Missing	System	36	22.5		
Total		160	100.0		

Courses offered

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Of high importance	104	65.0	76.5	76.5
	Of moderate importance	30	18.8	22.1	98.5
	Not sure	2	1.3	1.5	100.0
	Total	136	85.0	100.0	
Missing	System	24	15.0		
Total		160	100.0		

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Of high importance	2	1.3	28.6	28.6
	Of moderate importance	1	.6	14.3	42.9
	Not sure	2	1.3	28.6	71.4
	Not considered	2	1.3	28.6	100.0
	Total	7	4.4	100.0	
Missing	System	153	95.6		
Total		160	100.0		

Q4.5 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Experiential learning	1	.6	12.5	12.5
	Good standards	1	.6	12.5	25.0
	I did not have much knowledge of hotel schools in Cape Town	1	.6	12.5	37.5
	I thought hotel school would be easy	1	.6	12.5	50.0
	I wanted to study physiotherapy but did not get a place and could only start in the 2nd semester	1	.6	12.5	62.5
	I was accepted	1	.6	12.5	75.0
	It is a very broad field for someone who is not sure what they want to do	1	.6	12.5	87.5
	Recommended by Professor Daneel van Lill	1	.6	12.5	100.0
	Total	8	5.0	100.0	
Missing		152	95.0		
Total		160	100.0		

The tables revealed the following:

- 76.5% of the respondents regarded the courses offered as most important
- 73.9% of the respondents felt that the reputation of the institution was of high importance
- 41.9% of the respondents felt that the location of the institution was highly important
- 22.6% of the respondents felt that affordability was of high importance

On the other hand, 28.6% of the respondents listed other reasons for choosing to study hospitality. These included:

- Thinking that the Hospitality Management course would be easy
- Not being accepted in their first career choice
- Merely being accepted at the institution
- Hospitality being a broad field for someone who was not sure what they wanted to do
- Recommendation by a professor

These reasons showed that students were not fully aware of all the requirements of the industry they were entering.

4.6.2.5 Question 5 - Did you receive career guidance in hospitality while you were in high school or after you completed high school?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to determine whether students make informed decisions when choosing to study hospitality or whether students are in fact ignorant of the nature of the hospitality industry and the type of work they will be doing in their chosen career. College and career guidance and counselling programmes are important, as they aim to help students make more informed and better educational and career choices. Career counselling in high school is very important because, with the help of a trained professional and some scientifically designed tests, students and their parents might be able to gain a good idea of where a student's educational talents and career aspirations lie.

The results showed that 53.4% of the respondents received career guidance in hospitality, while 46.6% did not. These statistics reveal that just over half the respondents were adequately informed of the career path they had chosen.

4.6.2.6 Question 6 - Why did you choose to study a course in hospitality?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to know which reason most attracted students in pursuing a career in the hospitality industry. Table 4.6.2.6 is a breakdown of the reasons given by the respondents for choosing to study a course in hospitality.

Table 4.6.2.6: Reasons for choosing hospitality

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Personal work experience	53	33.1
Family background in the industry	26	16.3
Contact with other students and faculty in hospitality management programs	20	12.5
Enjoy dining out, travel and variety	89	55.6
Enjoy working with people	112	70
Enjoy working with food	85	53.1
Opportunities for employment and advancement	85	53.1
Desire to operate own business	100	62.5
Desire to travel	111	69.4
Desire to be independent	97	60.6
Studied hospitality at high school	29	18.1

Table 4.6.2.6 reveals the reasons students gave for choosing a career in the hospitality industry in descending order as follows:

- 70% enjoyed working with people
- 69.4% desired to travel
- 62.5% desired to operate their own business
- 60.6% desired to be independent
- 55.6% enjoyed dining out, travel and variety
- 53.1% enjoyed working with food
- 53.1% listed opportunities for employment and advancement
- 33.1% had personal work experience in the industry
- 18.1% studied hospitality at high school
- 16.3% had a family background in the industry
- 12.5% had contact with other students and faculty in hospitality management programmes

The last four scores, which were the lowest, ranging from 33.1% to 12.5%, reveal students who were adequately informed of the hospitality industry and their chosen career path.

4.6.2.7 Question 7 - Was hospitality your first choice of study?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to determine whether a study in hospitality was the student's first choice of study. Questionnaires sent out to the students show that hospitality was suggested by the academic institutions as an alternative to students who were unsuccessful in their first choice of study. The researcher is of the opinion that students would more likely drop-out if the course proved challenging in any way if it was not their first choice of study. The findings showed that 46.6% of the students, which was nearly half of the respondents studying hospitality at the two institutions, had chosen it as an alternative choice. The remaining 53.4% of the students had chosen hospitality as a first choice of study. It can be assumed that the students could not pursue their first choice of study due to unforeseen circumstances and therefore moved to hospitality, or that they did not enjoy their first choice of study and therefore moved to hospitality. Either way, the finding reveals a certain level of uncertainty regarding a career in the hospitality industry.

4.6.2.8 Question 8 - Did you research the hospitality industry in any of the following ways before making your decision to study hospitality?

Rationale for question

The researcher wanted to know whether the students had made an informed decision when they chose to pursue a career in the hospitality industry. Table 4.6.2.8 provides an analysis of the amount, if any, and form of research done on the hospitality industry by the students before they pursued a career in the hospitality industry.

Table 4.6.2.8: Research done on hospitality industry

Research done on hospitality industry	Frequency	Percent
Attended open days hosted by different hospitality training institutions	44	27.5
Received advice from family/friends	87	54.4
Contacted hotels to enquire about job shadowing	29	18.1
Attended workshops aimed at educating the public on the hospitality industry	13	8.1
Attended a career day/evening at your school which informed you on the hospitality industry	55	34.4
Searched the internet or library to gain more information on the hospitality industry	89	55.6
Worked part time at any hospitality establishment while still at school or after school	56	35
Obtained information from reputable sources on the best places to register at for a course in hospitality	52	32.5
I was not accepted for my first choice of study and was then referred to hospitality	14	8.8

The frequency of the findings was as follows, in descending order:

- 55.6% searched the internet or library to gain more information on the hospitality industry
- 54.4% received advice from family/friends
- 35% worked part time at any hospitality establishment while still at school or after school
- 34.4% attended a career day/evening at their school which informed them of the hospitality industry
- 32.5% obtained information from reputable sources on the best places to register for a course in hospitality
- 27.5% attended open days hosted by different hospitality training institutions
- 18.1% contacted hotels to enquire about job shadowing
- 8.8% were not accepted for their choice of study and were then referred to hospitality
- 8.1% attended workshops that educated the public on the hospitality industry

The findings show that the respondents did research the hospitality industry to a certain degree. The 8.8% of students who were not accepted for their first choice of study and were then referred to hospitality did raise concerns as to whether they knew what the hospitality industry was about.

4.6.2.9 Question 9 - Did you work or job shadow at any hospitality establishment for any length of time before applying for a course in hospitality?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out how many students had actually worked in the hospitality industry to determine whether they understood the nature and culture of the industry before pursuing a career in hospitality. The results are shown in Table 4.6.2.9.

Table 4.6.2.9: Previous experiences in the hospitality industry

Previous experiences in the hospitality industry	Frequency	Percent
Yes for 1-5 days	18	11.3
Yes for 1-4 weeks	11	6.9
Yes for 1-3 months	7	4.4
Yes for 3-6 months	11	6.9
Yes for 6-12 months	10	6.3
Yes for 1 year and longer	24	15
I did not work or job shadow before applying for a course in hospitality	69	43.1

The findings show that only between 11.3% and 15 % of the students had worked in the hospitality industry for between one day and over a year. A further 43.1% of the respondents said that they had not spend any time working or job shadowing in the hospitality industry before pursuing a career in hospitality. Though work experience or job shadowing is not required when applying for a course in hospitality, the researcher is of the opinion that it is advantageous, as students have a more realistic idea of what the industry entails.

4.6.2.10 Question 10 - What type of establishment did you do your work experience or job shadowing at?

Rationale for the question

The researcher was of the opinion that students would have a better idea of what the hospitality industry was about if they had worked or job shadowed at a hotel, guest house, events company, conference centre or fine dining restaurant. Students would therefore have a more realistic view of the course they were pursuing and the career path in which it would lead. The information obtained is shown in Table 4.6.2.10.

Table 4.6.2.10: Establishment where industry related work experience was obtained

Establishment	Frequency	Percent
Hotel	33	20.6
Fast food franchise	7	4.4
Restaurant	45	28.1
Catering & events company	34	21.3
Other (please specify below)	16	10
Did not obtain work experience or job shadowing	36	22.5

Q10.5 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Clubs	1	.6	6.3	6.3
	Advertisement agency	1	.6	6.3	12.5
	Bar	1	.6	6.3	18.8
	Bars	1	.6	6.3	25.0
	Bed & breakfast	1	.6	6.3	31.3
	Clothing store	1	.6	6.3	37.5
	First work was J&B Met in 1st year	1	.6	6.3	43.8
	Guest house	1	.6	6.3	50.0
	Old-age kitchen, bakery, small cafe	1	.6	6.3	56.3
	Private game ranch	1	.6	6.3	62.5
	Promotions, bistros	1	.6	6.3	68.8
	Sanlam investment company	1	.6	6.3	75.0
	Spar bakery	1	.6	6.3	81.3
	Sports Science Institute	1	.6	6.3	87.5
	Supper yacht and guest house	1	.6	6.3	93.8
Wine estate and function venue	1	.6	6.3	100.0	
	Total	16	10.0	100.0	
Missing		144	90.0		
Total		160	100.0		

Did not obtain work experience or job shadowing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	36	22.5	22.5	22.5
Missing	System	124	77.5	77.5	100
Total		160	100.0	100.0	100.0

The frequency of the results was as follows, in descending order:

- 28.1% of the respondents had worked in restaurants
- 20.6% of the respondents had worked in hotels
- 21.3% of the respondents had worked for catering and events companies
- 4.4% of the respondents had worked in fast food franchises
- 10% of the respondents had worked in other establishments, ranging from bars, clubs and bed and breakfasts to, wine estates, game ranches and old age homes
- 22.5% had not previously worked in the hospitality industry

4.6.2.11 Question 11 - Do you think it is beneficial to have previously worked in the hospitality industry before pursuing a career in the industry?

Rationale for the question

The researcher thought that it was beneficial to have previously worked in the hospitality industry before pursuing a career in the industry, as it would prepare the students better for what they would encounter during their studies and in their careers. The researcher wanted to find out whether students were of the same opinion. The answers are shown in Table 4.6.2.11 below:

Table 4.6.2.11: Benefit of previous work experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	112	70.0	75.7	75.7
	No	14	8.8	9.5	85.1
	Not sure	22	13.8	14.9	100.0
	Total	148	92.5	100.0	
Missing	System	12	7.5		
Total		160	100.0		

The findings reveal that a majority of the respondents, namely 75.7%, agreed that industry-related work experience was important, while 9.5% believed that it was not. The balance of 14.9% was not sure.

4.6.2.12 Question 12 - Why do you think it is beneficial to have previously worked in the industry before applying for a course in hospitality?

Rationale for the question

The researcher thought that it was beneficial to have previously worked in the hospitality industry before pursuing a career in the industry, as it would prepare students better for what they would encounter during their studies and in their careers. The researcher wanted to find out whether students were of the same opinion. The results are shown in Table 4.6.2.12.

Table 4.6.2.12: Reasons why previous work experience is beneficial

You know what you are getting yourself into

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	3.1	3.5	3.5
	Disagree	2	1.3	1.4	5.0
	Agree	49	30.6	34.8	39.7
	Strongly agree	85	53.1	60.3	100.0
	Total	141	88.1	100.0	
Missing	System	19	11.9		
Total		160	100.0		

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly agree	1	.6	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	159	99.4		
Total		160	100.0		

You have obtained basic skills that you can build on

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.5	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	8	5.0	5.6	8.5
	Agree	72	45.0	50.7	59.2
	Strongly agree	58	36.3	40.8	100.0
	Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing	System	18	11.3		
Total		160	100.0		

It is not beneficial to have previously worked in the industry before applying for a course in hospitality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	42	26.3	35.0	35.0
	Disagree	44	27.5	36.7	71.7
	Agree	23	14.4	19.2	90.8
	Strongly agree	11	6.9	9.2	100.0
	Total	120	75.0	100.0	
Missing	System	40	25.0		
Total		160	100.0		

Q12.4 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	So that if you do not want to be in the industry anymore, you can get out earlier	1	.6	12.5	12.5
	Confidence	1	.6	12.5	25.0
	Have the correct perception of the industry	1	.6	12.5	37.5
	I have travelled extensively and have seen the glamour of hospitality and I'm now on the other side	1	.6	12.5	50.0
	If it is your passion but you have no experience, you can succeed	1	.6	12.5	62.5
	You get to know how people do their things	1	.6	12.5	75.0
	You need to have a passion for this industry	1	.6	12.5	87.5
	You realise which department suits you best and in what you want to specialise	1	.6	12.5	100.0
	Total	8	5.0	100.0	
Missing		152	95.0		
Total		160	100.0		

The results revealed that:

- 60.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that having previously obtained industry-related work experience ensured that students knew what they were getting themselves into when applying for a course in hospitality
- 40.8% strongly agreed that having previously obtained industry-related work experience ensured that students obtained basic knowledge and skills that they could build on when applying for a course in hospitality
- 9.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that having previously obtained industry-related work experience is not beneficial when applying for a course in hospitality

The respondents also listed the following reasons in favour or opposition of having work experience before pursuing a career in hospitality:

- Agree, so that if you do not want to be in the industry anymore, you can get out earlier.
- Agree, you have confidence in what you are doing
- Agree, you have the correct perception of the industry
- Agree, you get to know how guests behave and what they require
- Agree, you realise which department suits you best and where you want to specialise
- Disagree, if it is your passion but you have no experience, you can succeed

4.6.2.13 Question 13 - What requirements did you have to meet in order to apply for the course? You may choose more than one option if applicable.

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to determine what the application and admission requirements were when the respondents applied for the course. The reasons are listed in Table 4.6.2.13.

Table 4.6.2.13: Admission requirements

Admission requirements	Frequency	Percent
National Senior Certificate/Matric	140	87.5
Aptitude test	17	10.6
Written communication test	24	15
Written numeracy test	25	15.6
Interview	35	21.9
Other written entrance exam	23	14.4
Submit references reflecting personal abilities and achievements	41	25.6
Work experience in the hospitality industry	22	13.8

Q13.9 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	A "C" aggregate to be accepted 60-69%.	1	.6	33.3	33.3
	I have passed A level - 2 steps above matric.	1	.6	33.3	66.7
	Minimum pass 50% for required subject	1	.6	33.3	100.0
	Total	3	1.9	100.0	
Missing		157	98.1		
Total		160	100.0		

The results from respondents revealed the following practise by the hotel schools in descending order:

- 87.5% required a National Senior Certificate/Matric
- 25.6% required submission of references reflecting personal abilities and achievements
- 21.9% interviewed students
- 15.6% issued a written numeracy test
- 15% issued a written communication test
- 14.4% required other written entrance exam e.g. general industry knowledge test
- 13.8% required work experience in the hospitality industry
- 10.6% issued an aptitude test
- 0.6% had other requirements, i.e. a C aggregate (60-69%) pass rate

Notably, the main requirement was a National Senior Certificate, with a C aggregate in some instances. Some students were required to provide references. Other students went through an interview process and were required to have previously worked in the hospitality industry. A few students were required to write other entrance exams, which included a written communication test, written numeracy test and an aptitude test.

4.6.2.14 Question 14 - Which of the following did you feel was most important or beneficial during the selection process?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to establish what students felt was most important during the student selection process. The answers to the question are shown in Table 4.6.2.14.

Table 4.6.2.14: Tools used in the selection process

National Senior Certificate/Matric

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	6.3	7.0	7.0
	Disagree	2	1.3	1.4	8.5
	Agree	33	20.6	23.2	31.7
	Strongly agree	97	60.6	68.3	100.0
	Total	142	88.8	100.0	
Missing	System	18	11.3		
Total		160	100.0		

Aptitude test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	3.8	8.2	8.2
	Disagree	28	17.5	38.4	46.6
	Agree	31	19.4	42.5	89.0
	Strongly agree	8	5.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	73	45.6	100.0	
Missing	System	87	54.4		
Total		160	100.0		

Written communication test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.9	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	18	11.3	22.5	26.3
	Agree	46	28.8	57.5	83.8
	Strongly agree	13	8.1	16.3	100.0
	Total	80	50.0	100.0	
Missing	System	80	50.0		
Total		160	100.0		

Written numeracy test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	4.4	9.2	9.2
	Disagree	26	16.3	34.2	43.4
	Agree	35	21.9	46.1	89.5
	Strongly agree	8	5.0	10.5	100.0
	Total	76	47.5	100.0	
Missing	System	84	52.5		
Total		160	100.0		

Interview

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.9	3.1	3.1
	Disagree	7	4.4	7.2	10.3
	Agree	46	28.8	47.4	57.7
	Strongly agree	41	25.6	42.3	100.0
	Total	97	60.6	100.0	
Missing	System	63	39.4		
Total		160	100.0		

Other written entrance exam e.g. General industry knowledge test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	4.4	9.0	9.0
	Disagree	24	15.0	30.8	39.7
	Agree	35	21.9	44.9	84.6
	Strongly agree	12	7.5	15.4	100.0
	Total	78	48.8	100.0	
Missing	System	82	51.3		
Total		160	100.0		

References reflecting personal abilities and achievements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	3.1	5.8	5.8
	Disagree	15	9.4	17.4	23.3
	Agree	45	28.1	52.3	75.6
	Strongly agree	21	13.1	24.4	100.0
	Total	86	53.8	100.0	
Missing	System	74	46.3		
Total		160	100.0		

Work experience in the hospitality industry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	4.4	8.1	8.1
	Disagree	18	11.3	20.9	29.1
	Agree	38	23.8	44.2	73.3
	Strongly agree	23	14.4	26.7	100.0
	Total	86	53.8	100.0	
Missing	System	74	46.3		
Total		160	100.0		

Personal grooming

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	1.9	3.5	3.5
	Disagree	9	5.6	10.6	14.1
	Agree	37	23.1	43.5	57.6
	Strongly agree	36	22.5	42.4	100.0
	Total	85	53.1	100.0	
Missing	System	75	46.9		
Total		160	100.0		

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.6	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	159	99.4		
Total		160	100.0		

Q14.10 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Anyone willing to pay	1	.6	50.0	50.0
	Nothing else was asked for or required.	1	.6	50.0	100.0
	Total	2	1.3	100.0	
Missing		158	98.8		
Total		160	100.0		

The findings revealed that respondents found the following factors to be important, in descending order:

- 68.3% National Senior Certificate/Matric
- 42.3% interview
- 42.4% personal grooming
- 26.7% work experience in the hospitality industry
- 24.4% references reflecting personal abilities and achievements
- 16.3% written communication test
- 15.4% other written entrance exam, e.g. general industry knowledge test
- 11% aptitude test
- 10.5% written numeracy test
- 0.6% other – academic institutions should accept anyone who is willing to pay

4.6.2.15 Question 15 - How do you feel about interviews?

Rationale for the question

The researcher believes that interviews should form part of the student selection process, as they allow assessors to test the student's interpersonal skills, which are important when choosing people for the hospitality industry. The researchers wanted to find out the student's perception of the interview process. The results are presented in Table 4.6.2.15.

Table 4.6.2.15: Views on the interview process

Interviews are intimidating and discourage students from applying for a course

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	41	25.6	29.9	29.9
	Disagree	66	41.3	48.2	78.1
	Agree	27	16.9	19.7	97.8
	Strongly agree	3	1.9	2.2	100.0
	Total	137	85.6	100.0	
Missing	System	23	14.4		
Total		160	100.0		

Interviews are informative and allow students to meet the people they may be working with

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.3	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	12	7.5	8.8	10.2
	Agree	79	49.4	57.7	67.9
	Strongly agree	44	27.5	32.1	100.0
	Total	137	85.6	100.0	
Missing	System	23	14.4		
Total		160	100.0		

Interviews are necessary to assess the student's communication skills and allows interviewees to get to know the student better

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Disagree	11	6.9	7.9	7.9
	Agree	68	42.5	48.6	56.4
	Strongly agree	61	38.1	43.6	100.0
	Total	140	87.5	100.0	
Missing	System	20	12.5		
Total		160	100.0		

Interviews are unnecessary

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	54	33.8	42.5	42.5
	Disagree	59	36.9	46.5	89.0
	Agree	11	6.9	8.7	97.6
	Strongly agree	3	1.9	2.4	100.0
	Total	127	79.4	100.0	
Missing	System	33	20.6		
Total		160	100.0		

The findings revealed the following:

- 2.0 to 19.7 of the respondents felt that interviews were intimidating and discouraged students from applying for a course, while 29.9 to 48.2% disagreed
- 32.1 to 57.7% of the respondents felt that interviews were informative and allowed students to meet the people they may be working with, while 1.5 to 8.8% disagreed
- 43.6 to 48.6 of the respondents felt that interviews were necessary to assess student's communication skills and allowed interviewees to get to know the student better, while 7.9% disagreed
- 2.4 to 8.7% of the respondents felt that interviews were unnecessary while 42.5 to 46.5% disagreed

It therefore can be concluded that more students favoured interviews than those who did not.

4.6.2.16 Question 16 - Has your perception of the industry changed since you began the course?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out whether the students had the correct perception of the hospitality industry when they started the course. The findings revealed that only 33.1% of the respondents had the correct perception of the hospitality industry, versus 66.9% of respondents that did not.

4.6.2.17 Question 17 - How has your perception of the hospitality industry changed since you began the course?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to know which areas of the hospitality industry the students were ignorant about when applying for the course. The results are shown in Table 4.6.2.17.

Table 4.6.2.17: Current perception of hospitality industry

Current perception of hospitality industry	Frequency	Percent
I did not expect to wear a uniform	20	12.5
I did not expect to work weekends and public holidays	30	18.8
I did not expect to work shifts	10	6.3
I did not expect to work such long hours	31	19.4
I did not expect it to be so labour intensive	45	28.1
I expected more pay	50	31.3
The industry is everything I expected it to be and more	73	45.6

The findings revealed the following factors, in descending order:

- 45.6% of the respondents found the industry to be everything they expected it to be and more
- 31.3% of the respondents expected the industry to pay more
- 28.1% of the respondents did not expect the industry to be so labour intensive
- 19.4% of the respondents did not expect to work such long hours and
- 18.8% of the respondents did not expect to work weekends and public holidays
- 12.5% of the respondents did not expect to wear a uniform
- 6.3% of the respondents did not expect to work shifts

It can be noted that less than half of the number of respondents (45.6%) had the correct perception of the hospitality industry. The balance of 54.4% of respondents were not aware of aspects such as the industries remuneration rates, the labour intensive nature of the industry in general, the work days and times required, and the dress code of the industry.

These findings further confirm that a significant number of students were not fully aware of the industry they were entering and the career path they had chosen.

4.6.2.18 Question 18 - Do you see yourself completing the course and enjoying a fruitful career in the industry?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to know how many students were still keen on completing the course and enjoying a fruitful career in the hospitality industry despite whatever unexpected challenges they had experienced thus far. The findings revealed that a majority of the respondents (86.9%) looked forward to completing the course and enjoying a fruitful career in the industry, while 11% were not sure and 2.1% were likely not to complete the course or pursue a career in the hospitality industry.

4.6.2.19 Question 19 - Is there any reason why you would not complete the course?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to establish what were the highest contributing factors influencing students not to complete their course. The reasons are given in Table 4.6.2.19 below.

Table 4.6.2.19: Reasons for not completing the course

Reasons for not completing course	Frequency	Percent
I do not enjoy the unsocial working hours	16	10
I do not enjoy the industry culture	7	4.4
I do not have sufficient funds to complete the course	17	10.6
My interests have changed	14	8.8
I would prefer a career in which I can earn more money	22	13.8
I enjoy the course and look forward to working in the hospitality industry	93	58.1

Q 9.7 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	I have a second degree, B-Com Law	1	.6	14.3	14.3
	I will complete the course	1	.6	14.3	28.6
	Maybe find something more exciting, in the outside world	1	.6	14.3	42.9
	No	1	.6	14.3	57.1
	No	1	.6	14.3	71.4
	Sometimes boring but I know it's beneficial to me. I can also do something else if I don't want to work in this industry	1	.6	14.3	85.7
	The course is sufficient. Practical component is basically like selling students for slave labour. You don't learn anything but get used. Could do course out of a text book, lectures are not really required except for the cooking part	1	.6	14.3	100.0
	Total	7	4.4	100.0	
Missing		153	95.6		
Total		160	100.0		

The findings were as follows in descending order:

- 58.1% of the respondents enjoyed the course and looked forward to working in the hospitality industry
- 13.8% of the respondents preferred a career in which they could earn more money
- 10.6% of the respondents did not have sufficient funds to complete the course
- 10% of the respondents did not enjoy the unsocial working hours [i.e. working shifts which are characterised by early mornings and late nights as many hotels operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (some shifts starting at 6am and other shifts only ending at 7am from 11pm the previous night), employees also work over weekends and public holidays]
- 8.8% of the respondents' interests had changed
- 14.3% of the respondents listed other reasons for not completing the course which included:
 - Having another degree
 - Finding something more exciting
 - Finding the course boring at times and maybe looking at doing something else
 - Finding certain aspects of the course undesirable
- 4.4% of the respondents did not enjoy the culture of the industry

4.6.2.20 Question 20 - Research shows that an averages of about 40% of students drop out of their courses within the first year of study. What do you think is the reason for the high student drop-out rate among student studying courses in hospitality?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out what students though was the reason for the drop-out rate amongst hospitality students. The reasons are shown in Table 4.6.2.20.

Table 4.6.2.20: Reasons for high students drop-out rate

Poor career choice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	3.8	4.4	4.4
	Disagree	8	5.0	5.8	10.2
	Not sure	17	10.6	12.4	22.6
	Agree	63	39.4	46.0	68.6
	Strongly agree	43	26.9	31.4	100.0
	Total	137	85.6	100.0	
Missing	System	23	14.4		
Total		160	100.0		

Financial constraints

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.5	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	8	5.0	6.0	9.0
	Not sure	29	18.1	21.6	30.6
	Agree	69	43.1	51.5	82.1
	Strongly agree	24	15.0	17.9	100.0
	Total	134	83.8	100.0	
Missing	System	26	16.3		
Total		160	100.0		

Student under-preparedness for tertiary education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.5	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	5	3.1	3.7	6.6
	Not sure	20	12.5	14.7	21.3
	Agree	74	46.3	54.4	75.7
	Strongly agree	33	20.6	24.3	100.0
	Total	136	85.0	100.0	
Missing	System	24	15.0		
Total		160	100.0		

Not being fully aware of the nature of the hospitality industry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	1.3	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	5	3.1	3.7	5.2
	Not sure	17	10.6	12.7	17.9
	Agree	48	30.0	35.8	53.7
	Strongly agree	62	38.8	46.3	100.0
	Total	134	83.8	100.0	
Missing	System	26	16.3		
Total		160	100.0		

The respondents believed that the following were the reasons, in descending order:

- 31.4% to 46% contribute the student drop-out rate to poor career choice, while 12.4% were not sure and 4.4 to 5.8% disagreed
- 17.9% to 51.5% of the respondents felt that financial constraints contributed to the student drop-out rate, while 21.6% were not sure and 3 to 6% disagreed
- 24.3% to 54.5% of the respondents believed that students were under-prepared for tertiary education, while 14.7% were not sure and 2.9 to 3.7% disagreed
- 35.8 to 46.3% of the students either agreed or strongly agree that not being fully aware of the nature of the hospitality industry contributed towards students dropping out of their courses, while 12.7% were not sure and 1.5 to 3.7% of the students either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4.6.2.21 Question 21 - What do you think hospitality training institutions can do in the student admission process to reduce the number of student drop-outs?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out what suggestions the students had that could assist in the admission process. Students had to indicate the criteria they deemed as important for admission to the Hospitality Management course. Their responses are shown in Table 4.6.2.21.

Table 4.6.2.21: Ideas on how selection process can be improved

Conduct interviews with all students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	2.5	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	3	1.9	2.2	5.1
	Not sure	19	11.9	14.0	19.1
	Agree	56	35.0	41.2	60.3
	Strongly agree	54	33.8	39.7	100.0
	Total	136	85.0	100.0	
Missing	System	24	15.0		
Total		160	100.0		

Raise the academic requirements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	5.6	7.1	7.1
	Disagree	17	10.6	13.4	20.5
	Not sure	31	19.4	24.4	44.9
	Agree	45	28.1	35.4	80.3
	Strongly agree	25	15.6	19.7	100.0
	Total	127	79.4	100.0	
Missing	System	33	20.6		
Total		160	100.0		

Insist on work experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	15	9.4	11.6	11.6
	Disagree	30	18.8	23.3	34.9
	Not sure	21	13.1	16.3	51.2
	Agree	51	31.9	39.5	90.7
	Strongly agree	12	7.5	9.3	100.0
	Total	129	80.6	100.0	
Missing	System	31	19.4		
Total		160	100.0		

Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	.6	6.7	6.7
	Disagree	1	.6	6.7	13.3
	Not sure	5	3.1	33.3	46.7
	Agree	2	1.3	13.3	60.0
	Strongly agree	6	3.8	40.0	100.0
	Total	15	9.4	100.0	
Missing	System	145	90.6		
Total		160	100.0		

21.4 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Assist the students in exploring the career choice before entering the course, e.g. week-long shadowing	1	.6	8.3	8.3
	Expectations of hospitality industry	1	.6	8.3	16.7
	Having a good understanding of people and being able to work hard in difficult situations	1	.6	8.3	25.0
	Inform them of what really happens regarding the course, for example in-service training and practicals	1	.6	8.3	33.3
	Institutions should reduce the fees	1	.6	8.3	41.7
	Job shadowing	1	.6	8.3	50.0
	Lower the mark requirement	1	.6	8.3	58.3
	More workshops and training days	1	.6	8.3	66.7
	Students are lazy then they can't cope with the work load and fail.	1	.6	8.3	75.0
	Students should write motivation letters of why they want to pursue a career in the hospitality industry.	1	.6	8.3	83.3
	Tell them how hard it is	1	.6	8.3	91.7
	There needs to be a set interview process.	1	.6	8.3	100.0
	Total	12	7.5	100.0	
Missing		148	92.5		
Total		160	100.0		

The findings were as follows in descending order:

- 39.7 to 41.2% of respondents suggested that interviews should be conducted with all students, while 2.2 to 2.9% disagreed and 14% were not sure
- 19.7 to 35.4% of the respondents suggested that academic institutions should raise the academic requirements, while 7.1 to 13.4% disagreed and 24.4% were not sure
- 9.3 to 39.5% of the respondents suggested that academic institutions should insist on work experience, while 11.6 to 23.3% disagreed and 16.3% were not sure

The suggestions made by the 7.5% of respondents in section “21.4 Other” reveal that most of them feel that students need to be more informed about the industry that they are entering into, before they are accepted at hospitality training institutions.

4.6.2.22 Question 22 - Please feel free to add in any other comments

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted students to add other comments that may be valuable to the study and that may have been omitted. These comments are shown in Table 4.6.2.22.

Table 4.6.2.22: Additional comments

Comments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative%
Valid	The industry needs to be more open to students, make them feel comfortable, etc. and listen.	1	.6	7.1	7.1
	I changed courses as I was not aware of what my previous course entailed - Quantity Surveying.	1	.6	7.1	14.3
	I was so interested in doing this course but now I hate it!	1	.6	7.1	21.4
	Interviews are very important in selection of students. Without interviewing the wrong people end up in the hotel school and in the industry.	1	.6	7.1	28.6
	Not as glamorous as it appears to be	1	.6	7.1	35.7
	One cannot discriminate against those with no experience as one has to start from somewhere and many students come here straight out of Matric.	1	.6	7.1	42.9
	Standards need to be raised as in what is required to get accepted. Too many poor-attitude students are let in.	1	.6	7.1	50.0
	Students from underprivileged areas should be well informed on the hospitality industry in order for them to make an informed decision on studying hospitality.	1	.6	7.1	57.1
	Students must be prepared, work hard, and know what they can expect from the course and what they want their outcomes to be.	1	.6	7.1	64.3
	The hospitality industry is much like the army, it requires great discipline, long hours, hard work, sleepless nights and self-control, but the rewards are priceless	1	.6	7.1	71.4
	The hotel school should provide more industry visits for the students to get to see what's out there.	1	.6	7.1	78.6
	The only downfall of this course is working in the restaurant when you are studying to be a chef and also the unhappiness of wearing court shoes all day in the restaurant.	1	.6	7.1	85.7
	Working experience would be very helpful but I came into this industry after years of travelling so I should not be rejected because I never worked in industry.	1	.6	7.1	92.9
	You really do need a passion for the industry and you don't really know what it is about until you work in industry yourself.	1	.6	7.1	100.0
Total	14	8.8	100.0		
Missing		146	91.3		
Total		160	100.0		

The following notable remarks were made by students:

- The industry needs to be more open to students, make them feel comfortable and listen.
- Interviews are very important in the selection of students. Without interviews the wrong people end up in the hotel school and in the industry.
- One cannot discriminate against those with no experience as one has to start from somewhere and many students attend hotel school straight out of Matric.
- Standards need to be raised as in what is required to get accepted. Too many students with a poor attitude are let in.
- Students from underprivileged areas should be well informed of the hospitality industry in order for them to make an informed decision on studying hospitality.
- Working experience would be very helpful, but those who come to this industry after years of travelling should not be rejected because they had never worked in the industry.
- One really needs a passion for the industry and does not really know what it is about until having worked in the industry.

The researcher concludes that interviews should be included in the selection process, mainly to determine whether the prospective student has the correct attitude towards learning and therefore succeeding in the hospitality industry.

4.6.3 Analysis of the hospitality industry questionnaire

4.6.3.1 Question 1 - What is your gender?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to obtain the demographic information of the respondents.

The findings revealed that 62.5% were female and 37.5% were male.

4.6.3.2 Question 2 - What is your age?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to obtain demographic information regarding the respondents. The data are shown in Table 4.6.3.2.

Table 4.6.3.2: Age**Age group**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	20-30 years	17	51.5	53.1	53.1
	31-40 years	12	36.4	37.5	90.6
	41-50 years	2	6.1	6.3	96.9
	51-60 years	1	3.0	3.1	100.0
	Total	32	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.0		
Total		33	100.0		

The majority of managers that responded were under the age of 30 years of age. The average age of respondents was 40 years.

4.6.3.3 Question 3 - What type of establishment do you work for?**Rationale for the question**

The researcher wanted to get the opinion of industry professionals from a range of hospitality establishments. Managers of hotels may have a different opinion to managers of restaurants or guest houses, for example. The wider the range of establishments, the less biased the results. The types of establishments are listed in Table 4.6.3.3.

Table 4.6.3.3: Type of establishment**Type**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Hotel	15	45.5	57.7	57.7
	Restaurant	3	9.1	11.5	69.2
	Catering Company	1	3.0	3.8	73.1
	Hotel School	7	21.2	26.9	100.0
	Total	26	78.8	100.0	
Missing	System	7	21.2		
Total		33	100.0		

Q3.5 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		27	81.8	81.8	81.8
	Accounting Practice	1	3.0	3.0	84.8
	Cake shop	1	3.0	3.0	87.9
	Cape Town Club (membership club)	1	3.0	3.0	90.9
	Freelance food stylist and recipe developer	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	Guesthouse	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	Hospitality	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The findings, in descending order, revealed that;

- 57.7% of the respondents were from hotels,
- 11.5% of the respondents were from restaurants,
- 26.9% were from hotel schools, and
- 3.8% of the respondents were from catering companies.

The questionnaire was also completed by industry professionals from hospitality-related institutions including, a freelance food stylist and recipe developer, as well as a guesthouse manager.

4.6.3.4 Question 4 - What position do you hold at this establishment?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to get the opinion of hospitality professionals on all levels of management to reduce bias. The results are shown in Table 4.6.3.4.

Table 4.6.3.4: Position held

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Senior Manager	9	27.3	42.9	42.9
	Junior Manager	12	36.4	57.1	100.0
	Total	21	63.6	100.0	
Missing	System	12	36.4		
Total		33	100.0		

4.4 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		22	66.7	66.7	66.7
	Accounting clerk	1	3.0	3.0	69.7
	Financial Assistant	1	3.0	3.0	72.7
	Freelance food stylist and recipe developer	1	3.0	3.0	75.8
	Guest services agent	1	3.0	3.0	78.8
	Intern	1	3.0	3.0	81.8
	Lecturer	3	9.1	9.1	90.9
	Lecturer in Professional Cookery	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	Operations and quality officer	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	Training officer	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The findings revealed a position breakdown among the respondents of 42.9% senior managers versus 57.1% junior managers, some of which included an accounting clerk, a financial assistant, a freelance food stylist and recipe developer, a guest services agent, an intern, lecturers, an operations and quality officer and a training officer.

4.6.3.5 Question 5 - How many years have you worked in the hospitality industry?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out how long the participants had worked in the hospitality industry. People with more experience are more equipped to give valuable input as to what the industry requires. The responses to this question are shown in Table 4.6.3.5.

Table 4.6.3.5: Years of experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		1	3.0	3.0	3.0
	1 year	1	3.0	3.0	6.1
	11 years	1	3.0	3.0	9.1
	12 years	2	6.1	6.1	15.2
	13 years	1	3.0	3.0	18.2
	14 years	3	9.1	9.1	27.3
	15 years	2	6.1	6.1	33.3
	16 years	1	3.0	3.0	36.4
	18 years	2	6.1	6.1	42.4
	2 years	1	3.0	3.0	45.5
	3 years	3	9.1	9.1	54.5
	4 years	4	12.1	12.1	66.7
	5 years	4	12.1	12.1	78.8
	6 months	1	3.0	3.0	81.8
	6 years	3	9.1	9.1	90.9
	7 years	2	6.1	6.1	97.0
	8 years	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The findings reveal that the respondents had industry-related work experience ranging from six months to eighteen years, with an average of eight years and four months of experience.

4.6.3.6 Question 6 - What is the star rating of your establishment?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to get participants from a range of different establishments. Managers of a five star hotel would possibly have different service levels and value different skills to those of a catering company, for example.

The researcher therefore wanted to get an overview from the managers of as many different establishments as possible to reduce bias. The answers to this question are given in Table 4.6.3.6.

Table 4.6.3.6: Star rating**Star Rating**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	3 Star	1	3.0	3.1	3.1
	4 Star	10	30.3	31.3	34.4
	5 Star	5	15.2	15.6	50.0
	Not Graded	16	48.5	50.0	100.0
	Total	32	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.0		
Total		33	100.0		

The findings reveal that:

- 3.1% of the respondent were from three star hotels,
- 31.3% of the respondent were from four star hotels,
- 15.6% of the respondents were from five star hotels, and
- 50% of the respondents were from establishments that were not graded, e.g. hotels schools and restaurants.

4.6.3.7 Question 7- What Matric subjects do you think should be compulsory for students applying for a National Diploma in hospitality?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out which subjects members of the hospitality industry thought were compulsory for students studying hospitality. The recommended subjects could be compared to the subject required by hospitality training institutions. Any discrepancies could then be discussed and suggestions could possibly be made on ways to improve the student selection process. The answers to this question are given in Table 4.6.3.7.

Table 4.6.3.7: Subject requirements**Mathematics**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	3.0	3.4	3.4
	Disagree	2	6.1	6.9	10.3
	Agree	17	51.5	58.6	69.0
	Strongly agree	9	27.3	31.0	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Accounting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	6.1	6.9	6.9
	Disagree	3	9.1	10.3	17.2
	Agree	17	51.5	58.6	75.9
	Strongly agree	7	21.2	24.1	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

English

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Agree	7	21.2	23.3	23.3
	Strongly agree	23	69.7	76.7	100.0
	Total	30	90.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	9.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Consumer Science

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	3.0	3.4	3.4
	Disagree	4	12.1	13.8	17.2
	Agree	18	54.5	62.1	79.3
	Strongly agree	6	18.2	20.7	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Computer Literacy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Disagree	1	3.0	3.3	3.3
	Agree	9	27.3	30.0	33.3
	Strongly agree	20	60.6	66.7	100.0
	Total	30	90.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	9.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Hospitality Studies

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	3.0	3.2	3.2
	Disagree	4	12.1	12.9	16.1
	Agree	7	21.2	22.6	38.7
	Strongly agree	19	57.6	61.3	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Q7.7 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Previous total	25	75.8	75.8	75.8
	Afrikaans	1	3.0	3.0	78.8
	Another language, such as French or German	1	3.0	3.0	81.8
	Business Economics, Tourism and an international language, eg. French	1	3.0	3.0	84.8
	Business Studies	1	3.0	3.0	87.9
	Guest Relations	1	3.0	3.0	90.9
	Spirit of Hospitality	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	Tourism	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	Tourism Studies, Maths Literacy instead of Mathematics. The diploma involves more reality situations and teaches more common information used on a daily basis	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The findings revealed the following:

- 31% to 58.6% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Mathematics should be compulsory, while 3.4% to 6.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 24.1% to 58.6% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Accounting should be compulsory, while 6.9% to 10.3% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.
- 23.3% to 76.7% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that English should be compulsory and none of the respondents disagreed.
- 20.7% to 62.1% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Consumer Science should be compulsory, while 3.4% to 13.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

- 30 to 66.7% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Computer Literacy should be compulsory while 3.3% disagreed.
- 22.6% to 61.3% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that Hospitality Studies should be compulsory, while 3.2% to 12.9% either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

In descending order, the industry professionals chose the following as being compulsory:

- English - up to 76.7%
- Consumer Science – up to 62.1%
- Hospitality Studies – up to 61.3%
- Computer Literacy – up to 60.6%
- Mathematics and Accounting – up to 58.6%

The respondents also listed other subjects as being important, such as Afrikaans, another language like French or German, Business Economics, Business Studies, Guest Relations, Spirit of Hospitality, Tourism studies and Maths Literacy instead of Mathematics.

4.6.3.8 Question 8 - Which of the following do you think should form part of the application requirements for entry level students applying for a National Diploma in hospitality?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out which documents the hospitality industry thought were compulsory for students studying hospitality. These documents could be compared to the documents currently required by hospitality training institutions. Any discrepancies could then be discussed and suggestions could possibly be made on ways to improve the student selection process. The answers to this question are given in Table 4.6.2.8.

Table 4.6.3.8: Application requirements
National Senior Certificate/Matric

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	26	78.8	83.9	83.9
	Advantageous	5	15.2	16.1	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Written numeracy test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	18	54.5	62.1	62.1
	Advantageous	8	24.2	27.6	89.7
	Not necessary	3	9.1	10.3	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Written communication test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	15	45.5	48.4	48.4
	Advantageous	14	42.4	45.2	93.5
	Not necessary	2	6.1	6.5	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Psychometric or aptitude test

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	15	45.5	48.4	48.4
	Advantageous	9	27.3	29.0	77.4
	Not necessary	7	21.2	22.6	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Hand written motivation letter

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	18	54.5	58.1	58.1
	Advantageous	10	30.3	32.3	90.3
	Not necessary	3	9.1	9.7	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

References reflecting personal abilities and achievements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	15	45.5	50.0	50.0
	Advantageous	12	36.4	40.0	90.0
	Not necessary	3	9.1	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	90.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	9.1		
Total		33	100.0		

CV reflecting work experience in the hospitality industry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	18	54.5	56.3	56.3
	Advantageous	11	33.3	34.4	90.6
	Not necessary	3	9.1	9.4	100.0
	Total	32	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.0		
Total		33	100.0		

Job shadowing experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	11	33.3	36.7	36.7
	Advantageous	15	45.5	50.0	86.7
	Not necessary	4	12.1	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	90.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	9.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Industry-related work experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	10	30.3	33.3	33.3
	Advantageous	18	54.5	60.0	93.3
	Not necessary	2	6.1	6.7	100.0
	Total	30	90.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3	9.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Q8.10 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		30	90.9	90.9	90.9
	Having experience will obviously be beneficial to their studies, but having it as a prerequisite for obtaining entrance is a bit unfair	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	I believe that students should demonstrate why they want to study for the National Diploma and should demonstrate at least a basic level of trainability Enthusiasm/attitude and training equal a good student	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	Statement of academic results	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The findings revealed the following about the industry professionals:

- 83.9% believed that a National Senior Certificate/Matric should be mandatory, 16.1% thought it should be advantageous, while none of the respondents thought it was not necessary
- 62.1% believed that a written numeracy test should be mandatory, 27.6% think it would be advantageous, while 10.3% of the respondents thought it was not necessary
- 48.4% believed that a written communication test should be mandatory, 45.2% think it should be advantageous, while 6.5% of the respondents think it is not necessary.
- 48.4% believed that a psychometric or aptitude test should be mandatory, 29% think it would be advantageous while 22.6% of the respondents think it is not necessary.
- 58.1% believed that a hand-written motivation letter should be mandatory, 32.3% think it would be advantageous, while 9.7% of the respondents think it is not necessary
- 50% believed that a reference reflecting personal abilities and achievement should be mandatory, 40% think it would be advantageous, while 10% of the respondents think it is not necessary
- 56.3% believed that a curriculum vitae (CV) reflecting work experience in the hospitality industry should be mandatory, 34.4% think it should be advantageous, while 9.4% of the respondents think it is not necessary
- 36.7% believed that job shadowing experience should be mandatory, 50% think it would be advantageous, while 13.3% of the respondents think it is not necessary
- 33.3% believed that industry-related work experience should be mandatory, 60% thought it would be advantageous, while 6.7% of the respondents think it is not necessary

In descending order, industry professionals chose the following as being mandatory:

- 83.9% - National Senior Certificate/Matric
- 62.1% - Written numeracy test
- 58.1% - Hand-written motivation letter
- 56.3% - Curriculum vitae reflecting work experience in the hospitality industry
- 50% - References reflecting personal abilities and achievement
- 48.4% - Psychometric or aptitude test
- 48.4%- Written communication test
- 36.7% - Job shadowing experience
- 33.3% - Industry-related work experience

The respondent also made the following comments:

- Having experience will obviously be beneficial to their studies but, having it as a prerequisite for obtaining entrance is a bit unfair.
- I believe that students should demonstrate why they want to study for the National Diploma and should demonstrate a least a basic level of trainability.
Enthusiasm/attitude and training equals a good student.

4.6.3.9 Question 9 - Do you think an entry level candidate’s academic achievement is a good indication of whether he/she has the potential to succeed in the hospitality industry or not?

Rationale for the question

There are hotel schools that use the student’s academic performance to either accept or reject the student. Students are required to have a certain minimum aggregate in a few recommended subjects in order to be accepted to the school. The researcher wanted to find out whether the hospitality industry felt that this practise was effective in the selection on students for the industry. The answers to this question are shown in Table 4.6.3.9.

Table 4.6.3.9: Academic achievement

Do you think an entry level candidate's academic achievement is a good indicator of whether they have the potential to succeed in the hospitality industry or not?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	9	27.3	28.1	28.1
	No	23	69.7	71.9	100.0
	Total	32	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.0		
Total		33	100.0		

Q9. Substantiate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
		8	24.2	24.2	24.2
Valid	A good academic grounding is great framework for the administrative side of things and understanding how the industry comes together, the logistics. However, the hospitality industry relies largely on people skills; you need these to be successful with staff, suppliers, industry players and guests. You can always hire a good accountant or marketing team, but if you don't possess good people skills - charms, graces and wit - it'll be extreme	1	3.0	3.0	27.3
	Academic is a plus however the industry is very operation driven and need individuals that have the passion and ability to think on their feet. Candidates that achieve good academic results do not necessarily become good managers.	1	3.0	3.0	30.3
	Academic work only shows a part of this candidate, therefore this person's attitude towards people and in the working environment would be the most important element to be successful in the hospitality industry.	1	3.0	3.0	33.3
	Many potential students assume that the industry is about fun, gilts and glamour. It is imperative that potential candidates provide more information as to why they think they are able to enter the industry. They need to establish what makes them suitable candidates.	1	3.0	3.0	36.4
	Aside from the fact that a Matric certificate in South Africa does not mean what it did in the past as a tool to measure academic ability, it also says nothing about a student's attitude, motivations and personality. The ND course requires people with certain characteristics and a single academic qualification simply does not provide enough information for selectors to make an informed decision.	1	3.0	3.0	39.4
	Because it shows if they are willing to work hard to achieve success.	1	3.0	3.0	42.4
	Because some candidates do not know what is hospitality and they just apply for it. A motivation letter should accompany, plus introducing subjects relating to hospitality.	1	3.0	3.0	45.5

Due to the fact that this is a very demanding industry, schools should be looking for specific types of people. Personal interviews are vital before the applicants are accepted.	1	3.0	3.0	48.5
Good communication skills, both oral and written, are important as you need to converse with a variety of guests with different cultural backgrounds. Your communication skills not only reflect on you but also on the establishment.	1	3.0	3.0	51.5
I feel that academic achievement helps to a certain degree, but one also has to get a sense of how committed the candidate is e.g. work hours, overtime.	1	3.0	3.0	54.5
It all depends on what level the candidate wants to get to in the hospitality industry. With academic achievements obviously they will move up the ranks quicker, but might not necessarily be the case in all hospitality sectors.	1	3.0	3.0	57.6
It gives them an advantage	1	3.0	3.0	60.6
It shows the applicants ability to follow through	1	3.0	3.0	63.6
No. A lot of students do not understand what they are actually getting themselves into. I think that if they are truly serious about the industry they would have some work experience even if it was only as a waiter.	1	3.0	3.0	66.7
Personally I think you have to have a passion for the service industry. Marks alone will not justify if you will be happy working in such an environment, but will show your capability to pass the subjects if you have good marks.	1	3.0	3.0	69.7
Potential only shows once they gain experience.	1	3.0	3.0	72.7
Some students are better equipped with practical work than academic work. The hospitality industry is predominantly a hands-on practical environment, but a sound understanding of systems and procedures needs to be in place. It therefore is vitally important that students pass subjects at tertiary level.	1	3.0	3.0	75.8
The hospitality industry is a largely blue collar industry.	1	3.0	3.0	78.8
The hospitality industry is stressful and it's necessary to see if a candidate will be able to handle pressure and if they will commit themselves to their working environment.	1	3.0	3.0	81.8

The industry can take so much of your personal being away from you that having reassurance of someone's Matric would not signify that they will be suited for the industry. It sounds so clichéd but one must really have a passion for this industry. I don't know how one could measure that.	1	3.0	3.0	84.8
The industry is more practical than theoretical although a lot of structures for a successful establishment are learnt theoretically.	1	3.0	3.0	87.9
The real challenge comes once they have been exposed to what the industry entails.	1	3.0	3.0	90.9
There are people with the knowledge and skill that are not good academic achievers.	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
Work experience is different.	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
Yes it is a concern, but if a candidate is able to achieve great success in the industry, then no, it is not a massive problem. Extra work and practise will just need to be focused in that specific area.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	100.0	

Note that 28.1% of the industry professionals believe that an entry level candidate's academic achievement is a good indicator of whether they have the potential to succeed in the hospitality industry, while 71.9% disagree.

4.6.3.10 Question 10 - Do you think interviews should be conducted with students as part of the selection process? Please explain below.

Rationale for the question

There are hotel schools that accept students based solely on their academic performance. Interviews are not conducted as part of the student selection process. The researcher wanted to find out whether the hospitality industry felt that this practice was effective in the selection of students for the industry. The results are shown in Table 4.6.3.10.

Table 4.6.3.10: Opinion on interviews

Q10. Explain

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Not necessary	18	54.5	54.5	54.5
	A potential employee needs to have an interview to assess whether the applicant can fit in with the demands of the specific hotel and get a sense of their behavioural traits.	1	3.0	3.0	57.6
	An interview is the best way of getting to know someone, especially for studying hospitality. Like I said earlier, attitude and the way one presents themselves are the most essential elements in the hospitality industry.	1	3.0	3.0	60.6
	I don't think it is necessary, as not all students will have had work experience. Once they have studied and had work experience they will probably interview a lot better and have more idea of where they want to go.	1	3.0	3.0	63.6
	Interviews should be optional.	1	3.0	3.0	66.7
	It is important to do proper induction to the industry as most have a vague idea of the industry.	1	3.0	3.0	69.7
	Not everyone is suited for all working environments and it is important to choose the right candidate for your hotel and the team that they would have to work with.	1	3.0	3.0	72.7
	So that the candidate gets full knowledge of the industry and working environment.	1	3.0	3.0	75.8
	This is a good way to judge the interpersonal skills of the applicant, as well as being a good introduction of the prospective student to the hands-on nature of the industry.	1	3.0	3.0	78.8
	To establish if they will fit in the industry	1	3.0	3.0	81.8
	To filter out the ones who are not passionate about this industry	1	3.0	3.0	84.8
	To understand why the student chose this industry To see if the student is ready for the industry and to answer any questions regarding it	1	3.0	3.0	87.9
	With an interview, one could assess how the student would deal with an environment where guests are the number one priority.	1	3.0	3.0	90.9
	Yes, but in a relaxed calm environment so the candidate is comfortable	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	You get a feel for the student, if they have the drive to be in industry or they were sent to you by mummy to keep them busy	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	You will be able to tell them exactly what the course and career are about. This will eliminate the failure and dropout percentage.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	100.0		

A total of 87.5% of the industry professionals thought interviews should be conducted with students as part of the selection process, while 12.5% disagreed that this was necessary.

4.6.3.11 Question 11 - If you answered ‘yes’ to question 10, which aspect of the candidate would have the most impact on your decision to either accept or reject the candidate?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out why hospitality professionals thought that interviews were important during the student selection process. The researcher was also curious as to what aspects of the candidate hoteliers would be scrutinising during the interview process in order to decide whether or not the candidate was suitable for the industry. The results are given in Table 4.6.3.11.

Table 4.6.3.11: Aspects of candidates

Prompt time keeping

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Mandatory	25	75.8	86.2	86.2
	Advantageous	4	12.1	13.8	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Well groomed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Mandatory	24	72.7	82.8	82.8
	Advantageous	4	12.1	13.8	96.6
	Not necessary	1	3.0	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Professionally dressed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Mandatory	19	57.6	65.5	65.5
	Advantageous	9	27.3	31.0	96.6
	Not necessary	1	3.0	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Positive body language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	23	69.7	79.3	79.3
	Advantageous	6	18.2	20.7	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Good verbal communication

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	21	63.6	72.4	72.4
	Advantageous	8	24.2	27.6	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Friendliness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	24	72.7	82.8	82.8
	Advantageous	5	15.2	17.2	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Theoretical knowledge of the hospitality industry through research

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	6	18.2	20.7	20.7
	Advantageous	21	63.6	72.4	93.1
	Not necessary	2	6.1	6.9	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Knowledge of hospitality industry through job shadowing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	7	21.2	25.9	25.9
	Advantageous	18	54.5	66.7	92.6
	Not necessary	2	6.1	7.4	100.0
	Total	27	81.8	100.0	
Missing	System	6	18.2		
Total		33	100.0		

Work experience in the hospitality industry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Mandatory	4	12.1	18.2	18.2
	Advantageous	16	48.5	72.7	90.9
	Not necessary	2	6.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	22	66.7	100.0	
Missing	System	11	33.3		
Total		33	100.0		

Q11.10 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		30	90.9	90.9	90.9
	In an interview setting, people don't always reflect themselves, either because of nerves or because they think pretending to be better than what they are will get them in. Appearance does matter. I know I ticked not necessary because I hate uniforms. A person that does not have to look a certain way for an interview will wear what they feel is appropriate. Personally I think this is better as it shows the way they carry themselves and can shed a lot of light on their personality.	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	Personal outcome achievements.	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	Reasons why they would be interested in working in the industry.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

Respondents listed the following as mandatory aspects and therefore having the most impact on their decision to either accept or reject a candidate during the interview process:

- 86.2% - Prompt time keeping
- 82.8% - Well groomed
- 82.8% - Friendliness
- 79.3% - Positive body language
- 72.4% - Good verbal communication
- 65.5% - Professionally dressed
- 25.9% - Knowledge of hospitality industry through job shadowing
- 20.7% - Theoretical knowledge of the industry through research
- 18.2% - Work experience in the hospitality industry

Hospitality professionals rated prompt time keeping, good grooming, friendliness, positive body language, good verbal communication and being professionally dressed among the highest in the aspects of the candidates that would have the most impact on their decision to either accept or reject them during an interview. Aspects such as knowledge of the hospitality industry through job shadowing, theoretical knowledge of the industry through research and work experience in the hospitality industry scored the lowest. The researcher therefore concludes that hoteliers are more concerned about the candidate's attitude than his or her experience or theoretical knowledge of the industry.

4.6.3.12 Question 12- Do you think it is necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out whether the hospitality industry thought it was necessary to participate in the selection of students wanting to pursue a career in the hospitality industry. If most of the participants responded positively to this question, it could possibly suggest willingness on the part of hoteliers to participate in the student selection process which could be used as a suggestion in order to improve the process. The answers to this question are given in Table 4.6.3.12.

Table 4.6.3.12: Opinion of industry professionals

Q12.Explain

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		11	33.3	33.3	33.3
	At the end, it is still a major at University; however, if the company in the industry is willing to sponsor the students, then yes, they should have to select their own candidates.	1	3.0	3.0	36.4
	Because they know what to look for in a candidate.	1	3.0	3.0	39.4
	Definitely as they are the ones that will be employing them at the end of the day!	1	3.0	3.0	42.4
	Firstly they don't care that much and it's up to the institution to rear these young minds to become future leaders, or at least have an opinion one day.	1	3.0	3.0	45.5
	I don't think it should be mandatory but it could be advantageous to include them.	1	3.0	3.0	48.5
	I think the lecturers who will be in the selection process are trained enough to make their decisions on their own about student selection.	1	3.0	3.0	51.5
	Industry professionals would have physically worked in the industry and would know what the expectations of this industry are. They would be able to make a proper selection of candidates.	1	3.0	3.0	54.5
	Industry professionals know what type of employee they would want to hire.	1	3.0	3.0	57.6
	Industry tells us what they are looking for and the type of requirement changes constantly.	1	3.0	3.0	60.6
	It allows them to choose suitable candidates so the level of trainees is raised.	1	3.0	3.0	63.6

It gives industry professionals insight into the applicant's desire to enter the industry.	1	3.0	3.0	66.7
It is a safeguard that ensures that the selection process stays tied to the active industry rather than going down a purely academic road.	1	3.0	3.0	69.7
Make it more authentic.	1	3.0	3.0	72.7
No I don't think this is necessary as it is sometimes difficult to judge when you don't know the candidates or what they are planning to achieve from their studies. Once their studies are completed or they have some work experience often their outlooks will change from when they first started studying.	1	3.0	3.0	75.8
Not necessary. The industry professionals can assist any students with a positive attitude who want to achieve their goals in the industry to become a reality.	1	3.0	3.0	78.8
So that they can see if the students will be making the right decision when they choose the hospitality industry.	1	3.0	3.0	81.8
The prospective student requires exposure and time to develop into a professional hotelier. In an ideal situation, it should not be judged before his/her introduction to the industry event starts.	1	3.0	3.0	84.8
Their standards may be too high.	1	3.0	3.0	87.9
These are the subject experts and an informative interaction with them will be beneficial to the students.	1	3.0	3.0	90.9
They have a better understanding about who'll make it into industry and stay or make a difference.	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
They know best what skills are required and understand why.	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
They would be able to ask questions based on how much passion the candidate has for the industry. They may also ask the candidate questions about what it is like working in the industry so they know what they are getting themselves into.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	33	100.0	100.0	

A total of 59.4% of the industry professionals thought it was necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process, while 40.6% disagreed.

4.6.3.13 Question 13 - Does your institution offer any financial aid to students applying for courses in the hospitality industry?

Rationale for the question

An article by Karen Macgregor (2007) and the International Education Association of South Africa (2012:15) as well as (Letseka, Cosser, Breier & Vissr, 2010:62) reported that financial constraints were an important factor contributing towards students dropping out of courses. The researcher wanted to find out if the hospitality industry offered any financial aid to students pursuing a career in hospitality. The answers are given in Table 4.6.3.13.

Table 4.6.3.13: Offer of financial aid

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Yes	21	63.6	65.6	65.6
	No	11	33.3	34.4	100.0
	Total	32	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.0		
Total		33	100.0		

A total of 65.6% of the respondents worked for institutions that offered financial aid to students applying for courses in the hospitality industry, versus 34.4% that did not.

4.6.3.14 Question 14 - If you answered 'yes' to question 13, please specify the type of financial aid offered by your institution.

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to know what type of financial aid was offered by the hospitality industry. Hospitality establishments that offer financial aid to students are usually more willing to be involved in the student selection process. The results are shown in Table 4.6.3.14.

Table 4.6.3.14: Type of financial aid offered

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Bursary	13	39.4	56.5	56.5
	Scholarship	2	6.1	8.7	65.2
	Traineeship	6	18.2	26.1	91.3
	Not applicable	2	6.1	8.7	100.0
	Total	23	69.7	100.0	
Missing	System	10	30.3		
Total		33	100.0		

Q14.Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Previous total	30	90.9	90.9	90.9
	Our institution offers scholarships, traineeships and loans as well.	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	Traineeships as well.	2	6.1	6.1	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The percentage of institutions offering different types of financial aid was as follows:

- 56.5% offered bursaries
- 26.1% offered traineeships
- 8.7% offered scholarship
- 8.7% did not offer any financial aid (not applicable)

Some institutions also offered students loans.

4.6.3.15 Question 1 5- Which students do you accept for work experience?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out if the hospitality industry encourages students, in high school and tertiary institutions, to gain experience in their establishments. The answers are given in Table 4.6.3.15.

Table 4.6.3.15: Work experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	High school students	2	6.1	6.5	6.5
	Tertiary students	9	27.3	29.0	35.5
	Both high school and tertiary	16	48.5	51.6	87.1
	None	4	12.1	12.9	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

The findings were as follows:

- 51.6% of institutions accepted students from both high school and tertiary institutions
- 29% of institutions accepted students only from tertiary institutions
- 6.5% of institutions accepted only high school students
- 12.9% of institutions did not accept any students for work experience

4.6.3.16 Question 16 - What has been your experience with trainees?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to find out the reasons why hospitality professionals would accept or deny students gaining work experience at their establishments. The answers are given in Table 4.6.3.16.

Table 4.6.3.16: Trainees

Trainees lack knowledge and skill and are therefore unsuitable to deal with paying guests

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	9.1	10.7	10.7
	Disagree	19	57.6	67.9	78.6
	Agree	3	9.1	10.7	89.3
	Strongly agree	3	9.1	10.7	100.0
	Total	28	84.8	100.0	
Missing	System	5	15.2		
Total		33	100.0		

Trainees are prepared for the hospitality industry through their time spent in industry during traineeship

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Disagree	3	9.1	10.3	10.3
	Agree	17	51.5	58.6	69.0
	Strongly agree	9	27.3	31.0	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Trainees are unreliable and lack the commitment required for success in the industry

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	5	15.2	17.2	17.2
	Disagree	15	45.5	51.7	69.0
	Agree	8	24.2	27.6	96.6
	Strongly agree	1	3.0	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	4	12.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Q16.4 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		30	90.9	90.9	90.9
	Need to pay more attention to the "future leaders".	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	Some students lack knowledge and skills but not all, what they don't know we teach them if they want to learn. Some students are unreliable but not all	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	Trainees are young and impressionable, with time you become who you are and are proud of your work. It's a learning curve everyone goes though I guess but trainees do need to be taught properly.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The hospitality industry seems to support trainees based on the results listed in Table 4.6.3.16.

4.6.3.17 Question 17 - What do you think hospitality training institutions can do in the student selection process to reduce the amount of student dropouts?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to gain suggestions from the hospitality industry on ways of improving the student selection process. The responses are shown in Table 4.6.3.17.

Table 4.6.3.17: Reducing students drop-outs

Conduct interviews with all students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Not sure	2	6.1	6.3	6.3
	Agree	6	18.2	18.8	25.0
	Strongly agree	24	72.7	75.0	100.0
	Total	32	97.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.0		
Total		33	100.0		

Raise the academic requirements

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	3.0	3.2	3.2
	Disagree	5	15.2	16.1	19.4
	Not sure	8	24.2	25.8	45.2
	Agree	12	36.4	38.7	83.9
	Strongly agree	5	15.2	16.1	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Insist on industry related work experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	9.1	9.7	9.7
	Disagree	9	27.3	29.0	38.7
	Not sure	3	9.1	9.7	48.4
	Agree	10	30.3	32.3	80.6
	Strongly agree	6	18.2	19.4	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Conduct personality tests to determine industry suitability

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Disagree	2	6.1	6.5	6.5
	Not sure	2	6.1	6.5	12.9
	Agree	18	54.5	58.1	71.0
	Strongly agree	9	27.3	29.0	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Q17.5 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid		32	97.0	97.0	97.0
	It's really about the money because a drop-out still pays the fees to the institutions even if they did not finish their studies.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

In response to the statement that interviews should be conducted with all the students,

- 18.8% agreed, 75% strongly agreed and 6.3% were not sure. None disagreed.

Regarding raising the academic requirements,

- 3.2% strongly disagreed, 16.1% disagreed, 38.7% agreed, 16.1% strongly agreed and 25.8% were not sure.

In relation to insisting on industry-related work experience,

- 9.7% strongly disagreed, 29% disagreed, 32.3% agreed, 19.4% strongly agreed and 9.7% were not sure.

As far as conducting personality tests to determine industry suitability was concerned,

- 6.5% disagreed, 58.1% agreed, 29% strongly agreed and 6.5% were not sure.

Note that a total of 75% of the respondents were strongly in favour of interviews being conducted as part of the student selection process.

4.6.3.18 Question 18 - What do you think the hospitality industry can do to assist hotel schools in reducing the student drop-out rate?

Rationale for the question

The researcher wanted to get suggestions from the hospitality industry on ways that they could assist hotel schools in reducing the student drop-out rate. The responses are presented in Table 4.6.3.18.

Table 4.6.3.18: Industry assistance

Participate in the students selection process

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Disagree	6	18.2	19.4	19.4
	Not sure	3	9.1	9.7	29.0
	Agree	13	39.4	41.9	71.0
	Strongly agree	9	27.3	29.0	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Offer financial aid to students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	3.0	3.2	3.2
	Disagree	2	6.1	6.5	9.7
	Not sure	6	18.2	19.4	29.0
	Agree	16	48.5	51.6	80.6
	Strongly agree	6	18.2	19.4	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Encourage job shadowing and traineeship at their establishments

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Not sure	2	6.1	6.5	6.5
	Agree	13	39.4	41.9	48.4
	Strongly agree	16	48.5	51.6	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Participate in initiatives designed to inform students about the hospitality industry, e.g. career days, etc.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid	Disagree	1	3.0	3.2	3.2
	Not sure	1	3.0	3.2	6.5
	Agree	15	45.5	48.4	54.8
	Strongly agree	14	42.4	45.2	100.0
	Total	31	93.9	100.0	
Missing	System	2	6.1		
Total		33	100.0		

Q18.5 Other

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative %
Valid		30	90.9	90.9	90.9
	It would be great that hotels do a buddy system with Hotel Schools, start investing time with the students and benefit from the returns of good managers for the future.	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
	Need to set the bar standards	1	3.0	3.0	97.0
	There is a lack of team spirit at hotel schools (sports teams, drama clubs, student bodies, etc.) Hotel schools are not student orientated.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

The industry professional rated the options as follows:

Regarding participating in the student selection process,

- 19.4% disagreed, 41.9% agreed, 29% strongly agreed and 9.7% were not sure.

Relating to offering financial aid to students,

- 3.2% strongly disagreed, 6.5% disagreed, 51.6% agreed, 19.4% strongly agreed and 19.4% were not sure.

On encouraging job shadowing and traineeship at their establishments,

- 41.9% agreed, 51.6% strongly agreed and 6.5% were not sure.

Finally, regarding participation in initiatives designed to inform students about the hospitality industry, e.g. career days etc.,

- 3.2% disagreed, 48.4% agreed, 45.2% strongly agreed and 3.2% were not sure.

4.6.3.19 Question 19 - Please feel free to add in any other comments you feel are useful to this study.

Rationale for the request

The researcher ended the questionnaire with an open-ended question to allow hospitality professionals the opportunity to make suggestions or recommendation that could be useful to the study in relation to aspects not covered in the questions. The suggestions are presented in Table 4.6.3.19.

Table 4.6.3.19: Additional comments

Q19 Comments

	Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Previous total	21	63.6	63.6	63.6
A very informative study. Looking forward to seeing the results.	1	3.0	3.0	66.7
Valid I feel the scope of what institutions offer is very limited for students. Although you are studying hospitality, it doesn't necessarily mean you must work in a hotel, be a chef or become a general manager. I think the perceptions of the industry are outdated and that hospitality is far more than "yes sir, no sir, three bags full sir" ideology people have painted it to be. I studied cheffing and always wanted to be a food stylist and work for magazines and write articles. There was no way for me to enter this industry through my institution so I made my own plan. Even lecturers told me to rethink this career path as it is hard to enter that realm. How can you not be able to assist students who share a dream out of your capacity? Once again, outdated ideas. This needs to change.	1	3.0	3.0	69.7

I think a traineeship is a very good qualification to have because you are gaining the knowledge as well as the necessary experience needed to succeed in this industry.	1	3.0	3.0	72.7
It is important to introduce scholarships in the hospitality industry so that students will be motivated to complete their studies up to PhD level. Hospitality should be introduced in schools from grade eight to twelve.	1	3.0	3.0	75.8
Many students that come to us have little knowledge of the technical side, e.g. Opera and Micros systems are widely used systems that could be taught at learning institutions. Many students do not seem interested and are only here to complete their course. They feel they chose the wrong industry but they better finish what they started and get the qualification. Hotels could embark on site visits of learning institutions to discuss the industry.	1	3.0	3.0	78.8
Some students have the academic knowledge but cannot cope under pressure, and most can cope.	1	3.0	3.0	81.8
Television has created this big hype around the top positions in industry; however they have not shown the work that goes into being successful.	1	3.0	3.0	84.8
The industry should conduct a proper study into why we are not maintaining hotel school students. Students straight from school should do one year practical in hotels before completing the 3-year diploma. Also the industry is deemed with the negative of operation stresses and working hours. The new generation don't believe in working long hours. Once done with hotel school, getting from one position to another is also limited as most management & senior positions are filled with older people.	1	3.0	3.0	87.9
The reason that I rate informing of students about the hospitality so low is that the hospitality industry is completely different on the inside to how it looks on the outside. I believe that it is nearly impossible to accurately communicate that across. It looks far more glamorous than it is. I suspect that career day participation will only result in a large pool of unsuitable students rather than the desired increase in suitable students.	1	3.0	3.0	90.9
There is a lack of team spirit at hotel schools (sports teams, drama clubs, student bodies, etc.). Hotel schools are not student orientated.	1	3.0	3.0	93.9
Unfortunately the hotel schools, just like other learning institutions of learning, have got their challenges. Some students only realise after their studies have started that this is not what they wanted. Probably, they only enrolled due to external influences (e.g. friends).	1	3.0	3.0	97.0

	Updating the learning curriculum to stay up to date. More involvement towards students.	1	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	33	100.0	100.0	

In summary, the hospitality industry professionals commented that hotel schools need to:

- increase the scope of what they offer
- teach students the technical skills required in the industry, e.g. Opera and Micros system
- balance the academic knowledge and the practical training
- ensure that students have a more realistic picture of what the hospitality industry is about
- update the learning curriculum to stay up to date with the industry

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher discussed how the data was collected and interpreted from the questionnaires and data-bases. A breakdown was given of each question that was asked, including the rationale for the question. Tables were displayed reflecting the feedback received from the respondents, as well as a detailed explanation of the findings.

The next chapter provides a record of the interviews conducted with the professionals involved in the student selection process at both institutions. The information derived from the IHS and the CTHS data-bases regarding the student drop-out rate is included.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher discussed how the data was collected and interpreted from the questionnaires and data bases. An analysis was provided for each question including the rationale for the question. Tables were displayed reflecting the feedback received from the respondents including a detailed explanation of the findings.

This chapter provides an analysis of the interviews that were conducted with professionals at the two hotel schools. Information on the student dropout rate derived from both school's formal data-bases is also included. The data derived from the interviews and formal data-bases were then used to make recommendations on how the student selection process can be improved, based on the findings. The real value of interviews lies in the depth of information and detail that can be secured (Blumberg, et al, 2005:281). The researcher gained valuable information from the interviews that were conducted with the professionals from the two hotel schools. The interviews provided her with a better perspective of the entry requirements of the two institutions.

5.2 Population and sample

The target population was students studying Hospitality Management courses at diploma level in Cape Town. The target sample used for this research was students from the International Hotel School (IHS) and the Cape Town Hotel School (CTHS) enrolled in Hospitality Management courses at NQF level 6. The IHS is a private institution, while the CTHS is a public institution. The IHS had a total of 60 first- and second-year students. The CTHS on the other hand had 220 first and second year students. The third year students from both institutions were not included in this study as they were in the industry completing their experiential learning programme. A total of 148 students from both institutions participated and completed the questionnaires.

Questionnaires were also emailed to 96 hospitality industry managers within Cape Town. A total of 35 completed questionnaires were returned after a reminder e-mail was sent two weeks after the first e-mail and several follow-up phone calls had been made to the hoteliers in an effort to collect more questionnaires. Interviews were conducted with the senior lecturer and student placement co-ordinator from the CTHS. The sales co-ordinator from IHS was also interviewed.

Interviews were conducted with four academics who are involved in the student selection process; two from IHS and two from the CTHS. The details of the interviews are recorded in the following section.

5.3 Analysis of the interviews

What follows, is a record of the interviews that were conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process at the IHS and the CTHS. The questions were stated and then the responses of the interviewees were recorded.

5.3.1 Interview 1

The first interview was conducted with a senior lecturer of the Cape Town Hotel School.

1. What has been the drop-out rate for 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-year hospitality students over the past three years (average for each class each year)?

It's in two stages. One is those that leave before the year is finished and there are those that leave after the 1st year of study. During the year, take 2011 for example, about five left during the year. Then there were those that did not pass academically which was another two to three students. The percentage is very small.

2. Do you think that students fully understand the hospitality industry and the career path they have chosen when they enrol for a course in hospitality management?

I think most of them understand what the industry is about. One or two of them might want to swap from the Food and Beverage Programme to the Accommodation or Professional Cookery Programme, but a good 90% understand what the industry is about.

3. What do your current entry requirements consist of?

For 2011 the student is assessed academically. They must have a Matric qualification with above 50% in English and above 50% in Maths Literacy and an overall aggregate of over 50%. Of huge benefit are subjects such as Accountancy, Economics, Business Economics, Consumer Science, Hospitality Studies, Tourism and Travel Studies, and Life Science, which was formerly known as Biology, would be useful. If they have the grade 12 qualification and meet the following criteria, the student is accepted. If they produce their grade 11 results, the student is provisionally accepted with the understanding that they are required to produce their grade 12 qualification before they can be officially accepted.

The requirements are purely academic. Applicants are required to submit an application form, Matric results and identification document.

If a CV is produced which shows industry work experience, it is not used as a criterion as to whether or not to accept a student, but is a good indicator as to whether or not the individual has chosen the right career.

4. Do you think the current entry requirements used by your establishment are adequate for identifying candidates that will most likely succeed in the course and industry?

The entry requirements are academic and we are looking to see whether the academic requirements which have been set are good indicators of whether they will academically succeed here at the hotel school. Whether or not that academic requirement will make them successful in industry, time will tell.

The academic requirements are sufficient. I would personally like to see the option of either Maths Literacy or Accountancy as a subject, because basically they will be going into a industry so accountancy knowledge and skills will be a huge advantage to help the students run their departments and understand the financial side of their departments.

5. Which of the following do you think should form part of the application documents requirements for entry level students? Please classify as mandatory, advantageous or not necessary.

Matric certificate – mandatory

Hand-written motivation letter stating why they want to pursue a career in the hospitality industry – advantageous

CV including industry-related work experience and references – advantageous

Industry-related work experience - advantageous

Job shadowing - advantageous

6. What do you think should form part of the academic entry requirements for hospitality management studies and at what competency level given as a percentage?

I think the current academic entry requirements are sufficient. I personally would like to see an option of either Maths Literacy or Accounting as a subject and requirement at 50%. Principally the students are going into an industry and having accountancy knowledge and skills will be a big advantage for them in the future to run their departments and to understand the financial side of their departments. So then personally, I would like to see that come in.

7. What characteristics do you think are required to succeed in the hospitality industry?

To succeed in industry I think a candidate would need to have a good level of patience, a good level of tenacity, display a high level of enthusiasm and energy. I think they would need to be outgoing and I think they would also need to have the characteristic of wanting to make their guest happy and enjoy the experience.

8. Do you think that students should be chosen based on their application requirements or should there be a selection process which involves interviews or personality testing, general knowledge industry-related tests, etc., considering that hospitality is a service industry?

I think the criteria for choosing students to come and study here, the academic requirements are measurable; it is in the numbers and stats. The other characteristics that I mentioned earlier such as enthusiasm and patience, are very difficult to quantify and measure, therefore making it a fairly subjective opinion and therefore not a fair criterion. Our objective here at the school is to train people with the necessary skills and abilities to go into junior supervisory positions in industry. If we achieve that then we've achieved our objectives and if at the same time we're able to instil those additional characteristics in an individual, then that proves valid/valuable in the industry. It's very difficult to measure patience and enthusiasm, because what criteria do you use for it to be fair and consistent for everyone across the board? It's very difficult. An interview process will give us an indication of the likelihood of them having these attributes, but I don't think the interview process should be used as criterion for students not to be accepted to come and study here because I think those attributes can be learnt.

9. What is the most effective way of testing a student's suitability for the industry during the selection process?

This question was not asked because a comprehensive answer was given in the previous question.

10. Do you think it is necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process? Please substantiate your answer.

I don't think it is necessary but I think it would be of value.

11. Do you think a Matric certificate provides sufficient evidence of an applicant's suitability for the hospitality industry? Please substantiate your answer.

There are students that achieve between 58 and 68% aggregate that are fantastic performers in industry.

We have had students who are distinction students that are average performers in industry. Academic performance is not a prerequisite for success in the industry, but a good indicator of the likelihood of student success in the industry.

12. What do you find challenging about the students application and selection process?

No difficulties in the current process because it's purely academic based on results so if you have achieved those results then you are accepted and if you do not have them you cannot be accepted. There are a few cases when students from other countries apply and their school results are difficult to interpret. That can also be dealt with because all applications need to go through and get a SAQA accreditation and they are able to tell whether the student has met the requirements or whether they have not.

13. What do you think can be done to improve the current selection process?

I don't think that the current system needs any improvement. The current system works.

14. What reasons do you commonly find as mainly contributing to students dropping out of courses?

Those that have dropped out have either dropped out because of finance, medical reasons, or they have come to realise that this is not what they thought the studies would be about.

15. What do you think academic institutions can do in the selection process to ensure that students are fully aware of what the hospitality industry is about and the career path to which it leads before they are enrolled for a hospitality course?

For 2012 our school has adopted a change in that all students who are accepted will be called in for a discussion to discuss their opinion of what the study is going to be about and what the industry is about, so should there be any misunderstanding we can deal with it at that time. Students that are able to attend the discussion will be given an opportunity to share their thoughts on the industry. We can then correct any misconceptions and help them make a better decision if necessary. Students that are not able to attend must submit a letter substantiating why they want to join this industry and what their experience has been of the industry and that they are sure that this is what they want to do. It will be a discussion and will not be used as a criterion to accept or to reject students.

16. Would you like to make any other comments?

The selection process that we currently use works because we want to be sure that the students who come to study here are going to succeed academically.

I think anything less than that, like to accept a student that has not met the standard, the probability of them passing in the time period is greatly reduced and to expect the sponsors to pay something in the region of R65 000.00 with a strong possibility that academically they will not be able to make it is not great. I think the academic requirements at the moment are very reasonable.

5.3.2 Interview 2

The second interview was conducted with the student placement officer of the Cape Town Hotel School.

1. What has been the drop-out rate for 1st-, second- and third-year hospitality students over the past three years (average for each class each year)?

I definitely do not have a hard and fast percentage, but if I look at how many students drop out from placement, it's a very small number. I would say about three out of a batch and a batch is normally about 120 so you can work that out.

2. Do you think that students fully understand the hospitality industry and the career path they have chosen when they enrol for a course in hospitality management?

No, students do not have a good idea.

3. What do your current entry requirements consist of?

A Matric certificate, with a preference of Maths and Accounting as a subject is required. It is not compulsory but it is a preference.

4. Do you think the current entry requirements used by your establishment are adequate for identifying candidates that will most likely succeed in the course and industry? Please substantiate your answer.

No, I think Maths and Accounting are important, but I do think you need a face-to-face interview with the prospective student. The whole industry is about communication and interaction and people skills, and you could not possibly know if this is going to work if you have not met the student.

5. Which of the following do you think should form part of the application documents requirements for entry level students? Please classify as mandatory, advantageous or not necessary.

Matric certificate – mandatory

Hand-written motivation letter stating why they want to pursue a career in the hospitality industry – advantageous

A motivation letter would definitely give us a better idea of what the student's motivation is for coming here, but I do not think you could exclusively select someone based on that. I think it would just be used as an added document.

CV including industry-related work experience and references – not necessary

At this stage a CV will not help as they can be falsified. I think maybe a testimonial from a part time employer would be handy, or a character reference; it doesn't have to be a full CV.

Industry related work experience – not necessary

6. What do you think should form part of the academic entry requirements for hospitality management studies and at what competency level given as a percentage?

Maths – 50%

English – 50%

Accounting – 60%

Other subjects such as Hospitality Studies and the like would be advantageous. I don't think they should be made compulsory though, because not all schools offer these subjects.

7. What characteristics do you think are required to succeed in the hospitality industry?

Good communication skills, friendliness and a positive attitude are required, anything else can be taught.

8. Do you think that students should be chosen based on their application documents or should there be a selection process which involves interviews or personality testing, general knowledge industry related tests, etc. considering that hospitality is a service industry?

I definitely think a face-to-face interview and industry-related work experience are necessary.

9. What is the most effective way of testing these characteristics during the selection process?

I think an interview process would help.

10. Do you think it is necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process? Please substantiate your answer.

It may not be necessary but would definitely be advantageous. We see students from a learner-centred side, whereas they see them as potential staff in their hotels, so yes I think it would help.

11. Do you think a Matric certificate provides sufficient evidence of an applicant's suitability for the hospitality industry? Please substantiate your answer.

This question was not asked because an explanation was already given in a previous question.

12. What do you find challenging about the students application and selection process?

It's hard because with selection you could have a very nervous student and you could perhaps not see the full potential sitting there because they have not developed it yet. I think the hardest part is choosing the wrong person.

13. What do you think can be done to improve the current selection process?

Well, the current selection process does not include conducting interviews so I would recommend it. It will also give us the opportunity to explain to the candidate what the course is about so they have the opportunity to with-draw if it is not quite the picture they had in mind.

14. What reasons do you commonly find as mainly contributing to students dropping out of courses?

It's not what they expected it to be. They were not prepared for this and it's simply not what they expected it to be. It's not as glamorous as they thought it would be.

15. What do you think academic institutions can do in the selection process to ensure that students are fully aware of what the hospitality industry is about and the career path to which it leads before they are enrolled for a hospitality course?

I think during the selection process there is not a lot you can do because they are not your students yet. I think if they were to become our students then maybe at that point more industry talks and telling them what hospitality is all about. What I would like to see form part of the selection process is insisting that students must have some sort of (industry-related) part-time work experience. It does not have to be for long periods of time, but enough to give them a real feel.

I remember a few years ago before students could apply here they had to have worked in industry for at least a year before they could apply here. I do see the sense in that because sometimes a lot of money is spent on careers that were not meant to be. If they have worked in industry for a year and then still want to pursue a career in hospitality, then so be it.

I understand that with that comes a problem because not everyone has the opportunity to go out and find part-time work, but it would definitely be an advantage. Protea Hotels do that. You are not allowed to join their training school unless you've worked a bit.

5.3.3 Interview 3

The third interview was conducted with the sales co-ordinator of the International Hotel School.

1. What has been the drop-out rate for 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-year hospitality students over the past three years (average for each class each year)?

It's difficult to say because every year it's a different scenario depending on the intake. The courses are designed that the students spend fifty percent of the time in academics and fifty percent of the time doing their practical. How this works is they spend three months in classes and three months in industry throughout the year, so it's quite early in the year and quite evident after the first practical who the potential drop-outs are, which is about after the first three months. I cannot give you exact statistics but it's possibly approximately 10%.

2. Do you think that students fully understand the hospitality industry and the career path they have chosen when they enrol for a course in hospitality management?

We have a very extensive interview and assessment programme that we do with students during the selection process whereby they do three assessments, which are a language assessment, numeracy assessment and an observation assessment. The observation assessment is basically to see whether they are actually observant of the finer details. The language assessment is a comprehension assessment based on the industry. We have two, one for the chefs and one for hotel operations or hospitality based on a scenario out of a hotel and which lasts about one and a half hours. After that there is a 20 to 25 minute session that the students have with me where I ask them a whole list of questions about the industry, about themselves and any prior hospitality-related work experience that they have. This also helps us at the beginning of the year to know whether to either place the students in group A or group B. During the interview process if they do not have any industry-related work experience, we place them in group B, while the students that have work experience go into group A. So group A will go out into the industry first and group B will stay behind and attend classes. This gives us a chance to nurture them a little bit as to what to expect when they go out into industry. Otherwise it is too much of a culture shock and that is when you get more drop-outs. We pretty much groom them for the first three months and prepare them for hotel operations.

We prepare them for what to expect in industry, for example public holiday and shift work, etc. So yes, by the end of this process students understand the hospitality industry and the career path they have chosen by the time they start the course.

3. What does your current entry requirements consist of?

The three-year diploma requirement is a Matric certificate and then we work on an APS (Application Performance Score) scoring system, with the scoring being 25 points. We take a combination because we will not just accept students because they excel in their tests and in their school results but then when I actually do the interview I pick up that you are not an outspoken person and you are a very family-orientated person and therefore weekend work would be an issue. We then have another meeting which the student attends with their parents and we go through all the finer details before we give students an acceptance letter. Students that barely cut the line in terms of academics will be given an acceptance letter with a clause that states that should the student need additional help beyond what the lecturer is able to give in terms of extra classes, we give the students a list of people that give private tuition after hours. It's an external process where we give students the contact details and they must privately contact the providers. This will be at the student's expense. Students must be over 18, as they will be working with alcohol and hotels are not willing to deal with the legal issues of having under-aged students working in their establishments. The students are also required to have medical aid. We are not so strict with local students, but international students must definitely have medical aid. This is because some hotels are not willing to take on the responsibility of paying students' medical expenses should they get injured on duty because they are not employed and therefore cannot claim for injury on duty according to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

4. Do you think the current entry requirements used by your establishment are adequate for identifying candidates that will most likely succeed in the course and industry? Please substantiate your answer.

It's difficult to say because sometimes you get a student that is brilliant in everything from academics to personality and after a year the student decides that, although they have enjoyed the year, they do not feel that the industry is for them. So no, I don't really think that there is anything in place or will ever be in place that will allow you to assess if the person will be suitable for the industry or how the career path will end. Our system is at least able to eradicate any problems that are evident in the student's school results, language or any of those things.

5. Which of the following do you think should form part of the application documents requirements for entry level students? Please classify as mandatory, advantageous or not necessary.

Matric certificate – mandatory

Hand-written motivation letter stating why they want to pursue a career in the hospitality industry – advantageous

CV including industry-related work experience and references – advantageous

Industry-related work experience – advantageous

Job shadowing – advantageous

All industry-related work experience is highly advantageous, especially for our traineeship programme, because we have industry professionals that sit on the panel during the assessment process and hand select who they want to work in their hotels by looking at things like work experience, personality, attitude, and so forth. Some students are given an acceptance letter onto the traineeship programme without work experience, but they are told in November that they must have at least two months of work experience by the time they start the programme in February of the following year. The students are given the contact details of hotels where they can get work experience and are expected to bring us a letter by the time they start the course stating where they have worked.

6. What do you think should form part of the academic entry requirements for hospitality management studies at what competency level given as a percentage?

No real specific subjects are required, but subjects that would be a huge advantage are Accounting, any hospitality-related subject like Consumer Science, Home Economics, and Business Economics is definitely an advantage. For international students we do have guidelines as to what we require from them, for example they require five A-level (advanced level) passes and five O-level (ordinary level) passes.

7. What characteristics do you think are required to succeed in hospitality?

First of all they need to be outgoing; this is one of those industries whereby you are going to be working with various types of people from different backgrounds and from different walks of life. So we look for someone who is neutral, focused, knows what they want, and does not have issues in life with other people with regards to race, etc. You quickly pick up in the interview whether they have big dreams of what they want to do in comparison to someone who sits in front of me and I have to ask all the questions. We try to be responsible in our selection. As a private institution we are not money grabbers so if we feel that you are not suitable for the course we are not just going to accept you for the fact of getting in your money because a drop-out student drops our success rate so we try to be responsible in that regard.

8. Do you think that students should be chosen based on their application requirements or should there be a selection process which involves interviews or personality testing, general knowledge industry-related tests, etc., considering that hospitality is a service industry?

I do not think that students can be chosen based solely on academic requirements. This industry requires you to work with people every day, so if you are not a peoples person this job is going to become challenging for you in terms of the fact that you are going to become irritated because you deal with people on a daily basis from all walks of life. So it's definitely very important that you cannot accept somebody based solely on their academic achievements. Some people are a combination where they have a great personality but they do not have good academic results, while other people have great school results but have no personality. It's very difficult to say that you are suitable because you have a good Matric certificate. You definitely need to have some set criteria of what you are going to look at. That is why we have various programmes in place because we will never show anyone away from the school. We also have a START (Skills, Task & Result Training) programme for those students with poor school results or who are not sure whether they will be suitable in terms of personality to prepare them for industry. This is a six month programme which you complete before you go into the three year programme if you pass and want to continue. We only do not accept students without a Matric certificate for the three-year diploma course.

9. What is the most effective way of testing a student's suitability for the industry during the selection process?

Our selection process requires that students complete an interview form that asks every industry-related question you can think of, for example "do you know that you will be working shifts, weekends and public holidays?"; it states the uniform requirements, etc. Students need to tick 'yes' or 'no'. This form is then checked and signed off by the student and initialled next to everything that they marked 'no' stating that I have explained it to them. This form goes on their file, stating that everything has been explained and they cannot at a later stage claim they never knew. This is something that we have perfected over a number of years of incidences. This forms part of the interview process at application level and we find it quite effective.

10. Do you think it is necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process? Please substantiate your answer.

It is definitely advantageous.

11. Do you think a Matric certificate provides sufficient evidence of an applicant's suitability for the hospitality industry? Please substantiate your answer.

No. Students have to undergo an interview process so that we can see which will be the best option for them in terms of all the programmes we provide.

12. What do you find challenging about the students application and selection process?

I don't really think that there is anything challenging. I sometimes think that there is a bit of confusion between all the different programmes and it's a challenge for the student to decide which would be the most suitable programme for them. Sometimes students select the wrong programme because they try to just get a qualification behind their name in the shortest possible time and get out. Sometimes maybe dealing with foreign students is a new experience. The interview process is a bit more lengthy in terms of the fact that we have a policy where I can have a telephonic interview with students, but I also have to Skype them so I can actually see them on Skype and see their passport to ensure that the person that is applying for the course is the person I am interviewing. It's also difficult to get a qualified assessor on that side to oversee the assessment. It becomes a lengthy process which can become straining. The assessment of local students, on the other hand, takes for to five days, followed by a two-week cooling period where you can go home and decide if this is really what you want to do, subject to a non-refundable deposit of R5 000.00, and then you are on our books. You get a registration number and then we will contact you closer to the time regarding the finer details.

13. What do you think can be done to improve the current selection process?

Nothing, I think the process is quite extensive and covers all aspects.

14. What reasons do you commonly find as mainly contributing to students dropping out of courses?

It's either that they made the wrong choice. The career path that they chose is not one hundred percent what they wanted. I would say that because students do not know what happens behind the scenes, it's all glamorised and as soon as they go on their first practical, then we get our first drop-outs. Some students drop out because of financial constraints. Because we are a private institution there is no real bursary as such. The moral of the story is that if they cannot afford it or cannot pay then they cannot come to school. Unless there is some sort of arrangement made prior or during whatever financial situation they find themselves in, arrangements can be made with our head office.

15. What do you think academic institutions can do in the selection process to ensure that students are fully aware of what the hospitality industry is about and the career path to which it leads before they are enrolled for a hospitality course?

Nothing, because our selection process involves an interview and an extensive interview form which covers everything the student needs to know about the course and industry which is effective and ensures students are well informed.

16. Would you like to make any other comments?

No, I think we have covered everything.

5.3.4 Interview 4

The fourth interview was conducted with the principal of the International Hotel School.

1. What has been the drop-out rate for 1st-, 2nd- and 3rd-year hospitality students over the past three years (average for each class each year)?

It varies from course to course, but with our full-time students it's between 20% and 30%. It's significant and definitely way higher than I would like it to be.

2. Why do you think the drop-out rate is at the rate that it is?

We have done some research. We keep records when people leave. There is a compulsory exit interview that we do with them. It's always very difficult to tell how honest they are being. I think people are less honest when it comes to finances. I suspect that finances are a bigger reason than one would imagine. Probably one of the biggest things though is industry fit. Probably 50% said that the industry is not for them. Either they had an artificial idea of how glamorous the industry would be, so they had no real understanding of just how tough it would be, or it just was way tougher than they had expected. The time spent in the kitchen by managers (management students) is a huge issue. They spend 10 weeks in the kitchen, which is a long time. We are revisiting that. My personal feeling is that the management students need to spend a few weeks in the kitchen so they have an understanding of what's goes on and the impact on the rest of the operations, but 10 weeks is too long. In summary, there are a variety of reasons why students drop out but finances and industry fit are most significant.

3. Do you think that students fully understand the hospitality industry and the career path they have chosen when they enrol for a course in hospitality management?

Not all of them.

4. What do your current entry requirements consist of?

We require a Matric or Senior Certificate with entrance to a diploma programme. We do understand that the certificates can be misleading and that there are a number of different standards. For this reason, part of the selection process includes a literacy and numeracy tests as well as an interview. There are a few tools that we use to try to get some understanding of their industry fit. For example there is a questionnaire exercise that they have to complete which is then probed in the interview.

5. Do you think the current entry requirements used by your establishment are adequate for identifying candidates that will most likely succeed in the course and industry?

Yes.

6. What documents do you think should form part of the application requirements for entry level students?

A Matric certificate with entrance to a diploma programme, a motivation letter/written submission stating why they want to study hospitality, there is also a written test which tests their ability to communicate, which is so important when it comes to your ability to study. These documents can then be probed during the interview process. There are only a few questions that need to be asked to determine whether service is important. You can then get a sense of whether there is a real commitment to service and an insight into what service is actually about.

7. Do you require students to have industry-related work experience when applying to study for a management course in hospitality?

Our full-time students are not required to have any industry-related work experience or job shadowing because it is an academic programme. This is something that we are grappling with because if you look at our traineeship programme, for example, which is a bit like an old-fashioned apprenticeship programme where they go into industry and study while they are working. We are very conscious of the fact that we take someone and drop them into the work-place and it has got to work from the start. With our full-time students we can ease them into the programme, whereas the trainees have to hit the ground running. We have a two-tier interview process with our trainees. One of the things that we do if we are not sure that they fit we encourage and arrange for them to go and work in industry, even if it is for a few weeks to get a sense of the industry. The job shadowing is required with the traineeship, but it's something I would like to introduce with the full-time students as well.

The industry experience is something we feel very strongly about because you cannot really know what the industry is like until you have actually worked in it. We have a bursary competition geared towards Matric learners where a learner can win a three-year bursary to come and study at the school and, for the first time this year, to make sure that we get the right person, we have said that you must have spent at least three days working in industry. Now we don't think three days is a big thing, but the resistance to that has been incredible.

8. What do you think should form part of the academic entry requirements for hospitality management studies and at what competency level given as a percentage?

The subjects are less important than meeting the requirements for entrance to the diploma because that positions them above entrance to a certificate programme. It certainly helps if they have industry-related subjects, but sometimes there is no substitute for passion. We do not want to eliminate people simply based on subject choice, which they sometimes have no say over. If students have hospitality-related subjects or subjects like Maths, Accounting and Business Studies and have some background and understanding of the industry, the decision to accept them is certainly made easier. It will take a little more convincing if they come without those.

9. What do you think of the National Benchmark Tests (NBT) and do you think that they can be used by hotel school to interpret school-leaving certificates?

We use our own internal tests and therefore do not currently use the NBT as part of the selection process. I think standards are always subjective and any effort to put them in place is great. If it is a user-friendly tool then I'll certainly support it.

10. What characteristics do you think are required to succeed in the hospitality industry?

I don't think that there is a particular list of specific characteristics, but we certainly try to access industry fit. Now industry fit is quite difficult with generation Y, so we tend to look at things like an understanding and willingness to work shifts and long hours. We need to get a sense for whether they understand that hospitality never stops. Students need to have a work ethic and service focus that is hard to define, but you can see it and sense it in people. It is almost a culture that has been programmed and I think some people are born with it. For example in Zimbabwe, there is a real culture of hospitality; one of the few things left in the country is the hospitality industry. Some properties may not have the resources, but the service and service excellence is there. It's almost like the service culture is genetically bred in the people so we look for that, i.e. the way you have been brought up and shaped as well as your focus on service.

It helps in hospitality that you have a personality. It's not the 'be-all-and-end-all' because there is room for everyone in the different departments, from front of house to people working in back of house, but, personality goes a long way.

10A. Do you think that students should be chosen based on their application documents or should there be a selection process which involves interviews or personality testing, general knowledge industry-related tests, etc., considering that hospitality is a service industry?

I would not recommend it. I have been involved in a couple of selection processes recently and I think your Matric certificate adds very little value to the selection process. It is simply the first step.

10B. Do you find it challenging to keep the selection process unbiased especially during the interview process when trying to assess industry fit?

Because the industry is so diverse, you have room, for example a computer geek can be involved in marketing while somebody who is really outgoing could be manning the front desk. There is so much variety and as long as the person involved in the selection process understands that there is so much space within the industry, the selection process becomes easier. The hospitality industry is getting broader and broader. It is no longer simply your formal four and five star hotels. It is everything from small boutique hotels to golf estates. There is a huge variety of places where you can place people. You must be willing to understand that there is room for a variety of people. For me the service excellence focus is far more important than personality.

11. Do you think it is necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process? Please substantiate your answer.

We do that for our traineeship programme. There are two levels of interviews for the traineeship programme and the second interview is usually with a panel of normally HR and GM's. That is really a bonus because they are in a position to identify people that have the potentials to make a great success of the industry. I appreciate the wisdom and experience they bring to the table. We don't really do that with our full-time students, except that quite a lot of our staff members have been in industry. We try and take staff with industry experience and teach them how to teach, as opposed to trying to find teachers and teaching them about the industry. You could argue the merits of both ways. Whenever we have a selection process there are people that have spent time in industry. I think having industry professionals would be advantageous, but will not necessarily add a huge amount to what we are already doing. It would also be difficult to get their participation with the volumes of students coming in.

What is very interesting is that I had a meeting with the Hague Hotel School in the Netherlands about a month ago and they were talking about their selection process and how students are involved in the selection process. Even as a foreign student you have to go to the Netherlands for the selection process. You cannot do it remotely. So even if you simply want to apply you have to go to the Netherlands. And part of the selection process involves being assessed, interviewed and spending time with existing students that will decide if you are a good fit. That is something at the back of my mind that we have discussed to figure out how we could do this. Maybe involve a couple of senior students, maybe third-year students who know what the industry is about and with the practical's still fresh in their minds will know what is required. Maybe from a dual perspective, the existing students help decide whether the prospective person is suitable for the industry and also to give them a real idea of what the industry is about.

12. Do you think a Matric certificate provides sufficient evidence of an applicant's suitability for the hospitality industry? Please substantiate your answer.

No, as stated earlier, it's simply the first step.

13. What do you find challenging about the students application and selection process?

I'm the first person to admit that we are a business, and education and business are an uncomfortable mix. If somebody is border line we will still take them and give them a chance which is not academically unsound in terms of giving people an opportunity. My background is education and there have been many times when I thought that some people would not make it and I was proven wrong, and there have been times when I thought some people would cruise through a course and they just did not make it. We tend to give chances rather than not. The other complicating fact is that we have a large amount of international students, particularly from SADC countries. If we recognise their qualification and we know that they are going to get entrance, then they go through the same set of tests. If we do not know what their qualification is about, then they have to go through SAQA to be compared.

14. What do you think can be done to improve the current selection process?

We could probably ensure that students are better informed on what the hospitality industry is about before pursuing study in a course in hospitality. We try to do a reality check. For example, part of our marketing structure is career days and information evenings. We try to encourage prospective students wherever possible to come to one of those. During the information evening, whilst we obviously want to sell, there is a focus on being realistic as well.

We make it clear, for example, that the kitchen is a rough place, the hours are long, the work is hard, when you enter a hotel room you need to understand that somebody cleaned the toilet, washed the bath and did some of the things that no one wants to do and that somebody is going to be you for part of your course. We tell students not to have any illusions, when we show them beautiful pictures of four and five star properties, because they will very seldom see the pictures of what we show them in reality because they will be working there and will not be the ones sitting next to the pool, for example. We try to bring in a sense of reality.

As an educator I am particularly conscious of the pressure from our side in terms of through put. With our registration we have to recount every year on what our through-put was. We look at the ratio of the students who enrolled and those that actually completed their qualification. Fortunately our funding does not depend on that, like many of the public institutions, but we have to account. There is pressure on me as principal to try to be as responsible as possible. One of the ways we do that is to try to be realistic. I am also very conscious that if I give you a place in first year and you drop out that effectively I have lost two years of income, so it is not in my interest to have someone who drops out during the first year.

The main thing for me is that they should have worked in the industry even if they have worked as a waitron in a Wimpy, because they at least have a sense of what service is about. Many of the students, when they arrive, they have no real sense of consequence for poor service. They have no idea what it means to the bottom line of the property if they do not look after a guest. What surprises me with some of the students that I talk to, few of them are working part time and I don't know if that is because we get a more affluent group of students because our fees are expensive, so maybe they do not have to work. Most of the other educational institutions where I have worked, a lot more of them were working. That is definitely something I would like to see more of.

15. What reasons do you commonly find as mainly contributing to students dropping out of courses?

Financial difficulty is common. Academic challenges are an issue although we have been looking at the way in which our academics are structured and we have changed our course structure to a certain extent. We have more continuous assessment than we had in the past which is in line with what is happening internationally. It is a smaller percentage than one would think. Our pass mark is 70% and I would have expected academics to be a big issue. It is relevant but nowhere near the industry fit, but it is an issue.

Personality I would think is very closely aligned to industry fit. If your personality is such that you refuse to take instructions or orders from the head chef, for example, it is not going to be a good experience for you.

16. What do you think academic institutions can do in the selection process to ensure that students are fully aware of what the hospitality industry is about and the career path in which it leads before they are enrolled for a hospitality course?

We need to focus on the right people. I would guess 20% of our students come because their family is in the industry. If you look at the structures we have in place, there are a number of 'stations' at which we can assess or inform students. The one is the information evenings or the open days. If you have a descent interview and there is enough time taken and it's almost a mentoring process as well, then I think it's a two-way flow of information. It's not only about trying to find out if you fit, but also about advising you. I think that there are a few people who fall through the cracks. It's either they do not come for the interview or maybe they are foreign students who are accepted just to make targets. There are sometimes people who are either borderline or sometimes taken for perhaps the wrong reasons where we should have been a bit more careful. I suppose if you had said how we can improve it from an academic perspective I would say take the business aspect away, but we know that that is not going to happen.

5.4 Drop-out statistics

5.4.1 The International Hotel School

The drop-out statistics of the International Hotel School were compiled by the academic administrator.

Numbers at January 2010 = 246

Numbers at December 2010 = 215

Total drop-outs = 31

Drop-out percentage = 13%

Numbers at January 2011 = 212

Numbers to date = 192

Total drop-outs = 20

Drop-out percentage = 9%

Main reasons for leaving:

- Finances
- Incorrect study field
- Change-over to correspondence programme – shorten study time
- Further studies overseas, etc.

Statistics for the period before 2010 could not be obtained, as the academic administrator had only been employed since 2010 and hence could not access previous records.

5.4.2 The Cape Town Hotel School

The drop-out statistics of the Cape Town Hotel School were compiled by the Management Information Services of CPUT.

Total enrolments for 2006 = 419

Total cancellations for 2006 = 6

Drop-out percentage = 1%

Period of study = first year

Reasons for cancellation of course

Change decision = 4

Financial reasons = 1

Other = 1

Total enrolments for 2007 = 391

Total cancellations for 2007 = 8

Drop-out percentage = 2%

Period of study = first year

Reasons for cancellation of course

Change decision = 1

Financial reason = 4

Personal reasons = 1

No/Invalid study permit = 1

Other = 1

Total enrolments for 2008 = 338

Total cancellations for 2008 = 10

Drop-out percentage = 3%

Period of study: 7= first year, 1 = second year & 2 = third year

Reasons for cancellation of course

Change decision = 5

Personal reasons = 1

Death = 1

Did not attend course = 1

Other = 2

Total enrolments for 2009 = 354

Total cancellations for 2009 = 14

Drop-out percentage = 4%

Period of study: 11 = first year and 3 = second year

Reasons for cancellation of course

Change decision = 11

Financial reasons = 1

Academic performance = 1

Administrative error = 1

Total enrolments for 2010 = 361

Total cancellations for 2010 = 16

Drop-out percentage = 4%

Period of study: 15 = first year and 1 = second year

Reasons for cancellation of course

Change decision = 10

Financial reasons = 3

Death = 1

Accepted full-time employment = 1

Personal reasons = 1

Total enrolments for 2011 = 299

Total cancellations for 2011 = 7

Drop-out percentage = 2%

Period of study = first year

Reasons for cancellation of course

Change decision = 3

Financial reasons = 2

Personal reasons = 1

Health reasons = 1

5.5 Summary

The researcher detailed the information derived from the academics involved in the student selection process at the IHS and the CTHS in this chapter. Information on the student drop-out rate derived from both schools' formal data-bases was also included. The IHS has always conducted interviews as part of the selection process. The CTHS, on the other hand, conducted interviews as part of its selection process for the period 2006 to 2008. No interviews were conducted from 2009 to 2011. The statistics show that there was no significant difference in the drop-out rate of students over the six years. The formal statistics show that the drop-out rate of both schools is no more than 13%. The interview conducted with the principal of the IHS revealed a higher drop-out rate of between 20 and 30%, though actual records to confirm this were not given. Records by Macgregor (2007) and the International Education Association of South Africa (2012:15) show that the national student drop-out rate at universities is between 40 and 45%. The drop-out rate observed at IHS and the CTHS is lower than the national average.

An informal interview conducted with the CTHS lecturers revealed that the calibre of students had dropped to an extent. It also seems that student's prefer to continue with the course, even though they realise that the hospitality industry is not suitable for them. Students feel compelled to complete the course and at least get a qualification behind their name. In the next chapter, the findings and recommendations will be discussed in relations to the research hypothesis, problems and objectives.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter detailed the interviews conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process at the IHS and the CTHS. Information on the student drop-out rate derived from both institutions' formal databases was included. The researcher gained valuable information from the two data collection methods used. The data derived from the interviews will now be used to make recommendations on how the student selection process can be improved, based on the findings.

In the proceeding chapter, the researcher analysed the results of the findings. Information derived from the completed questionnaires received from the hotel school students at both institutions, as well as from the hospitality professionals, was analysed. The in-depth information derived from the interviews conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process, as well as the statistics on the student drop-out rate obtained from both schools' formal data-bases, were used.

The main and sub-problems were detailed, along with the corresponding findings. Recommendations were made in line with the main and sub-objectives of the study.

6.2 Analysis of results and findings

6.2.1 Main problem

The main problem of the research was that the assessment criteria currently used by hospitality training institutions in the selection of entry level students were not effective in identifying the most suitable candidates for training in the National Diploma course in Hospitality Management.

6.2.2 Sub-problem 1

The first sub-problem was that a substantial number of students are dropping out of hospitality courses.

6.2.2.1 Findings for sub-problem 1

The statistics from both schools' data-bases revealed the following trends:

The IHS drop-out percentage for the period 2010 to 2011 ranged from 9% to 13%

The CTHS drop-out percentage for the period 2006 to 2011 ranged from 1% to 4%

Based on the four interviews conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process and the information derived from both schools' data-bases, the number of drop-outs was found to be between 1% and 13% between the two schools. The principal at the IHS however, mentioned that the drop-out rate at IHS was a significant 20-30%, though records of this could not be obtained.

According to a report by the International Education Association of South Africa (2012:15), higher education in South Africa in general has a drop-out rate of 45% amongst students. It is observed that the number of students dropping out of hospitality courses at IHS and the CTHS is lower than the national average.

6.2.3 Sub-problem 2

The second sub-problem was that some students were not well informed of the nature of the hospitality industry and the career path to which it leads.

6.2.3.1 Findings for sub-problem 2

The findings showed that most students choose to study Hospitality Management at the respective schools for reasons such as affordability, reputation, location and courses offered. However, 28.6% of the respondents listed reasons such as the following for studying hospitality:

- thinking that the Hospitality Management course would be easy
- not being accepted in their first career choice
- merely being accepted at the institution
- hospitality being a broad field for someone who was not sure what they wanted to do
- recommendation by a professor

Table 4.6.2.5 showed that 53.4% of the respondents received career guidance in hospitality, while 46.6% did not. These statistics reveal that just over half of the respondents were adequately informed of the career path they had chosen.

Table 4.6.2.6 revealed the reasons given by a majority of students (53.1% to 70%) for choosing a career in the hospitality industry. In order of descending importance, these were:

- enjoying working with people

- a desire to travel
- a desire to operate their own business
- a desire to be independent
- enjoying dining out, travel and variety
- enjoying working with food
- opportunities for employment and advancement

The last four scores, which were the lowest, ranging from 12.5% to 33.1% reveal that the students had background knowledge of the hospitality industry.

The findings revealed that 46.6% of the respondents studying hospitality, i.e. nearly half, had chosen it as an alternative choice versus, 53.4% who had chosen hospitality as a first choice of study. It can be assumed that the former students could not pursue their first choice of study due to unforeseen circumstances and therefore moved to hospitality, or that they did not enjoy their first choice of study and therefore moved to hospitality. Either way, the finding reveals a certain level of uncertainty regarding a career in the hospitality industry. This shows a certain degree of ignorance on the part of the students in terms of the industry they are entering.

The students were asked if they had researched the hospitality industry before pursuing a career in hospitality. As can be seen in Table 4.6.2.8, the findings reveal that 8.1% to 55.6% of the respondents had done research on the hospitality industry to a certain degree. The 8.8% of students who were not accepted for their first choice of study and that were then referred to hospitality did raise concerns as to whether they knew what the hospitality industry was about or whether they applied for the course as a last resort.

The students were asked if they had worked or job shadowed at any hospitality establishment for any length of time before applying for a course in hospitality. Table 4.6.2.9 shows that only between 11.3% and 15% of the students had worked in the hospitality industry for between one day and over a year. A further 43.1% of the respondents said that they had not spent any time working or job shadowing in the hospitality industry before pursuing a career in hospitality. Although work experience or job shadowing is not required when applying for a course in hospitality, the researcher is of the opinion that it is advantageous, as students had a more realistic idea of what the industry entails.

Table 4.6.2.11 revealed that 75.7% of the students agreed that industry-related work experience was important when wanting to pursue a career in hospitality, while 9.5% believed that it was not. The balance of 14.9% was not sure.

When the students were asked whether they thought it was beneficial to have previously worked in the industry before applying for a course in hospitality, 40.8% to 60.3% agreed that it was, while 9.2% disagreed (see Table 4.6.2.12).

The respondents also listed the following reasons in favour of having work experience before pursuing a career in hospitality:

- if you do not want to be in the industry anymore, you can exit earlier
- you have confidence in what you are doing
- you have the correct perception of the industry
- you get to know how guests behave and what they require
- you realise which department suits you best and where you want to specialise

In opposition to needing work experience, one respondent stated that if the hospitality industry was your passion, you can succeed even if you have no experience.

From Table 4.6.2.16, it is evident that 66.9% of the students said that their perception of the hospitality industry had changed from the time that they had started the course, versus 33.1% of the students who said their perception had not changed. Table 4.6.2.17 shows that the students were not aware of some of the operational requirements of the hospitality industry when they started their courses.

When the students were asked if they saw themselves completing the course and enjoying a fruitful career in the hospitality industry, a majority (86.9%) looked forward to completing the course and enjoying a fruitful career in the industry, while 11% were not sure and 2.1% were likely not to complete the course or pursue a career in the hospitality industry (see Table 4.6.2.18). The students were asked if there was any reason why they would not complete their course. The findings, according to Table 4.6.2.19, confirmed that there were aspects of the hospitality industry that students were not aware of when applying to study a course in hospitality.

The respondents gave the following reasons why they felt that students dropped out of courses in hospitality (Table 4.6.2.20): 31.4% to 46% contributed the student drop-out rate to poor career choice, 17.9% to 51.5% felt that financial constraints contributed to the student drop-out rate, 24.3% to 54.5% believed that students were under-prepared for tertiary education and 35.8% to 46.3% either agreed or strongly agreed that ignorance of the nature of the hospitality industry contributed towards students dropping out of their courses.

Statistics from the CTHS data base also showed that 34 out of the 61 course cancellations for the period 2006 to 2011 was due to students changing their minds about studying hospitality. The academics involved in the student selection process at both institutions also confirmed that a number of students were not adequately informed on what the hospitality industry was about when applying for the course.

Based on the recorded findings, the researcher therefore can conclude that some students were not well informed of the nature of the hospitality industry and the career path to which it leads.

6.2.4 Sub-problem 3

The third sub-problem was that there was an absence of a comprehensive assessment programme used by hospitality training institutions that tests both the academic and vocational skills of students to identify students most likely to complete the courses they enrol for and thus effectively serve the hospitality industry.

6.2.4.1 Findings for Sub-problem 3

Because the Cape Town Hotel School falls under the Faculty of Business of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), the entry requirements are similar to those of the faculty.

Hospitality Studies is listed under the Business Faculty and therefore holds the following minimum requirements (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2010:15):

English Home Language or English First Additional Language (50-59%), Mathematics (30-39%) or Mathematical Literacy (50-59%), as well as one of the following: Accounting (40-49%), Economics (50-59%), Hospitality Studies (50-59%), Life Sciences (40-49%) or Tourism (50-59%). Work experience was recommended. Students may be required to submit a motivational letter/essay explaining why they want to study a specific course. Where learners do not offer subjects in the business, commerce and management category, subjects in other categories may be considered at the discretion of the dean of the faculty, on condition that the required achievement ratings have been met for all of the mentioned programmes. These requirements apply to all the diplomas in Hospitality Studies, viz. The Diploma in Hospitality Management: Accommodation, the Diploma in Hospitality Management: Food & Beverage, and the Diploma in Hospitality Management: Professional Cookery (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2010:15).

When asked about the student selection process, one of the senior lecturers at the CTHS explained that the requirements are purely academic. Applicants are required to submit an

application form, Matric results and identification document. If a CV is produced that shows industry work experience, it is not used as a criterion for whether or not to accept a student, but is a good indicator for whether or not the individual has chosen the right career. The entry requirements are academic and the Hotel School regards them as a good indication whether the students will succeed academically here at the school. Time will tell whether or not the academic requirement will make them successful in the industry.

The student placement co-ordinator at the CTHS thought that Maths and Accounting were important and recommended a face-to-face interview with the prospective student.

The placement co-ordinator also stated that the whole industry was about communication, interaction and people skills, and that it would not be possible to know if the student was suitable for the industry until you had met him or her.

The principal of the IHS felt that determining industry fit was the most important aspect during the selection process. The principal also felt strongly about ensuring that prospective students had some sort of industry-related work experience or job shadowing, as one cannot really know what the industry is like until one has actually worked in it. Furthermore, students need to have a work ethic and service focus that is hard to define, but can be seen and sensed when interacting with prospective students, thus making the interview process important. A literacy and numeracy test were also deemed important in determining prospective students' ability to study, and was also recommended.

The enrolment requirements of the International Hotel School (IHS) for the Diploma in Hospitality Management and the Diploma in Professional Cookery and Kitchen Management were a National Senior Certificate with a minimum admission points score of 25. The IHS also requires that English be taken as a first or second language with a score of at least 4 points. The Hotel School would, however, consider candidates with lesser qualifications based on an entry exam, an interview and the approval of the Academic Board. Accounting would be an advantage, but is not a prerequisite. Previous practical experience in the industry was advantageous. Applicants are required to complete an application form and return it to the campus of their choice with the following (The International Hotel School, 2010:2): copies of school certificates and reports for grades 11 and 12, two passport or ID-sized photographs, and two references reflecting personal abilities, achievements, social and interpersonal traits. The applicants undergo a thorough screening procedure, including interviews and assessments and evaluations before being accepted.

When asked about the efficiency of the student selection process at the IHS, the sales co-ordinator said it was difficult to say, because sometimes one gets a student who is brilliant in

everything, from academics to personality, but who then decides after a year that although they have enjoyed the year, they do not feel that the industry is for them. The sales co-ordinator said that he did not think that there was or ever would be anything in place that would allow you to assess if the person would be suitable for the industry or how the career path would end.

The findings show that the two schools use different assessment criteria during the selection process. The one institution has a selection process that is a purely academic exercise, while the other has a very extensive interview and assessment programme.

It therefore can be concluded that, although one school tests both academic and vocational skills during the selection process, the other school keeps the selection process purely academic.

6.3 Recommendations

The recommendations arising from this study were based on the feedback derived from the questionnaires completed by 32 hospitality professionals (42.9% of whom were senior managers versus 57.1% junior managers). The respondents had between six months and 18 years' industry experience, resulting in an average of eight years and four months industry experience.

6.3.1 Objectives

6.3.1.1 Main objective

The researcher intended to identify success predictors and thus formulate an effective selection programme that incorporates the student's academic and vocational skills in order to reduce the student drop-out rate and increase the number of graduates entering the job market.

6.3.1.2 Sub-objective 1

The first sub-objective was to make recommendations on how to reduce the student drop-out rate being experienced by hospitality training institutions.

6.3.1.2.1 Recommendations for sub-objective 1

- Ensure that students are fully aware of the nature of the hospitality industry and the career path to which it leads before accepting them to study a course in hospitality. Dawson, et al. (2011: 299) developed a quantitative instrument called the Hospitality Cultures Scale (HCS), which measures a persons' understanding of the culture of hospitality organisations and can be used to determine if a particular individual's values are in line with those in the industry. The HCS can be used by high school

counsellors and hotel school recruiters to determine if a student is a potential candidate for the hospitality industry. Although high school students may not have experience in dealing with customers or may not possess leadership skills, the scale offers a tool to determine if the student has the propensity to develop and value these traits in the future.

- The career guidance counsellors at high schools should encourage students to spend time working in the hospitality industry during their high school years if they are interested in pursuing a career in hospitality. Job shadowing or working part time in the hospitality industry gives students a more realistic view of the industry.
- Because hospitality establishments and the media often portray the glamorous side of the hospitality trade, the career days held by hotel schools should focus on informing students of the characteristics of the hospitality industry including uniform requirements, working hours and conditions, e.g. long hours without overtime pay-payment substituted with time off, weekend and public holiday work, shift work and the labour-intensive nature of the industry. The hospitality industry is also a service industry and the product of the hospitality industry is really the guest's experience (Barrows & Powers, 2009:7-8). The manner and level of guest interaction required (direct, face-to-face, on-going contact, problem-solving requirements, etc.) should also be explained clearly to prospective students.
- Research has shown that financial constraints also contribute to the student drop-out rate. Students should be made aware of the institutions that offer financial aid and the different types of financial aid available.

6.3.1.3 Sub-objective 2

The second sub-objective was to make recommendations on which assessment tools should be used in the selection of entry level Hospitality Diploma students.

6.3.1.3.1 Recommendations for sub-objective 2

Studies by Van Lill (2005:972) and Ratangee (2007:15) and Aldolphus (n.d.) all concurred that access criteria need to be open, objective, evidence based and non-discriminatory. The results from the questionnaires completed by the industry professionals suggested the following:

- A National Senior Certificate should be compulsory for students applying for a National Diploma in Hospitality Studies at NQF level 6. Subjects that should be considered as highly important are English and Mathematics or Maths Literacy. In a study by Letseka, Cosser, Breier & Visser (2010:61), academics at a university in the Western Cape said that a matriculation (exception) is the best available indicator of future success. The academics in the same study also noted that English and

Mathematics (and Physical Science) were the Senior Certificate subjects regarded as important indicators of potential for higher education study. Subject such as Accounting, Consumer Science or Business Economics should be considered important as hospitality studies falls within the field of business. Subjects such as Hospitality Studies and Computer Literacy should be considered highly advantageous as applicants have background information regarding the industry and most restaurant and hotel point of sale systems are computerised.

- A curriculum vitae (CV) reflecting work experience in the hospitality industry and a hand-written motivation letter detailing the reason why the student wants to pursue a career in the hospitality industry will be highly advantageous. The above mentioned assessment tools allow hotel school professionals to identify the foundational skills derived from the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS), which are the skills and qualities that underlie the competencies required for success in the hospitality industry. These competencies include reading, writing and responsibility.
- Hotel schools can request prospective students to take the National Benchmark Test (NBT) to aid in the interpretation of school-leaving results when necessary. According to Braaf (2010:1), the NBT is an assessment for prospective first-year entry students into higher education. The assessment was designed to measure the writer's levels of proficiency in Academic Literacy, Quantitative Literacy and Mathematics as these are related to the demands of tertiary study. The NBT also provides information to assist in the placement of students in appropriate curricular routes (e.g. regular, augmented, extended, bridging or foundation programmes) and with the development of curricula for higher education programmes. In addition, it assists higher education to interpret school-leaving results, such as those of the National Senior Certificate (NSC).

6.3.1.4 Sub-objective 3

The third sub-objective was to demonstrating the importance of testing students' academic and vocational skills during the selection of entry-level students to ensure that the most suitable students are chosen for enrolment and training in hospitality management courses.

6.3.1.4.1 Recommendations for sub-objective 3

The majority of industry professionals interviewed (71.9%) believe that an entry level candidate's academic achievement is not a good indicator of whether he or she has the potential to succeed in the hospitality industry, and that it therefore cannot be the only criterion used in the selection process. Tesone (2005: 4) points out that, in practice, hospitality managers hire primarily for attitude and secondarily for specific knowledge and

skills. The researcher concurs with the principal of the IHS that the NCS should not be the determining factor, but should rather form the first step in the selection process.

The recommendations in relation to sub-objective 3 therefore are the following:

- In addition to the NSC, an interview should be conducted with students as part of the selection process. The need for such an interview was supported by 87.5% of the hospitality professionals who completed questionnaires. Interviews allow hotel school professionals to identify the foundational skills derived from the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) referred to by Chon and Maier (2010:27) which are the skills and qualities that underlie the competencies required for success in the hospitality industry. These competencies include the basic skills of speaking and listening, thinking skills and personal qualities. A prospective student's attitude towards the course and the work of hospitality can also be assessed using this tool.
- Among the findings of this research, 59.4% of the industry professionals thought it was necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process, while 40.6% disagreed. It therefore would be highly advantageous to have the industry involved in the student selection process. Industry involvement can be achieved by ensuring that hotel school staff who have industry experience are involved in the selection process. Industry involvement is not limited to scheduling hospitality professionals from outside of the hotel school. Industry participation provided a safeguard that ensures that the selection process stays tied to the active industry, rather than going down a purely academic road.

Hotel schools will also do well to take cognisance of the following suggestions made by industry professionals:

- Increase the scope of what hospitality training institutions offer, as the options facing students currently are very limited.
- Students should be informed of traineeship programmes, as these allow students to gain the knowledge and experience needed to succeed in the industry. Students are also able to earn while they study, which can assist those facing financial constraints.
- It is important to introduce scholarships in the hospitality industry so that students will be motivated to complete their studies up to PhD level. Hospitality should be introduced in schools from grade eight to twelve.
- The learning curriculum should be updated constantly to stay in line with industry changes and requirements.

6.4 Summary

The current chapter provided a summary of the research problem and objectives as well as the research findings and their corresponding recommendations. The findings revealed that the student drop-out rate was up to 30%, thus proving research problem one. A number of students were not well informed of the nature of the hospitality industry and the career path to which it leads when applying to study a course in hospitality. The findings therefore also proved research problem two. In relation to research problem three, one school tested both academic and vocational skills during the selection process while the other school kept the selection process purely academic, thus proving this research problem. The hospitality industry professionals also made a few notable remarks that can be implemented by learning institutions.

The following chapter concluded this study by providing a summary of the entire study. The research findings and recommendations were listed concisely, followed by an explanation of the challenges experienced whilst conducting the study. Future research possibilities that can be explored and the researcher's concluding remarks were provided at the end of the chapter.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUDING REMARKS

7.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, the researcher discussed the hospitality industry and the way in which students should be selected, given the characteristics of the industry. The second chapter formed the theoretical framework of the study, within which the researcher reviewed the characteristics and culture of the hospitality industry and the general profile of hospitality industry professionals. Current selection practices used by hospitality training institutions were analysed to ascertain how these could be improved upon. The literature review of past studies that was conducted assisted with the development of a base upon which to build this study. The target population used for this research was students studying hospitality management courses at NQF level 6 in Cape Town. The two schools that were used as the sample for this study were, the IHS and the CTHS, as they were found to be the only two schools that fitted the criteria.

The third chapter detailed the research methods used in this study, namely interviews, questionnaires and formal data-bases. Questionnaires were distributed to two target groups, namely hospitality students and hospitality professionals. Interviews were conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process at the IHS and the CTHS. Statistics of the student drop-out rates were derived from the formal data-bases of both institutions. The researcher proceeded with a discussion of how the data were collected and interpreted from the questionnaires, interviews and data-bases in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 6 consists of the findings and recommendations of the study. This chapter presents the conclusion of the study, including suggestions for possible future research.

7.2 Summary of research findings

Based on the interviews conducted with the academics involved in the student selection process and the information derived from both schools' data-bases, the number of students dropping out of hospitality courses proved to be lower than expected: it was 1% to 4% on average at one school, versus 9% to 13% at the other. An interview with the principal of the IHS however, revealed that the drop-out rate was between 20% and 30%, however, which was a substantial number, thus proving sub-problem one.

Statistics from the CTHS data base also showed that 34 out of the 61 course cancellations for the period 2006 to 2011 were due to students changing their minds about studying hospitality.

Based on these statistics and the recorded findings, the researcher therefore can conclude that some students were not well informed of the nature of the hospitality industry and the career path to which it leads, which coincided with sub-problem two.

The findings also revealed that each school used different assessment criteria during the selection process. The selection process ranged from being a purely academic exercise to being a very extensive interview and assessment programme that tested both academic and vocational skills. This finding confirms sub-problem three.

7.3 Summary of recommendations

The researcher makes the following recommendations for the student selection process:

- The requirement should be a National Senior Certificate, with recognition given to subjects such as English, Consumer Science or Business Economics, Hospitality studies, Computer Literacy, Mathematics or Maths Literacy, and Accounting.
- A curriculum vitae (CV) reflecting work experience in the hospitality industry and a hand-written motivation letter detailing why a student wants to pursue a career in the hospitality industry should be considered highly advantageous.
- An interview should be conducted with all prospective students. Where possible, hospitality professionals should be included as part of the interview panel.
- The Hospitality Culture Scale (HCS), which measures a person's understanding of the culture of hospitality organisations and determines whether a particular individual's values are in line with those of individuals currently working in the industry, should be used as part of the interview process.
- Where necessary, prospective students should be requested to take the NBT to aid in the interpretation of school-leaving results such as the NSC.

7.4 Challenges of the research

The following challenges were experienced when the study was conducted:

- Participation from the hospitality industry was not as favourable as desired. Because of the demanding nature of the industry, access to hospitality professionals proved to be difficult.
- Participants were not always willing to complete the questionnaires and several follow-up messages were needed to persuade participants to complete the questionnaires.

7.5 Future research possibilities

Based on the findings of this study, it can be stated that students seem to continue following the course until completion, despite the fact that they disliked certain aspects of the industry

and would have preferred to pursue a different career path. Future research can be done in the following areas:

- Similar research should be replicated in different cities in South Africa in order to determine how different hotel schools assess their students and whether hospitality industry professionals in other parts of the country share the same views. This will help hospitality training institutions determine the most effective assessment tools to use during the selection process.
- Continued research can be done on ways to determine industry fit given the changing generations and expanding scope of the hospitality industry.
- The hospitality industry needs to determine how it can retain graduates once they have completed their courses
- There is a need for research into students' perceptions of the hospitality industry. Understanding students' perception will enable hotel schools and the hospitality industry at large to determine the best manner in which to select students and retain employees in the industry.
- Research can also be done in the area of ensuring that the student selection process is kept fair and free from bias, given the history of South Africa. Educational institutions need to find a way of broadening access without increasing situations that will be characterised by high drop-out and failure rates.
- There is a fine line between the training and business aspects of hotel schools. Research can be done on how hospitality training institutions can successfully strike the balance.

7.6 Concluding remarks

A report prepared by the U.S. Department of Labour (DOL), Employment and Training Administration (ETA) reveals that the hospitality industry has difficulty finding entry-level workers who possess basic "soft skills" such as punctuality and professionalism, which are a prerequisite for success in a customer service oriented field. Utilising effective selection tools therefore becomes a crucial part of ensuring that appropriate people are selected for the industry. Past injustices in South Africa pose a challenge to ensure that the selection process is kept fair and free of bias. Educational institutions are also faced with the challenge of ensuring that the selection process allows access to as many students as possible without resulting in a high dropout and failure rate.

Determining industry fit is a vital part of the selection of students for training in hospitality. Utilising effective assessment tools in the student selection process will not only ensure a steady flow of suitable candidates but will also secure a future of efficient hospitality professionals to continue the growth in the hospitality and tourism industry in South Africa.

If hotel schools can ensure that prospective students not only understand, but also are willing to comply with the hospitality industry culture at entry level, then the selection of students and the retaining of prospective industry employees will be made easier.

The hospitality industry is broad and diverse, offering students a range of career paths to choose from upon qualification. Hotel schools need to therefore, on a continuous basis, increase the scope of the courses that they offer and keep their learning curricula updated to stay in line with industry changes and requirements. Interaction with the institutional environment should also be increased as this is also a variable that impacts on the success or failure of students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Student questionnaire

Indicate with an X in the block next to the appropriate answer.

1. What is your gender?

Female	
Male	

2. What is your age

18-20	
21-25	
26-30	
31-40	

3. Which hospitality training institution are you currently registered at?

The International Hotel School (IHS)	
The Cape Town Hotel School (CTHS)	

4. Why did you choose to study at the institution at which you are registered as opposed to any other?

	Of high importance	Of moderate importance	Not sure	Of low importance	Not considered
Affordability					
Reputation					
Location					
Courses offered					
Other (please specify below)					

5. Did you receive career guidance in hospitality while you were in high school or after you completed high school?

Yes	
No	

6. Why did you choose to study a course in hospitality?

You may choose as many options as are applicable to you.

Personal work experience	
Family background in the industry	
Contact with other students and faculty in hospitality management programs	
Enjoy dining out, travel and variety	
Enjoy working with people	
Enjoy working with food	
Opportunities for employment and advancement	
Desire to operate own business	
Desire to travel	
Desire to be independent	
Studied hospitality at high school	

7. Was hospitality your first choice of study?

Yes	
No	

8. Did you research the hospitality industry in any of the following ways before making your decision to study hospitality? You may choose more than one option if applicable.

Attended open days hosted by different hospitality training institutions	
Received advice from family/friends	
Contacted hotels to enquire about job shadowing	
Attended workshops aimed at educating the public on the hospitality industry	
Attended a career day/evening at your school which informed you on the hospitality industry	
Searched the internet or library to gain more information on the hospitality industry	
Worked part time at any hospitality establishment while still at school or after school	
Obtained information from reputable sources on the best places to register at for a course in hospitality	
I was not accepted for my first choice of study and was then referred to hospitality	

9. Did you work or job shadow at any hospitality establishment for any length of time before applying for a course in hospitality?

Yes, for 1-5 days	
Yes, for 1-4 weeks	
Yes, for 1-3 months	
Yes, for 3-6 months	
Yes, for 6-12 months	
Yes, for 1 year and longer	
I did not work or job shadow before applying for a course in hospitality	

10. What type of establishment did you do your work experience or job shadowing at?

Hotel	
Fast food franchise	
Restaurant	
Catering and events company	
Other (please specify below)	
Did not obtain work experience or job shadowing	

11. Do you think it is beneficial to have previously worked in the hospitality industry before pursuing a career in the industry?

Yes	
No	
I have no previous experience in the hospitality industry – not sure	

12. Why do you think it is beneficial to have previously worked in the industry before applying for a course in hospitality? Please rate each individually.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
You know what you are getting yourself into				
You have obtained basic skills that you can build on				
It is not beneficial to have previously worked in the industry before applying for a course in hospitality				
Other (please specify below)				

13. What requirements did you have to meet in order to apply for the course? You may choose more than one option if applicable.

National Senior Certificate/Matric	
Aptitude test	
Written communication test	
Written numeracy test	
Interview	
Other written entrance exam, e.g. general industry knowledge test	
Submit references reflecting personal abilities and achievements	
Work experience in the hospitality industry	
Other (please specify below)	

14. Which of the following did you feel was most important or beneficial during the selection process? Rate each option individually.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
National Senior Certificate/Matric				
Aptitude test				
Written communication test				
Written numeracy test				
Interview				
Other written entrance exam e.g. General industry knowledge test				
References reflecting personal abilities & achievements				
Work experience in the hospitality industry				
Personal grooming				
Other (please specify below)				

15. How do you feel about interviews? Rate each option individually.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Interviews are intimidating and discourage students from applying for a course				
Interviews are informative and allow students to meet the people they may be working with				
Interviews are necessary to assess a student's communication skills and allows interviewees to get to know the student better				
Interviews are unnecessary				

16. Has your perception of the industry change since you began the course?

Yes	
No	

17. How has your perception of the hospitality industry changed since you began the course? You may choose more than one option if necessary.

I did not expect to wear a uniform	
I did not expect to work weekends and public holidays	
I did not expect to work shifts	
I did not expect to work such long hours	
I did not expect it to be so labour intensive	
I expected more pay	
The industry is everything I expected it to be and more	

18. Do you see yourself completing the course and enjoying a fruitful career in the industry?

Yes	
No	
Not sure	

19. Is there any reason why you would not complete the course?

You may choose more than one option if necessary.

I do not enjoy the unsocial working hours	
I do not enjoy the industry culture	
I do not have sufficient funds to complete the course	
My interests have changed	
I would prefer a career in which I can earn more money	
I enjoy the course and look forward to working in the hospitality industry	
Other (please specify below)	

20. Research shows that an average of 40% of students drop-out of their courses within the first year of study. What do you think is the reason for the high student dropout rate among student studying courses in hospitality? Please rate each option individually.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Poor career choice					
Financial constraints					
Student under-preparedness for tertiary education					
Ignorance of the nature of the hospitality industry					

21. What do you think hospitality training institutions can do in the student admission process to reduce the amount of student dropouts? Please rate each individually.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Conduct interviews with all students					
Raise the academic requirements					
Insist on work experience					
Other (please advise below)					

22. Please feel free to add in any other comments:

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

Appendix B: Hospitality industry questionnaire

Please mark the appropriate block with an X.

1. What is your gender?

1	Female	
2	Male	

2. What is your age

1	20-30	
2	31-40	
3	41-50	
4	51-60	
5	Over 60	

Other (please specify) _____

3. What type of establishment do you work for?

1	Hotel	
2	Restaurant	
3	Catering company	
4	Events company	

Other (please specify) _____

4. What position do you hold at this establishment

1	Owner	
2	Senior manager	
3	Junior manager	

Other (please specify) _____

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

6. What is the star rating of your establishment?

1	*	
2	**	
3	***	
4	****	
5	*****	
6	Not graded	

7. What Matric subjects do you think should be compulsory for students applying for a National Diploma in hospitality? Please rate each option individually.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Mathematics				
2	Accounting				
3	English				
4	Consumer Science				
5	Computer Literacy				
6	Hospitality Studies				

Other (please specify) _____

8. Which of the following do you think should form part of the application requirements for entry level students applying for a National Diploma in hospitality? Please rate each option individually.

		Mandatory	Advantageous	Not Necessary
1	National Senior Certificate/Matric			
2	Written numeracy test			
3	Written communication test			
4	Psychometric or aptitude test			
5	Hand written motivation letter			
6	References reflecting personal abilities and achievements			
7	CV reflecting work experience in the hospitality industry			
8	Job shadowing experience			
9	Industry-related work experience			

Other (please specify) _____

9. Do you think an entry level candidate's academic achievement is a good indication of whether they have the potential to succeed in the hospitality industry or not? Please substantiate your answer below.

1	Yes	
2	No	

10. Do you think interviews should be conducted with students as part of the selection process? Please explain below.

1	Yes	
2	No	

11. If you answered 'yes' to question 10, which aspect of the candidate would have the most impact on your decision to either accept or reject the candidate? Please rate each option individually.

		Mandatory	Advantageous	Not Necessary
1	Prompt time keeping			
2	Well groomed			
3	Professionally dressed			
4	Positive body language			
5	Good verbal communication			
6	Friendliness			
7	Theoretical knowledge of hospitality industry through research			
8	Knowledge of hospitality industry through job shadowing			
9	Work experience in the hospitality industry			

Other (please specify) _____

12. Do you think it is necessary for industry professionals to participate in the student selection process? Please substantiate your answer below.

1	Yes	
2	No	

13. Does your institution offer any financial aid to students applying for courses in the hospitality industry?

1	Yes	
2	No	

14. If you answered 'yes' to question 13, please specify the type of financial aid offered by your institution.

1	Bursary	
2	Scholarship	
3	Traineeship	

Other (please specify) _____

15. Which students do you accept for work experience?

1	High school students	
2	Students from tertiary institutions	
3	Students from both high school and tertiary institutions	
4	None of the above	

16. What has been your experience with trainees?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Trainees lack knowledge and skill and are therefore unsuitable to deal with paying guests				
2	Trainees are prepared for the hospitality industry through their time spent in industry during internship				
3	Trainees are unreliable and lack the commitment required for the industry				

Other (please specify) _____

17. What do you think hospitality training institutions can do in the student selection process to reduce the number of student dropouts? Please rate each option individually.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Conduct interviews with all students					
2	Raise the academic requirements					
3	Insist on industry-related work experience					
4	Conduct personality tests to determine industry suitability					

Other (please specify) _____

18. What do you think the hospitality industry can do to assist Hotel Schools in reducing the student drop-out rate? Please rate each individually.

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Participate in the student selection process					
2	Offer financial aid to students					
3	Encourage job shadowing and traineeship at their establishments					
4	Participate in initiatives designed to inform students about the hospitality industry, e.g. career days, etc.					

Other (please specify) _____

19. Please feel free to add in any other comments you feel are useful for this study:

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.