Cape Peninsula
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HOTEL SCHOOL GRADUATES' PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FIRST LINE MANAGEMENT ROLE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN THE WESTERN CAPE

by

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DECLARATION

I, Ngizimisele Ndlovu, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed   **Date**

ABSTRACT

The hospitality industry is a highly service-orientated sector and therefore requires hospitality graduates to be prepared for the industry. This can be done if higher education institutions fully equip hospitality graduates for the industry during their tertiary period so that when they get to the workplace they have what the hospitality employers expect from them. The research problem is that there seem to be existing challenges/contradictions in the hospitality graduates' preparation by the hotel school at a university in the Western Cape for the first line management (FLM) role. This study set out to explore these challenges and to bring together academic staff, employers and hospitality graduates to collectively seek potential interventions. The objective of the study was to focus on hotel school graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the hospitality industry in the Western Cape.

This was done using a qualitative intervention-research methodology, the Change Laboratory (CL), which allows participants involved in the problem to generate solutions through dialogic workshops for change. Historical data was collected through in-depth interviews (mirror data) with six hospitality lecturers and four hospitality employers (selected from five-star hotels in Cape Town) through purposive sampling. This was followed by four CL intervention sessions with six hospitality graduates, self-selected through non-probability purposive sampling.

The mirror data collected from hospitality employers and academic staff were closely aligned as there seemed to be agreement that hospitality graduates were not prepared for the FLM role in the industry. In the CL sessions, the main contradictions of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry emerged during the analysis stage and the modelling stages. A new activity system for the future for the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role was developed as a solution to the outlined main contradictions. This was envisaged to be an activity system that would produce a possible solution to the research problem. The study therefore recommends further research be done on the proposed new activity system so that all the processes of the expansive learning cycle could be completed for the proposals to be effected at this UoT hotel school as this would bring about the needed change (prepared hospitality graduates).

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DEDICATION

Avumile Mosho, this is for you. Be inspired to push your passion.

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ACRONYMS

AT	Activity Theory
BTech	Bachelor of Technology
CATE	Colleges of Advanced Technical Education
CATHSSETA	Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority
CEA	Council of Economic Advisers
CHAT	Cultural-Historical Activity Theory
CHE	Council for Higher Education
CL	Change Laboratory
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DOL	Division of Labour
FET	Further Education and Training
FLM	First Line Management
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HET	Higher Education and Training
ND	National Diploma
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
STATSSA	Statistics South Africa
UoT	University of Technology
UoTs	Universities of Technology
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The tourism industry is considered to be a crucial sector in the South African economy. This sector contributes 8.6% to the country's economy and around 9.2% total employment (World Council and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2019:1). During the International Travel Trade show held from the 7th to the 11th of March, Siso Ntshona, the then South African Tourism Chief Executive Officer, (CEO), (2018), recognised that the tourism industry had the potential to boost the economy, therefore, careful attention should be provided to nurture and sustain its growth. Makumbirofa and Saayman (2018:1) write that research has recognised that for tourism to develop its economic contributions fully, it must have qualified people employed by the industry. These are employees who will assure that quality of products and services are maintained in tourist destination areas, thereby keeping the levels of competitiveness very high. To sustain this growth, the South African government continues to work towards meeting the country's development needs and to upskill labour through the introduction of sectors like the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA), which positions itself as a leader in tourism skills development (CATHSSETA, 2018:12). This was not just a local imperative, according to Nachmias, Walmsley and Orphanidou (2017:135); governments around the world are promoting programmes that will work towards changing graduates' preparedness for the world of work, with the aim of producing graduates who can contribute to the local and global economy.

The above aim places increased pressure on higher education institutions (HEIs) to produce graduates who are prepared to contribute positively to society and the economy (Chiu & Chuang, 2016:854). To fulfil this obligation, higher education (HE) continues to work towards ensuring that graduates are prepared for industries. Nachmias et al. (2017:135) adds that evidence of this is reflected in the curricular and pedagogical reform locally and internationally. Beyond providing students with a higher education qualification, graduates should be confident, professional, competent and ready for work (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Harwood, 2010; Fongwa, 2018). There is an expectation that graduates should be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes so that they are able to fit into the ever-changing workplace environment (Attali, 2014; Barnett, 2009:431).

As a response to this expectation, universities of technology (UoTs) emerged from the restructuring of the educational landscape in South Africa (Du Pre, 2010:14). These institutions, formerly known as technikons, made significant contributions towards developing

a skilled labour force. Closely linked to industry through advisory boards/committees, technikons engaged in applied research which kept them abreast with industry's perception of graduates (Du Pre, 2010:14). Through in-service training, graduates were exposed to work-integrated learning (WIL) to familiarise them with the way the industry functions (Rambe, 2018:2). UoTs, with their foundation in the former technikons, continue to strive to fulfil the function of providing career-oriented vocational programmes which prepare graduates for industry.

This chapter provides a background to the study, the statement of the problem and the aim of the study. It further identifies the objectives of the study, research questions, delineation of the research and the significance of the study. At the end of the chapter, a summary of the discussions is given.

1.2 Background to the research

Hospitality Management is one of the UoT programmes in which hospitality graduates are trained for industry through theory learning, practice and WIL. Graduates are skilled through the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 6 and 7, the National Diploma (ND) and the Bachelor of Technology (BTech) respectively. It should be noted though that in 2020, through re-curriculation, the BTech changed to the Advanced Diploma and the ND was changed to Diploma. ND programmes equip graduates with knowledge, practical skills and workplace experience enabling them to enter the workplace with supervisory responsibility (Moolman & Wilkson, 2014:240). According to the South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA] (2013), the rationale of the BTech qualification is to meet the standards of assistant managers in the hospitality industry. Graduates are therefore to be equipped with basic managerial skills.

The ND in hospitality studies provides for a range of career opportunities for graduates which include positions such as restaurant supervisors, sous chefs, front office team leaders, reservation agents, bar supervisors, guest house managers, coffee shop managers and many more (Moolman & Wilkinson, 2014:262). According to SAQA (2014), ND graduates should be able to hold first line management (FLM) roles while the BTech degree qualification elevates them to middle management roles in the hospitality industry. The above mentioned SAQA outcomes seem to give hospitality graduates the expectation that after their graduation they will automatically start in the FLM role as they will have the required skills.

Employers have their own expectations of graduate preparedness for the FLM role (Moolman & Wilkinson 2014:257), while graduates on the other hand have their own expectations of their preparedness for the FLM role (Sibanyoni, Kleynhans & Vibetti, 2015:3-4). This is a sign that

there are gaps that need to be bridged between these two parties. This research aims at establishing and possibly resolving the existing challenges/contradictions in hospitality graduates' preparation by the UoT hotel school or the FLM role in the industry. Engeström's (2001) Change Laboratory (CL) methodology was used in the study to analyse the above mentioned challenges that the study aims to explore. CL has previously been used as a methodology to assist in dealing with complex challenges of the human system in a participatory approach (Garraway & Christopher, 2020:4). Participants involved with the activity collectively explore the challenges and work together to find solutions using the CL's Activity theory and expansive learning cycle (Engeström's, 2001). The CL method will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The FLM role helps develop graduates in their career path. According to Tran (2015:VI), graduates are viewed as not ready for the work environment by employers, which is contrary to what graduates' expectations are. Graduates view their qualification as a passport to finding employment in a supervisory or management position (Molefe, Roberson & Roeloffze, 2019: 9).

However, despite this approach, one of the challenges identified by Suprabha, Prasad and Shridev (2017:87) is poor work readiness of graduates and inadequate skills levels for the industry. Previous studies have explored different aspects of research in relation to hospitality graduates and employment. Molefe et al. (2019) investigated hospitality employers' perspectives on hospitality graduates' competencies for employment in the industry, and concluded that graduates are not adequately prepared for the work environment. International studies such as Australian researchers Wang, Ayres and Huyton (2013) investigated whether tourism education was meeting the needs of the tourism industry, and found that there are gaps between the curriculum and what industry needs. The study recommended that the tourism curriculum should concentrate on various skills which include written communication, problem-solving, decision-making and other management skills. These gaps identified in Australia seem to be a cause of concern in South Africa as well. This is confirmed by the study done by Molefe et al. (2019:3), which outlines the need to bridge gaps between what employers perceive graduates to be and what graduates think of themselves. The argument on preparedness in this study has much to do with exploring challenges of graduates' preparedness for the FLM role when they get to the industry, and finding ways aimed at addressing the existing challenges using the CL method. Do they have what it takes to be in that role? Examples of the gaps highlighted by Molefe et al. (2019:10) include "written communication skills, critical and analytical ability, planning and executing tasks independently and problem solving". Such gaps are a challenge that needs to be addressed if hospitality graduates wish to find themselves adequately prepared for the FLM role after graduation.

Against this background, the study focuses on graduate preparedness for an FLM role in the hospitality industry by proposing possible interventions to address the existing challenges. The FLM role is considered to be a lower management level role that deals with smaller segments of the business in an organisation (Tyrańska, 2016:27) and it involves mainly the day to day running of business and short-term planning.

In reference to personal experience, as a graduate of a UoT, there was an expectation of employment as a first line manager, considering that the programme trained students for management level, and the curriculum exit outcome for these programmes specify that after graduation, an ND holder will be at supervisory level while the holder of a BTech will be at assistant manager level in the industry (SAQA, 2013). For practical experience in the industry, graduates take part in WIL for a total period of one year, under the supervision of both the hospitality employers and the university academic staff. This way graduates have an opportunity to transfer theoretical knowledge gained from formal study to the real world of work (Henderson & Trede, 2017:76). However, from the experience of the researcher who already had WIL experience, hospitality graduates still have to work their way up after graduation. This experience was confirmed in a study conducted by Sibanyoni, Kleynhans and Vibetti (2015:6), who found that graduates are of the opinion that their academic qualifications should elevate them to management positions as their first role of employment, which is not necessarily the case. It is because there is a prevailing perception amongst employers that graduates are not adequately prepared or experienced for management roles, that hospitality employees continue to employ them to do basic industry non-managerial jobs on entry into the industry (Molefe et al. 2019:9).

Zagonari (2009) cited by Zwane, du Plessis and Slabbert (2014:4) writes that employers want graduates who are educated and can specialise in their field so as to deliver quality service in an ever-changing environment such as the hospitality sector. This would extend to the hospitality graduates being employed in the FLM role. Many graduates assume that the one-year experience at WIL combined with the practical training from their institution of learning will be sufficient to prepare them adequately for the FLM role. For this to be the case, Molefe et al. (2019:9) state that hospitality graduates must be equipped with knowledge and proper skills for them to be able to tackle FLM work challenges they encounter.

Based on the previous observations there is a need to address the challenges that exist between the employers and hospitality graduates' expectations on the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. Hospitality graduates' expectations are guided by the curriculum outcomes, which are not producing what the industry needs Zwane, du Plessis and Slabbert (2014:1).

1.3 Statement of research problem

The hospitality sector is recognised as one of the fastest growing sectors in the tourism industry. This growth calls for hospitality programmes that prepare hospitality graduates for the present and fluid demands of the industry (Nachmias et al. 2017:134). Despite this growth, the hospitality sector continues to experience a shortage of skilled labour just like other economic sectors (Horwitz, 2013:2435). This was recognised by Zwane et al. (2014:1) who argue that graduates are not equipped with skills for the workplace. This challenge has been highlighted by Sibanyoni et al. (2015:5) who found that employers have their own expectations of hospitality graduates which leads to challenges and therefore there is a need to explore these challenges and to collectively seek interventions that address the disparities in expectations.

For this study, an analysis of the challenges of preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role were explored.

1.4 Aim, purpose and objectives of the research

The study aimed to establish and possibly resolve the existing challenges/contradictions in hospitality graduates' preparation by the university for the FLM role in the industry. In order to achieve this aim, the objectives were to:

- Explore employers' and academic staff perceptions of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role.
- Locate the gaps/challenges between the hospitality graduates' university preparation and what is needed by hospitality employers for the FLM role.
- Use data gathered to envisage a way forward to bridge the existing gaps.
- Test or examine the new ideas envisaged with the academic staff and through the researcher's own reflections.

1.6 Research questions

This is a broad research question of the study which relates to the objectives of the study. The study approach is emergent in design and further questions were elicited from participants during the CL sessions.

What are the main challenges in the preparation of hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry?

The following sub-questions will guide this research project:

- What are the kinds of challenges that exist between the employers' and graduate expectations on graduate preparedness for the FLM role?

- What kinds of interventions can be tentatively suggested to address the current challenges that exist in preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry?

1.7 Delineation of the Research

The study was limited to the Cape Town region for ease of access. The study was delineated further through the selection of Hospitality graduates from a university of technology hotel school in Cape Town as part of the population. The study consisted of six graduates from the following courses: two from Food and Beverage Management, two from Accommodation Management and two from Professional Cookery. Four employers from different five star hotels in Cape Town were also part of the population. The five-star hotels selected are in the Cape Town Central Business District (CBD). The reason for this choice was that such hotels are always busy and have the capacity to employ hospitality graduates for the FLM role. The hotels' standards of service are also in line with what hospitality graduates are exposed to during their training.

Six academic staff of the UoT hotel school were selected because they had each worked in this institution for more than three years and would therefore contribute greatly to the historical aspects of this study.

1.8 Significance of the research

The study is significant as it has implications for curriculum development, and for teaching and learning in the provision of higher education hospitality management programmes. By exploring the challenges of preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role, the findings of the study provide interventions which address the expectations for future employability and graduates transition into the FLM role in the industry. The study contributes to hospitality management programmes by highlighting the challenges, and providing with new ways to enhance the competencies and skills needed by graduates for the FLM role. Furthermore, the study through the CL methodology used provides opportunities and means for engagement between employers, educational providers and graduates who will address future needs and

ensure that the hospitality management programme incorporates aspects important to enhancing graduates' employability prospects (Teng, Horng & Baum, 2013:239). The study provides potential areas for further research in the field of graduate preparedness and employability.

1.9 Chapter summary

Chapter 1 outlines the problem to be researched, which is hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. The changes that the UoT has undergone were discussed with the aim of finding out if they have any impact on the graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. This historical information is useful for the study because of its importance when using the Change Laboratory (CL) process. Change is envisaged through participants' interaction using the expansive learning process of the CL theory. The CL theory was selected for this study to enhance the needed change in the graduates' preparedness for the FLM role by bridging gaps/challenges in hospitality graduates' preparation by the university for the FLM role in the industry. The study uses activity theory (AT) as a theoretical framework and the expansive learning cycle as methodology to execute the aim of the study.

1.10 Structure of the study

Chapter 1 introduces the study and explains how it will be executed.

Chapter 2 focuses on the literature on various aspects related to the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role. These include the employers' expectations on graduates' preparedness for the FLM role, UoT transformation and how that has affected hospitality graduate preparedness for the FLM role and the hospitality graduates' curriculum. The hospitality graduates' expectations will be discussed as well. The reason for discussing the above is to explore the existing challenges in order to find a way of articulating them.

Research design is discussed in Chapter 3. Research methodology, population and the sampling method are identified. The data collection instruments and how data will be collected and analysed are outlined. The design of the hospitality graduates' CL sessions are outlined and explained.

Chapter 4 contains the results of the mirror data findings. The collected data will be presented. This will reflect the voice of the academic staff and hospitality employers on the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role.

Chapter 5 is an analysis and discussion of the CL results. The analysis provides a reflection of the CL discussions using the activity theory triangle to come up with new ideas that will see the preparedness of hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry. The discussions will follow the CL expansive learning cycle process. Only 4 stages of CL expansive learning will be done.

Chapter 6 will outline the conclusion and recommendations of the research. These will follow the CL developments of the study and the researcher's interpretations will be given. Recommendations will be that further research on the same topic be done to complete the expansive cycle process.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 outlined the topic and identified why the study was done, including how the research was executed. The aim of this chapter is to lay out the theoretical dimensions of the research, through a discussion of literature on hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. The literature review allows the researcher to read widely on the research problem so as to provide the reader with useful information (Tummons & Duckworth, 2013:15). For this study, the researcher explores the literature widely to provide a context for the research problem. The history of the hospitality industry and its current state, the tertiary system (inclusive of the curriculum) that prepares graduates for the FLM role, the hospitality employers' expectations of preparedness for the FLM role, the hospitality graduates' expectations of their preparedness for the FLM role, and the FLM role itself are discussed. The challenges that exist in the preparation of hospitality graduates for the FLM role is the main focus. The underpinning theoretical framework is discussed, and its choice for the study is motivated.

2. 2 The history of the hospitality Industry

The hospitality industry can be traced back to ancient Rome and Biblical times. According to Kulshreshtha, Yadar, Gautam and Rajanna (2016:6), the hospitality motivation arose through religion because in ancient times, priests used to travel often and they needed accommodation. As time went by, many people, for example actors, scholars and intellectuals travelled as well and this brought the need to construct rooms for travellers. During the Industrial revolution, the European countries saw the need to develop hospitality by building hotels and upgrading the taverns and inns that were already there. The growth of the hospitality industry eventually spread to other parts of the world (Kulshreshtha et al. (2016:8).

According to Skripak (2016:13), the hospitality industry is the largest segment of the tourism industry. The tourism industry refers to the travelling of people from one place to another for business or leisure (Skripak, 2016:11). Kulshreshtha et al. (2016:1), defines hospitality as the act of being kind to strangers by welcoming and entertaining them in a friendly way. There is therefore a need for hospitality graduates to be prepared for the industry so that they can be able to meet its demands. There should be a connection between what is learned in the classroom with what is done in the industry (Nachmias et al., 2017:134) so as to prevent gaps. In recent years, findings from several studies have established the existence of gaps between employers and graduates' expectations in the hospitality industry, for example, Molefe et al.

2018 and Sibanyoni et al. 2015. These gaps are of particular concern since they cause the unpreparedness of hospitality graduates. The hospitality industry is growing fast (Wakelin-Theron, Ukpere & Spowart, 2018:1), and the level of hospitality employees has to be in line with that growth, which is why there is a need for higher education institutions (HEIs) to ensure that hospitality graduates are equipped for industry with the knowledge and skills expected by hospitality employers. It has been noted that hospitality patrons are now knowledgeable people who have expectations of good service (Zwane et al. 2014:2), therefore skilled professional employees are a necessity.

2.3 UoT as a hospitality training institution

Hospitality training has seen numerous changes in its execution and even in the Institutions that provide the training. According to Du Pre (2010:6), in 1979 Colleges of Advanced Technical Education (CATEs) became technikons with the aim of offering career-oriented tertiary education. The ND was to be a three-year course with an additional year allowing the graduate to obtain a higher National Diploma. In 1993, technikons were awarded degree status, with the fourth year being the Bachelor of Technology (BTech) degree replacing the Higher National Diploma (Du Pre, 2010:6). The name 'technikon' was changed to university of technology in October 2003 after the then Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP) felt the name did not represent their higher education identity. The curriculum has also been affected by the changes over the years through the national policies (Hattingh, 2020). According to Hattingh (2020), the hospitality curriculum was the same for all UoTs that offered the hospitality curriculum. This was meant to provide uniformity and to enable quality assessment to ensure standards were assured. One of the enforced standards was mandatory interviews for all the first-year students who wanted to study hospitality management. All these fell away for varying reasons, which included the need for equitable access to education to curb the inequalities experienced in South Africa (Fongwa, 2018:7). To find if this has been a positive change for hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role or not, this study will explore the effects of such changes and more.

According to the Council for Higher Education (2013:4), the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) came into effect in October 2007. Its main objective was to allow the movement of students across universities to pursue their careers which the UoTs had previously allowed. Since then, the qualifications framework has been reviewed with the latest review completed in 2013. A number of studies have identified gaps between expectations of hospitality employers and hospitality graduates.

Molefe et al. (2019:10) found that the biggest gaps between the employers and graduates' expectations include "the ability to find and access information, written communication skills

and ability to use information". These are service-centred skills that the HEIs must be teaching hotel school graduates so that they do not lack such essential skills. According to Jaykumar (2018:14), lack of skilled workers is a crisis for the economy which must be avoided at all costs.

2.3.1 Hospitality graduates

A graduate is defined as an individual educated in institutions of higher education with qualifications at NQF level 7 (Van Broekhuizen, 2016:34). This is the level that comes after the National Diploma. Despite this definition, for this study, the researcher will use the term 'graduates' for NQF level 6 and higher. This is because the basic entry level diploma for the industry (ND in Hospitality Management) is classified at NQF Level 6. Only hospitality graduates participated for this study.

As previously indicated, the hospitality industry is regarded as a major global sector (Suprabha et al. 2017:1). Once considered an informal sector, its global growth resulted in professionalisation of the industry. This led to colleges and universities and now UoTs offering accredited hospitality qualifications, namely the ND and BTech Hospitality Management (Moolman & Wilkinson 2014:62). Hospitality students are exposed to a three-year full-time course to complete their ND in Hospitality Management. If students continue to do a fourth year then they are awarded with a BTech degree qualification, although through a recent re-curriculation process BTech has changed to Advanced Diploma and ND to Diploma. According to the SAQA exit outcomes, both these qualifications should prepare graduates for managerial positions (SAQA, 2014) because they are equipped with the skills needed (Moolman & Wilkinson, 2014:147; Makumbirofa & Saayman, 2018: 9).

2.4 Hospitality graduates' preparedness

One of the objectives of a hotel school should be to connect the university to workplaces and society. To do so there is a need for an institution to set and execute graduates' skills and knowledge that are sufficient for the graduates for any complex working environment (Garraway & Millar, 2017:17). According to Nachmias et al. (2017:134), hospitality graduate training is still failing to meet current and future needs of the hospitality industry and the challenge has been there for more than a decade. It is in light of this that the UoT hotel school subject explored in this research has aligned its four main graduates' attributes to the institution's mission statement. If hotel school graduates are empowered with these attributes, they will be better prepared. Garraway and Millar (2017:17-19) outlined the following graduate attributes of the UoT as follows:

- **Relation Capability**: this refers to understanding each other's needs, values, and cultures at interpersonal, intercultural, inter-linguistic and inter-professional level. Basically, graduates have to be able to interact with diverse people. Hospitality graduates are exposed to diversity every day; therefore, this is one of the major attributes required for success in the industry.

- **Technological knowledge, capability and foresight**: hospitality graduates must understand the link between science and technology to acknowledge the changes that these two can bring. Technology is everywhere and the hospitality industry is no exception. Hospitality graduates have to be knowledgeable when it comes to technology for services like guest reservations, and check-in and check-out procedures.

- **Ethical capability**: this includes personal, societal and professional ethics. Hospitality graduates should be concerned with the well-being and the improvement of society. They must acknowledge the concerns of others, considering that the hospitality industry deals with diverse individuals.

- **Resilience capability**: hospitality graduates should be able to solve complex problems of society confidently. These graduate attributes are vital for innovation, entrepreneurial activities and within research. Hospitality graduates need to understand that solving any problem is not easy, therefore they must act with resilience. The hospitality industry, like any other, has many challenges. For graduates to succeed in the industry they should be able to continue doing research and be resilient when it comes to solving problems because issues are different.

Equipping hospitality graduates with such attributes will assist in ensuring that they are prepared for the industry because these attributes cover all the aspects of the world of work. According to Kort and Strydom (2014:121), appropriate attributes are crucial in the tourism and hospitality industry because employees serve diverse people on a daily basis.

Farmaki (2018:50) is of the opinion that graduates' skills and knowledge combined with WIL experience help improve the graduates' competencies for the workplace. They are supported by Wang et al. (2013:10) who add that WIL prepares students in the direction of what is expected by the employers when executing work duties. Kort and Strydom (2014:121) are of the view that "work placements make a significant contribution to students' self-awareness, self-management, and self-confidence". Despite these findings, Jaykumar (2018:143) found that hospitality education institutions are still hard skill-based instead of being both hard skill soft-skill based as per the industry requirements. Jaykumar (2018:143) cites the causes of

hospitality graduates' unpreparedness as the lack of partnerships between hotel school institutions and the industry. Hospitality graduates are not flexible or willing to learn, lack initiative, are not problem solvers, and fail to work in teams (Zwane et al. 2014:4). Without these qualities, hospitality graduates will find it difficult to meet industry requirements for the FLM role.

Knowledge is defined as the actual information on a theoretical content field that graduates possess; hospitality graduates should use knowledge to apply expertise which is the skill to perform a certain task (Walken-Theron et al. 2018:4). Hospitality graduates should therefore be able to apply knowledge and skills learnt at the HEIs in the workplace.

According to Molefe et al. (2019:9), employers believe that an experienced individual is better than an individual with a qualification. Lourens and Fourie-Malherbe (2016) and Nachmias et al. (2017) are of the view that qualifications do play a part in the career development of hospitality graduates but there is a need for graduates to acquire the workplace identity by balancing academic education and industry experience. Employers require graduates who are well groomed with a variety of skills and knowledge needed for the job (Walkelin-Theron et al. 2018:4).

Molefe et al. (2019:10) suggests that students have to work on different areas of their competencies for employability purposes, even if it means volunteering their services. This can be done through utilising the knowledge and experience obtained from the institutions or WIL. The holistic conception of employability requires entry-level hospitality employees to exhibit not only generic competences, but also hospitality-related competences in order to be employable (Moolman & Wilkinson, 2014:270). A qualification on its own does not guarantee that any graduate can be a first line manager. Wang et al. (2013:11) outline that for employees to be fit for a particular role, they have to excel academically, be skilful, well-groomed and have an engaging personality. All these characteristics should be balanced. According to Sibanyoni et al. (2015:6), employers have their ideas on how the graduates should be. Their expectation is that graduates should possess the skills and abilities required by the industry.

2.5 The role of the curriculum on graduate preparedness

The role of the curriculum is to equip graduates with skills and knowledge that match the industry standards. `For this reason, Quinn and Buzzetto-Hollywood (2019:24) recommend that students and other stakeholders must be involved in curriculum processing because this will assist the development of students for industry. They also recommend that hospitality management curriculum be a skill-based one, considering that this industry is service-driven

(Wakelin-Theron et al. 2018:4). In addition, according to Van de Merwe and Septoe 2015:1), a curriculum should focus on teaching problem solving, long term planning, high order thinking and leadership. A curriculum should allow for the development and provision of basic skills which is why hospitality students are given an opportunity to do WIL. WIL and practical modules done in the kitchen and restaurant are meant to train students on integrity, accountability and responsibility (Seager, 2018:14). Hospitality graduates are expected by the industry to make informed business decisions and this is the reason why the following modules are taught during their tertiary education: Hospitality Management, Financial Management, Food and Beverage Studies, Hospitality Industry Law, Accommodation Studies and Professional Cookery. These modules are offered by the UoT under study with the aim of developing potential managers for the industry (Van de Merwe& Septoe, 2015: 7). HEIs must encourage students to think systematically and to learn beyond the curriculum needs because the world of work has challenges that require graduates to think on their feet.

Premised on this background, hospitality education should equip graduates with the necessary skills and competencies that are of importance to the prospective graduates. A fair balance must be created between academic education and WIL in order to meet the operational requirements prioritised by the industry, as well as the academic requirements as prioritised by the HEI (Rambe, 2018:3). Hospitality education must pay attention to the metacognitive skills of students to include higher order thinking techniques for implementation at an operational level (Nachmias et al. 2017:137). There is a need for hospitality education to have a relationship with the industry to ensure that it keeps abreast with the industry needs. This way a hotel school would be able to equip its graduates to be prepared for the industry (Nachmias & Walmsley, 2015:54). The current skill trends in the hospitality industry must drive what hospitality graduates learn at the hotel school so that the hotel school can produce prepared graduates for the industry (Quinn & Buzzetto-Hollywood, 2019:25). This extends to having appropriate resources such as equipment and facilities available for hospitality training and training modules (Rambe, 2018:3) According to Jaykumar (2018:140), in India, the government has prioritised hospitality education because it contributes positively to the country's economy which is why the hospitality industry is calling for HEIs to upgrade their hospitality education to match the needs of the industry (Makumbirofa & Saayman, 2018:3).

The need for hospitality graduates in South Africa has grown and it this is evident in the number of hospitality school that are continuously growing. The hotel schools are both public and privately owned. Examples of such schools include the International hotel, Cape Town Hotel School, School of Hospitality and Service Excellence and Chefs Training and Innovation Academy. According to Ezeuduji, Chibe and Nyathela (2017:11), hospitality training facilities

in Africa and globally should empower hospitality graduates with operations knowledge that would assist them to move fast on their career path to management levels.

2.5.1 First Line Management (FLM) role

The FLM role entails supervising subordinates therefore they need to have strong technical expertise and be able to plan and motivate subordinates (Weber, Crawford, Junghoon & Dennison, 2013:319). Examples of the FLM role in the hospitality industry include food and beverage supervisors, sous chefs, housekeeping supervisors, head waiters, restaurant supervisors, guest house managers, coffee shop managers and many more (Moolman & Wilkinson 2014:262). In this role, individuals are involved with daily management of a business. This could be a department or section which reports to a middle or senior manager. According to Averesch (2017), during a paper presentation at the 9th IBA Bachelor Thesis Conference, University of Twente in Netherlands on the 5th of July, an FLM role includes the skills that individuals need to have in order to execute their role at the required level. Examples of these skills are developing staff, planning, organising, leading, budgeting and managing operations.

The above skills should therefore be included in the university curriculum for hospitality graduates to execute them well in the industry.

2.6 Work Integrated Learning (WIL)

WIL is part of the hospitality curriculum and it plays a vital role in the graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry (Seager, 2018:14). The reason is that it integrates theory learned at the university with the practice in a work environment. This approach is meant to benefit both the student and the employer because the graduates should be prepared for the workplace after graduation and should have an idea of what is expected of them. The benefits of WIL to students would include increasing the knowledge level of students (Crawford & Wang, 2015:571) and improving skills, for example, communication, teamwork, management and technical skills. It also develops career opportunities for graduates (Henderson & Trede, 2017:77; Rambe 2018:16). The UoT hotel school places all third year hospitality management students to job shadow managers in their specific fields. This is meant to prepare students for a career-oriented experience which is vital for the FLM role in the industry and to bridge the existing gaps of unprepared graduates (Jeong & Jeong, 2018:120). It seems as if WIL is actually not bridging the gaps as expected. There is a gap in co-participation in working and learning (Billet, 2001:11) from both the hospitality graduates and the hospitality employers

during the WIL period. Employers should afford graduates the opportunity to learn and at the same time the graduates themselves should be ready to learn at work.

HEIs such as UoTs in South Africa offer career-focused education which is the reason why they allow students to gain practical experience through WIL and the curriculum practical modules. Students get an opportunity to develop their skills and at the same time learn new ones, thereby becoming prepared for their career paths. In China, WIL was introduced for similar reasons, to enhance the skills needed by the hospitality industry. This has been viewed by Yang, Cheung & Song (2016:86) as a critical pedagogical approach by the HEIs because it promotes the development of prepared graduates. According to Keogh, Maguire & O'Donoghue (2015:387), a workplace is a complex environment that can be overwhelming for the graduates on their first encounter. It is for this reason that graduates have to be equipped

with more than classroom knowledge to be able to transit from formal learning to the complex workplace.

As much as WIL has such influence on the graduates' career, its success can only be observed if there is monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the whole WIL process (Rambe, 2018:1). According to Atkinson (2016:6), it is unfortunate that in most cases students' development during WIL is dependent on the willingness of employers to assist in preparing the students for the industry. This is supported by the findings of Farmaki (2018:54) who suggests that most hospitality students felt that WIL exposed them to operational tasks, for example, scullery duties, as opposed to management orientation. Some students even went to the extent of referring to WIL as a period of performing "donkey work" for the establishments. This reflects failure of the WIL system to appropriately close the existing gaps. Instead, it creates negativity from students, leading to some opting out of the industry (Farmaki, 2018:54). Most hospitality graduates find themselves having to reject employment from the tourism and hospitality industry after their graduation (Sibanyoni et al. 2015:1). Hospitality employers are blamed for not bettering hospitality graduates' skills during the WIL period. According to Rambe (2018:14), employers focus on their work objectives and overlook the students' objectives. To enjoy the benefits of WIL, hospitality employers, lecturers and students should work together (Jeong & Jeong, 2018:120).

2.7 Existing challenges between hospitality employers and graduates' expectations of their own preparedness

An expectation is defined as what is perceived by an individual before exposure to the experience (Farmaki, 2018:51). According to Molefe et al. (2019:11), it is the expectation of

employers to receive graduates who are ready to work. Hospitality employers expect graduates to possess certain specialised skills that will help them deal with the fact that modern tourists are well informed (Zwane et al. 2014:1). For hospitality graduates to be employed for the FLM role, they are expected to be problem solvers who have operational and leadership skills. The graduates produced by higher education should be able to take the initiative and be willing to be part of an organisation or company through lifelong learning as they pursue their careers (Yorke & Harvey, 2005:99). Employers argue that there is no time for training graduates at a place of work, therefore graduates should be able to "hit the ground running" (Yorke & Harvey, 2005:98). Although these findings apply to all graduates, this can be linked to hospitality industry graduates who are also expected to be ready for work after graduation because this is a very busy industry that might not always have time to train graduates from scratch. There are, however, arguments that skills development is best undertaken by industry rather than by the university (Jackson, 2014:222). At the UoT, graduates focus more on developing their knowledge and skills than applying them. According to Zwane et al. (2014:4), hospitality employers expect hospitality graduates who are team players, passionate about the industry and are willing to learn through the establishment's training programmes. The hospitality industry is people-orientated, therefore hospitality graduates are expected to be able to work with people, for example, staff, guests and suppliers. Hospitality graduates are expected to be equipped with the knowledge and skills that the establishment requires (Zwane et al. 2014:5). Canadian hospitality employers expect graduates with diverse skills obtained from the institutions of learning (Chhinzer & Russo 2018:104). The hospitality employers' expectations of hospitality graduates are not only local, but international as well.

Hospitality graduates' expectations are high when it comes to higher education because there is a belief that it makes it easy for them to enter the world of work after their graduation (Sibanyoni et al. 2015:6). For graduates, possessing a qualification is a pathway to getting a proper job which would then lead to a clear career path. Graduates' expectations are that after employment, employers should guide and support them through continuous on-the-job training (Smith & Kruger, 2005:35). Graduates' expectations of themselves seem to be different from that of their employers. The expectations of graduates are that they meet the employer's needs because they have acquired the skills and knowledge from the Institution and from WIL (Walkelin-Theron et al. 2018:5). Such hospitality graduates will be able to deliver the expected results. According to Van de Merwe & Septoe (2015:2), hospitality graduates consider themselves to have the knowledge and skills to start up their businesses which therefore means that they can manage any hospitality operational environment and make higher order decisions that require critical thinking. According to Nachmias et al. (2017:137), hospitality graduates' education is a reality shock' for them because their qualification does not hold water as per their expectation it does not give them the job they expect. This then makes the

hospitality graduates lose confidence in themselves and the industry and might end up opting for a different career path.

Upon entering the industry, graduates have their own expectations in relation to what their remuneration and their working environment for their jobs should be. They individually have expectations of what they can achieve at work (Smith & Kruger, 2005:41). It is therefore important to bridge the existing gaps between graduates and employers' expectations so as to recommend a solution for both parties. These various expectations of employers and graduates highlight the need for a research intervention to address the current challenge through engaging the relevant participants to develop the necessary tools and/or teaching interventions to bridge the existing gaps.

The hospitality industry requires prepared graduates because it is continuously growing. Unfortunately, the hospitality employers are not happy with the unprepared hospitality graduates from the universities. Wakelin et al. (2018:5), suggests that bridging the existing gaps happens during graduates' higher education period. According to Quinn and Buzzetto-Hollywood (2019:22), in the USA, the government has produced programs to address gaps related to producing graduates who are prepared for the workplace. The reason for this stance is that 34% of US business leaders believe that hospitality graduates are not prepared for the industry. According to the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) (2018:1), there is an 'information gap' between hospitality graduates, employers and the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) due to a failure to keep up with trends and technology, which leads to failure to produce prepared graduates for the FLM role in the industry. Wang and Tsai (2014:129) and Quinn and Buzzetto-Hollywood (2019:28) found that there are contradictions between what employers expect from graduates and what graduates think is expected of them.

According to Whitelaw, Barron, Buultjens, Cairncross and Davidson, (2009:7), hospitality management institutions train the wrong people because the enrolment is done to get a certain number or to meet enrolment targets of the institution. This then allows for a situation where the hotel school gets graduates who do not have the right attitude, passion and intrinsic motivation to be in the hospitality industry. In this case, there are gaps between what the hospitality graduates possess and what the industry wants. Jaykumar (2018:143) is of the view that the gaps between hospitality employer and graduate expectations of the latter's preparedness is caused by classroom training which does not put emphasis on the specifics that are needed by the industry. Griesel and Parker (2009:14), in a baseline study on employers' perspectives of graduates, do acknowledge the existence of gaps generally on the employers and graduates' expectations; this research however focused specifically on the FLM role in the hospitality industry. Arguments of whether HEIs are doing justice in preparing graduates for employability continue to increase (Farmaki, 2018:50). According to Wakelin-

Theron et al. (2018:3), there is a gap between what HEIs produce for the tourism and hospitality industry and what the industry wants from the hospitality graduates.

Some employers are still of the perspective that graduates are not prepared or ready for work. According to Wakelin-Theron et al. (2018:5), hospitality employers believe that academic knowledge on its own is not sufficient, it must be accompanied by skills and experience. Hospitality employers have a feeling that hospitality graduates are overqualified with no experience for entry level management roles (Nachmias et al. 2017:112). Cai (2013:54) is of the opinion that employers change their expectations on graduates according to their own beliefs and traditions. These beliefs could be developed from the performance of the recruited employees holding the same educational credentials. Nachmias et al. (2017:137) believe that the industry underestimates the value of an academic qualification and this leads to boredom on the part of the graduates because the graduates' skills and knowledge are not utilised upon employment. It seems as if some hospitality employers have a belief that experience is the best teacher, so in their view hospitality graduates do not have the experience to take up the FLM role.

2.8 Theoretical framework

CL is an interventionist method that uses various instruments to transform work activities and develop learning (Virkkunen and Newnham 2013: xix). The action of the study was guided by the beliefs of both the constructive and transformative paradigms. The reason for selecting these paradigms was that they are useful approaches to qualitative research (Creswell, 2014:9) and are what CL as a constructivist methodology aims at achieving.

Constructivists understand their world and they define objects through their experiences (Creswell, 2014:9). In this study, hospitality graduates were familiar with the environment and constructed solutions from the discussions of the existing challenges using the activity system. The researcher therefore used open-ended questions which allowed participants to express themselves freely giving various meanings to the questions asked. This paradigm is based on historical information because participants based their responses on their background information. This information assisted the researcher with historical data that was used in the research as mirror data. The many meanings given by participants were used to formulate the needed change by both the researcher and the participants (Creswell, 2014:9), which is what CL method is about.

The transformative paradigm was used because it aims at changing the participants' environment (Creswell, 2014:9) which is what this study aims to achieve: changing the environment for the hospitality graduates so that they are prepared for the FLM role in the

industry. Hospitality graduates used the activity system triangle which assisted them in understanding issues at the hotel school and in seeking to transform those problems into possible solutions in modelling the new ways of acting.

The study aims to establish the existing challenges/contradictions in hospitality graduates' preparation by the university for the FLM role in the industry using Change Laboratory (CL) methodology, which is described as an interventionist, problem-posing and solving methodology underpinned by Activity Theory (AT) (Virkunnen and Newnham, 2013). AT is guided by the following principles (Engeström, 2001:136-137). Firstly, that we can understand human activity as purposeful or object oriented and the actions on the object are mediated by tools. Activities are the result of historical developments, thus are underpinned by the principle of historicity. Activities are also characterised by multiple community viewpoints, which produces many contradictions in the activity system. Transformation of the activity occurs through expansive learning in response to the contradictions. Expansive learning will be explained in detail in the next chapter. The CL was originally developed by Engeström and colleagues (see for example Engestrom, 1999), as a methodology that dealt with complex challenges of the human system allowing those involved with the activity to take time to understand those challenges in order to find possible solutions for them. To be able to do this, participants used the past experiences and the current ones to develop new ideas for the future (Garraway & Christopher, 2020:4). For this reason the CL method was selected for this study because it allowed participants who were involved with the research problem to bring their own past and current experiences in the study, and therefore were able to fully analyse the current practices and challenges and create proposed new ideas or solutions to the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM in the industry (for this study) (Engeström, 2001; Engeström & Sannino, 2010). AT was used to explore the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry as a theoretical framework. AT helped to clarify the way a system operates through the use of the activity system triangle (Engeström, 1987:87). The activity system triangle is a conceptual tool that helps the participants to discuss the problems with the aim of promoting change (Engeström & Sannino, 2017). The researcher had to examine the evolution of hospitality graduates' preparedness over the years so as to understand the challenges and find a way of coming up with new ways of overcoming the challenges. Therefore, discussions of the hotel school's historical and cultural background were vital. These activities were guided by interactions that occur internally and externally between the involved parties. Hospitality employers, hospitality graduates and academic staff were the parties who played a role in this study. These parties and their interactions made up the activity system (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:33). An activity system (Figure 1) is a tool

that helps locate the contradictions underpinning the challenges raised on the relationship between the subject and the object. For this study, hospitality graduates were the subjects and preparing graduates for the FLM role was the object.

The academic staff who undertake human activity to prepare the hospitality graduates for the FLM role make use of mediating tools (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:34). During the expansive learning process, tensions erupt, which could but not be limited to improper tools used, for example, old operational equipment and resistance to change (rules). This causes contradictions between activities (Engeström, 1999). Hospitality classroom learning and WIL are examples of the tools that could be used for this study. In this activity, the community included the academic staff, hospitality employers and hospitality graduates because they all play a role in the activity. According to Engeström (1999), the way each of the community members act on the object is guided by the division of labour. Members of the system play different roles. Rules are also part of the activity system. These could be the hotel school culture, terms of services, the curriculum design and rules and procedures. According to Virkkunen & Newnham (2013:34), rules are meant to guide the way subjects work on the object. Rules are meant to guide the subjects on what they are permitted to do and how to work with a community.

Below is Figure 1 illustrating the AT triangle which assists the participants of the study to understand the challenges that exist within the university.
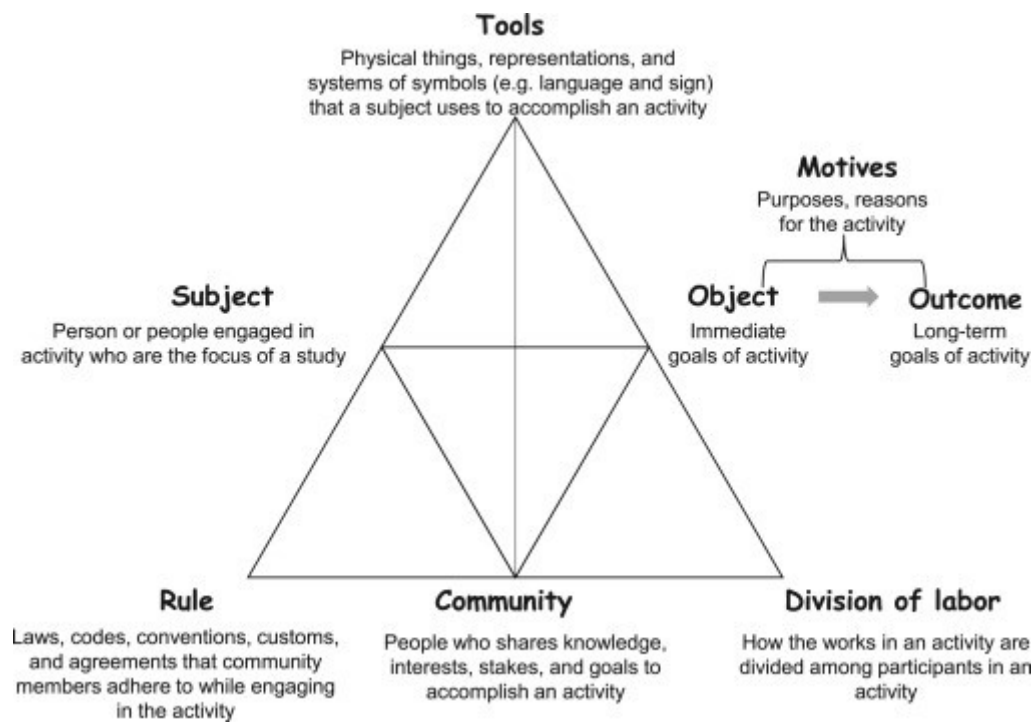
Figure 1. The organisation of human activity system
Adapted from Engeström (2001:75)

When participants work together in analysing and solving these challenges, a cyclical process is formed. This process is called expansive learning (Engeström 2001:78). This process allows participants to question each other on the challenges until they reach a point where they find a solution which is scrutinised before implementation. The triangle (activity system) is a tool for the CL and the expansive learning process.

The activity model system focuses on the challenges of the current problem. The past and the current systems related to the problem at hand were used as instruments to model the future. Participants would hopefully transform the situation through engaging actively and collaboratively with conceptual tools (Engeström, 2011:602). The expansive learning cycle is a tool used by this study to find a new solution to the challenges. It is a process where participants engage in a discussion to find a new way of thinking in order to find solutions to a problem. This study focused on the first four stages of the cycle due to time constraints. The expansive learning method will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

2.9 Chapter Summary

The literature explored in this chapter reveals that the hospitality industry requires graduates who are prepared for the industry. It also noted that there are indeed existing gaps between hospitality employers and hospitality graduates regarding the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role. Hospitality graduates have their own expectations which are highlighted by Zwane et al. (2014:5), while on the other hand, Wakelin-Theron et al. (2018:5), indicates that hospitality employers have their own expectations of the graduates' preparedness for the industry. Many researchers have identified the existing contradictions and this study explores these contradictions in order to find solutions.

WIL as a component of the hospitality curriculum seems to be lacking in its intended purpose of ensuring that graduates are prepared. The reasons for this were discussed in this chapter, and were further explored during the CL intervention workshop sessions with the hospitality graduates. HEIs continue to change the hospitality curriculum in an effort to produce prepared hospitality graduates; however, hospitality employers are still not satisfied with the graduates produced. This study explores the challenge of unprepared hospitality graduates using the CL expansive learning method in the following chapter, with the aim of finding a solution to the problem. Activity theory and expansive learning help guide the process of CL intervention, therefore both were used by this study as the theoretical framework and methodology respectively.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed literature by various researchers on hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. The UoT as a hospitality training institution and the existing contradictions between hospitality employers and hospitality graduates' expectations were explored as well. This chapter discusses in depth how the research of the study was done, including the tools used to gather the research information. The activity system, i.e. the tool used, was discussed by the participants using CL methodology. The

research design followed the expansive learning cycle in which the activity system was used to find solutions to the existing challenges of the research problem. The instruments and ways of collecting data were identified. The chapter outlines all the research done, how it was done, with whom, and why it was done that way. The limitations of the study and the ethical considerations will be discussed.

3.2 Methodology

Change Laboratory (CL) as previously stated as a methodology was used to work through complex challenges of the human system in a participatory approach (Garraway & Christopher, 2020:4). This methodology allows researchers to creatively apply it in the development of any work activities as need arises. In this study, this interventionist methodology relates to the main aim and objectives of this study which is why it was selected by the researcher. The following were the objectives of this study:

- To explore the employers and academic staff perceptions of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role.
- To locate the gaps/challenges between the hospitality graduates' university preparation and what is needed by hospitality employers for the FLM role.
- Use data gathered to envisage a way forward to bridge the existing gaps.
- To test or examine the new ideas envisaged with the academic staff and through the researcher's own reflections.

Traditionally, CL allows participants to solve their own problems in their working activities; this study gathered information to solve problems in the hospitality department of a UoT. Hospitality graduates participated in the CL sessions, with the hospitality employers and academic staff being used for collecting mirror data. This way the results from these sessions were used to bring about the solutions to the research problem as per the expansive learning cycle. To do this, the set-up on Figure 2 was used in the CL sessions.
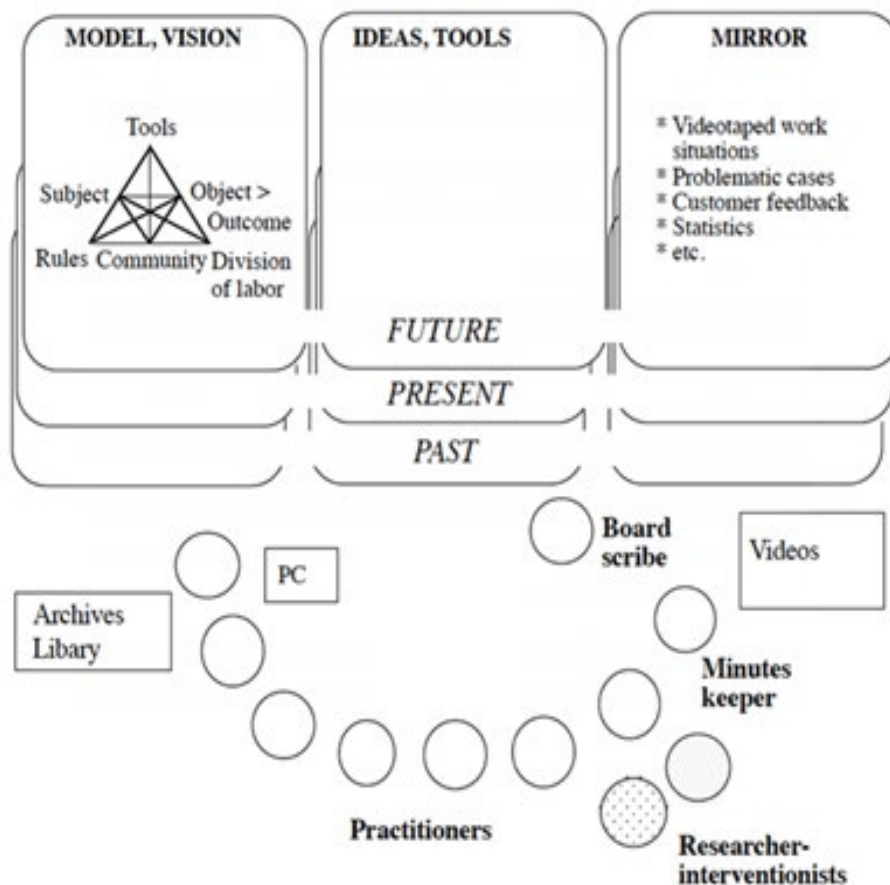
Figure 2. A prototypic layout and Instruments of the Change Laboratory space (CL set-up

Adapted from Engeström (1996:11)

A group of six hotel school graduates worked in four sessions and intensively analysed the challenges of preparing hotel school graduates with the aim of coming up with the needed changes. Figure 2 above illustrates the research method used by this study. The tiles in the figure represent the past, present and future of the activity. For this study, the hotel school graduates' preparedness was discussed from past, present (current) and future perspectives. Discussing these was meant for participants to engage on the differences in the preparedness of hospitality graduates in these various periods. This then led to discussions of what was right for the future and on how that could be achieved. The method began on the right hand column of Figure 2 through to the left hand one. The right hand column of the mirror provided participants with a reflection of the current practice. The current practice was what was being done at that particular period at the hotel school, using available tools (expansive learning and the activity system triangle) in preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role.

Historically analysing contradictions enabled participants to find the real causes of the problem which then enabled them to envisage a change (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:51). Hotel school graduates were seated in a circular pattern in a position accessible to the video camera for recording purposes. To observe all the participants clearly, the researcher sat on the side where all the participants were visible.

3.2.1 Mirror Data

Mirror data is defined by Virkkunen and Newnham (2013:15) as the documentation, observed work activity or video recording that can be used by a researcher to stimulate comments in an interview. Mirror data was used as the first stimulus and then the analysis done by hospitality graduates to solve the problem identified (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:16) as the second stimulus. The researcher interviewed the hotel school academic staff and the hospitality employers (industry partners) to get the mirror data which was used in provoking tensions in the CL workshop sessions with the hotel school graduates. Video clips and historical information were used in the employers' interview session.

3.2.2 CL workshops and expansive learning process

The CL workshop sessions used the mirror data to help the graduates formulate ideas and concrete tools that envisaged solutions to the problems associated with the practical concepts of hotel school graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry.

The vision or aim of the research was to find solutions to the hotel school graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry within the hotel school training environment. The activity system's subject, tools, rules, community and division of labour were discussed in the CL workshop sessions. According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013:34), activity theory enables participants to use tools (for example, WIL), rules (for example hotel school rules and culture), community (for example, hospitality employers and hotel school management board), division of labour (for example university management duties, academic staff, food and beverage instructors and chef instructors) to analyse the object (graduates' preparedness for FLM role) to get to the new changes (outcome) where a solution is then obtained through interaction amongst the participants in the CL.

Four CL workshop sessions were held with the hospitality graduates and as mentioned above, the expansive learning process was used. Session one was used as a learning action of the expansive cycle whereby hospitality graduates were exposed to the mirror data and were allowed to explore the problem by expressing their thoughts and feelings on the problem. The journey continued to session two with hospitality graduates continuing with the questioning

stage. The researcher who facilitated the research, introduced the activity system triangle (Figure 1) and explained the meaning of each of the parts of the triangle in relation to the research problem. Hospitality graduates were then tasked to plot the triangle for the hotel school activity system for discussion in the next session. Session three was the analysis and modelling stage. The first part of the session focussed on theorising the challenges to contradictions through the activity system triangle and the second part of it was spent on historical analysis where the hospitality graduates had to reflect at how things used to be in the past and how they were currently, and envisaged on what changes they wanted for the future in relation to the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role. Session three was therefore for both analysis and modelling as new ideas kept on coming from the hospitality graduates. The last session was used for the modelling stage of the learning process. In this session, hospitality graduates formulated new ideas to resolve the problem as well as a potential future activity system triangle (Figure 5), which is explained in the following chapter. The fourth stage of the expansive learning was done with the academic staff who participated in examining the new ideas produced by the hospitality graduates during the CL sessions.

3.2.3 Data Collection

The researcher collected all the data by herself. All the participants were asked to sign a consent form agreeing to be part of the study. The data was collected from hospitality employers and academic staff between May and July when it was the hospitality industry off-season. The workshop sessions with the hospitality graduates lasted for at least one and a half hours and four sessions in total were held. Schedules for the proceedings of the workshop sessions were planned by the researcher and the participants. For the CL workshop sessions with the hospitality graduates, the meeting dates were agreed upon by all the participants using social media (WhatsApp) group chat. The CL workshop sessions were conducted following the expansive learning process (Figure 3) with the first one focussing on introducing the research topic to the hospitality graduates. The questioning stage was completed in the first session. This was the time when the challenges were exposed followed by the continuation of the questioning and analysis process in the second session. The second session involved theorising the challenges using the AT triangle. Analysis and modelling were completed in the third session where the theorising of challenges continued and at the same time the modelling of the needed changes were highlighted. The final session dealt with resolving the identified challenges before examining the proposed solutions brought about.

The researcher used a historical analysis method to get as much information on the past as possible about the problem at hand. This was done through the use of historical literature, in-

depth interviews with the academic staff who have been at the institution for more than three years and with hospitality graduates during the CL analysis stage.

All the CL workshop sessions with the hospitality graduates were video-recorded, audio-recorded and transcribed. The CL workshops were done through a facilitation method where the researcher was the facilitator and the hospitality graduates were respondents. The researcher guided the workshops by asking questions guided by the research questions and the objectives. Own notes were taken as well. The researcher also wrote down any non-verbal communication or use of certain words that needed to be analysed by the researcher, for example, connectors and transitions.

Participants were allowed to ask each other questions as they analysed the problem of the contradictions that exist in the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. The structured interactions between the participants were conducted in sessions to allow for enough time to explore the different activity systems that had an impact on the outcome of the object. This allowed disturbances and contradictions to be identified so that they could be resolved. Observations of any contradictions arising were noted as well (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:190). The venue used was private and comfortable for the participants and they felt at ease.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

The audio recorded data was transcribed. The researcher read through the notes, watched the videos for observations and also wrote down notes for research analysis purposes. The analysis was done by hospitality graduates through the CL sessions two, three and four through the facilitation of the researcher. Hospitality graduates followed the expansive learning cycle where analysis of the research problem happened in all the stages. Empirical analysis which focused on the activity system and the historical analysis which focused on the reflections of the past were both used during the CL sessions by the hospitality graduates. Hospitality graduates were assigned a task to present their ideas on the activity triangle after which a discussion was held with the researcher. The researcher had to consider later the underlying meanings of the participants' contributions. This was done through assigning data gathered from the sessions to the activity elements. This then allowed a process of finding where the main contradictions lied on the activity system. Emerging themes were identified. New artefacts (those brought up by participants as solutions to the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role) of how the new activity system should be organised were recorded by the researcher.

3.3 Research Design

At the heart of this research lie existing challenges/contradictions in hospitality graduates' preparation by the university for the FLM role in the industry. To make sense of these existing contradictions required a research approach which allowed for deeper engagement and understanding. When participants worked together in analysing and solving contradictions, a cyclical process was formed. This process is called the theory of expansive learning (Virkkunen and Newnham (2013:75). This process allowed participants to question each other on the contradictions until they reached a point where they found a solution which was scrutinised before implementation. Figure 3 below illustrates the cycle of expansive learning which this study used.
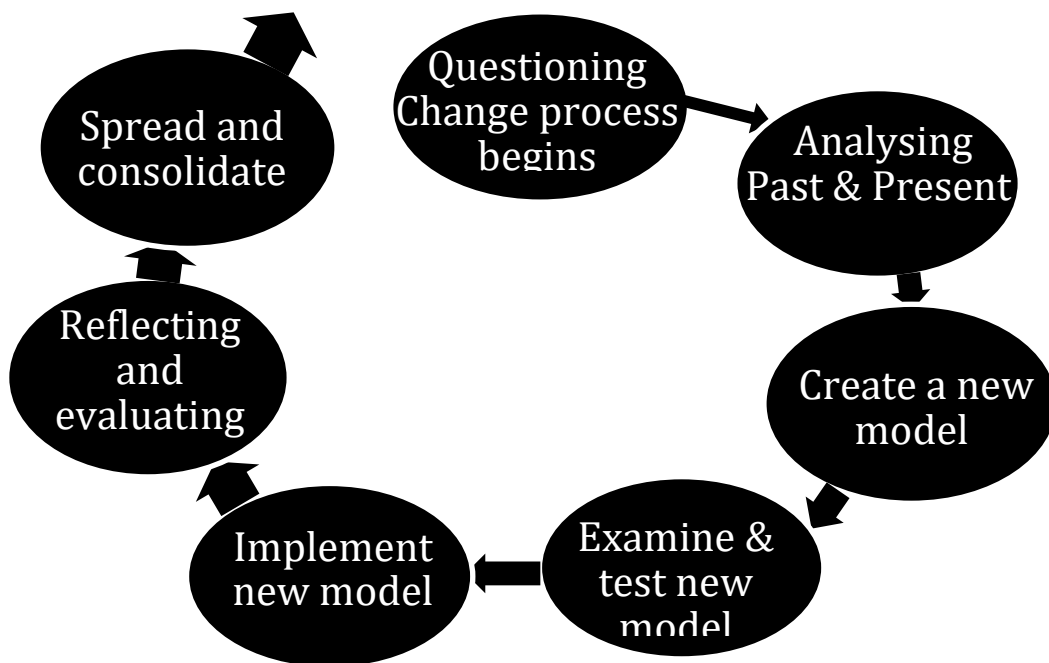
Figure 3. Expansive Learning Cycle

Adapted from Virkkunen and Newnham (2013:75).

The cycle of expansive learning is a model of a new change or solution to the problem. The researcher used structured workshop sessions with a group of hotel school hospitality graduates. A focus group is defined by Creswell (2014:87) as interaction between multiple participants through structured or unstructured discussions. The structured workshop sessions

were used in a way that allowed participants to freely explore the subject of activity in discussion (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:29). Four one hour sessions were held with the participants. The workshop sessions took place during the hospitality industry off-season period because participants were not very busy at work so they had time to attend. The first three stages of the expansive cycle were covered in four sessions. The examining of the changes was done as a follow-up session with the academic staff as a way of checking if the changes outlined by the workshop sessions could be tested.

The questioning stage was the starting point where participants' tensions were high and they were questioning and answering each other. The researcher used provocative questions to get the participants to come out of their shells and express themselves. The mirror data provoked the participants and served as the first stimulus. This was the strength of the expansive learning because the participants' tensions were observed and noted for analysis. The next stage was an analysis in which participants discussed the existing gaps in the hotel school graduates' preparedness with reference to the past and the present so as to find solutions for the future. Introducing conceptual tools, in this case the activity system model, became the second stimulus (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:16). The solutions that the hotel school graduates identified were then presented to the hotel school academic staff for examining and testing. This might then give room to implementation in the future. It should be noted though that the CL expansive cycle is a difficult and lengthy process that takes long to accomplish (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:51). For this reason, this study focussed only on the first four stages of the expansion cycle, namely questioning, analysis, modelling and examining.

The CL sessions followed the study research design which is the expansive learning cycle. The dates on when the sessions were held and the information of what transpired on the sessions are outlined.

3.3.1 Table 1. Design of CL sessions with hospitality graduates

Workshop Session and Date	Contents	Mirror Material	Methods	Learning Actions
Session 1 (31/07/2019)	● Introduction of the study and the CL method and the expansive learning cycle.	● Video clips of academic staff and hospitality employers' interviews.	● PowerPoint slides for the introduction and the expansive learning cycle.	Questioning-change process begins

	● Exploring the problem by participants – participants venting their thoughts and feelings		● Questions to provoke participants on the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role for the industry.	
Session 2 (12/08/2019)	● Introduction of the activity theory triangle. ● Discussion and analysis of the activity system of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. ● Theorising challenges	● Group work discussions on the activity system triangle.	● Activity theory handout for each participant. ● Flip charts for group members to scribe their ideas. ● Task – Participants to complete the activity system triangle	Questioning and analysis of past and present
Session 3 (16/09/2019)	● Discussion of the task. ● Historical analysis of hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry related to the activity theory's rules, subjects, tools, community and division of labour so as to identify problems related to the object. ● Identifying contradictions	● The activity system: historical problems versus the current activity system	● The group worked on the current activity system.	Analysis and Modelling new ways
Session 4 (14/10/2019)	● Development of new changes or ideas to the current activity system. ● Resolving contradictions	● Current activity system triangle ● Video clips from the previous session	● Group work on the activity system triangle for the future (finding solutions to the study problems).	Modelling of new ways
Academic staff engagement 05/03/2020	● Hospitality graduates' new ideas presented to academic staff ● Academic staff examines the new ideas to verify if they can be used to rectify the research problem.	N/A	● Individual work on the examination of new ideas. ● Each academic staff responds to the email sent. ● Feedback from academic staff.	Examining the new ideas brought up by hospitality graduates

Adapted from Guzman (2019:75-77)

The researcher also became part of the research, which allowed her to have a rich understanding of the whole process of the hospitality graduates' preparedness. Brief historical research of the hotel school was used as mirror data in the study. The reason for including this type of research was to be aware of what used to happen in relation to hospitality graduates' preparedness and track the changes; how it has impacted the present; and then decide on what would work for the future. The same applied for the hospitality employers and the hospitality graduates.

3.4 Population

The population for this study was the hospitality employers from the five star hotels in the Cape Town CBD, hospitality academic staff from the UoT's hotel school in the Western Cape and the hospitality graduates from the same UoT from the three streams, namely Accommodation Management, Food and Beverage Management and Professional Cookery. The hospitality academic staff who participated had spent at least three years at the hotel school which enabled them to respond to interview questions regarding past practices at the hotel school and its impact on hospitality graduates' preparedness. They could therefore analyse the present state of the hospitality graduates' preparedness and determine how the problem could be articulated going forward. Participants for this study were of any age, gender and ethnicity. The reason for selecting these participants was that they dealt with the object on a daily basis and were able to compare the past and the present problems and work towards the possible future (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:65). The academic staff and hospitality employers were selected for mirror data purposes only.

The two five-star hotel employers who were part of the mirror data group were contacted by the researcher by email. The hotel training manager was asked to identify managers who participated from one hotel in this study, and then sent an email with all the information to the researcher. The training manager was selected because of her expertise and experience that in the industry. The employer from the second hotel responded to the email as well. The reason for choosing five-star hotel employers was because they have the capacity to enrol hospitality graduates for the FLM role as they provide twenty four-hour service to the guests. This means they need more manpower compared to lower graded hotels, and the five-star hotels' excellent standard of service is what hospitality graduates are exposed to during their practicals in the kitchen and restaurant at the Institution, thus the study measures graduates' competencies against these hotels.

For the hospitality graduates, the researcher requested graduate volunteers to participate using the UoT's Work Integrated Learning office. She specified that only two graduates from a particular stream can participate to ensure that all the streams were represented.

3.5 Sampling

Self-selection non-probability sampling was used for the hospitality graduates. Fox and Bayat (2007) describe self-selection sampling as an approach where individuals are allowed to volunteer to participate. A total of six hospitality graduates representing each of the following Hospitality Management streams (Accommodation Management, Food and Beverage Management and Professional Cookery) were asked to participate, because the different hospitality streams might have different employability experiences after graduation. A notice was sent by the researcher through the Work Integrated Learning office alumni database for the hospitality graduates to indicate their interest in participating in the study. The participants constituted graduates from 2010 to 2018.

Purposive sampling was used for six hospitality academic staff members who had worked at the hotel school for at least three years. The reason for using this type of non-probability sampling was that these participants met the criteria of people with the richest ideas on the research problem (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016:3) that the researcher needed for the study. The participants were easily accessible and were willing to take part to effect the needed change because they represented the relevant population for the study. The CL method was used to stimulate the hotel school graduates to formulate solutions to the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry.

For the hospitality employers, an email was sent out requesting that they participate in the study. The email was sent to all five-star hotels in the CBD and the first two that responded were used for the study. In total four hospitality employers from two five-star hotels were interviewed. Two five-star hotels in Cape Town were part of the focus group. One Food and Beverage manager from one of the five-star hotels took part in the group with three managers (training manager, front of house manager and a housekeeper) from the other five-star hotel, thus ensuring that different departments were represented in the study. A letter requesting employers to participate was emailed to them and they responded to the letter in writing.

It should be noted though that since this study used the CL method, the sampling of staff and hospitality employers was to gather information to be used for the workshop sessions for stimulus purposes for the hospitality graduates during the workshop sessions.

3.6 Data collection instruments

According to Goddard and Melville (2009:36), an instrument is a research device used for measuring data. The hotel school academic staff and hospitality employers were interviewed first before meeting the other participants because the information obtained from them was

used as mirror data for the workshop sessions. The interview protocol (Appendix B) used included a list of questions prepared by the researcher. These detailed and specific questions were meant to guide the interview process for both the academic staff and the hospitality employers. The reason for using this instrument was because it allowed questioning of sensitive and highly emotional issues (Welman, Kruger and Mitchell, 2005:81). The data was used to elicit forms of agency from the participants as they scrutinised the problem (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:51). The research instrument used for the mirror data was the in-depth interviews where participants were questions on the problems they felt were affecting the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. Unstructured questions were used to allow participants to express themselves.

For the CL workshop sessions, structured interactive sessions were used for the hospitality graduates who were involved in populating the activity system. A recorder was used to videotape and audio record the proceedings of the sessions. The recordings were all transcribed. The recordings assisted the researcher in analysing data.

3.7 Validity and reliability

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:199), validity refers to checking accuracy and credibility of findings of the study while reliability refers to the research approach that is consistent even when different researchers or studies are used. For a study to be qualitatively valid, the researcher's findings have to be accurate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:200). Participants were used to determine the accuracy of the findings through listening to the audio-recordings of all the CL workshop sessions and giving their views on them (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014.2). To ensure qualitative reliability, all changes outlined by participants after listening to the audiotape were taken note of. Prolonged time was spent with the participants during the CL workshop sessions which allowed the researcher to develop more understanding of the study, while on the other hand, the participants got used to the setting and were free to give deep information on the subject.

3.8 Ethical considerations

The study did not cause danger to any individual. A consent form was given to participants stating the purpose of the study. Participants were assured that confidentiality would be observed and that it was their right to participate and they could withdraw whenever they felt like doing so (Creswell, 2014:23). The research was only done after the researcher had been granted an ethics clearance certificate (number 2019FBRE623) by the Ethics committee from the Faculty of Business and Management Sciences (Appendix A). Graduates' right to privacy was considered, which is why the researcher sent emails to the graduates willing to participate

through the WIL office. This was done in consideration of the Protection of Personal Information Act, No 4 of 2013 (PoPI Act), Government Gazette of 2013 (Republic of South Africa, 2013:7). Interview sessions were held in a quiet and private setting where all the participants felt at ease and were comfortable to participate freely (Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, dos Santos & Masenge 2014: 225). Participants were informed that a copy of the transcribed interviews would be sent to any participant who requested it, otherwise an email was sent to all the participants to thank them after completion of sessions.

3.9 Deliverables (research outputs and uptake)

The research will benefit hospitality graduates who will know what is expected of them by the hospitality employers for the FLM role. The hotel school academic staff can empower hospitality graduates with the knowledge and skills that not only prepare hospitality graduates for employment but for the FLM role. The hospitality industry would benefit because the results of the research will enable them to understand what to expect from hospitality graduates and how to assist graduates during their WIL period. The study recommends that these parties work together which in the end would benefit the country as a whole. Hospitality is in need of skilled workers to meet the demands of tourists (Makumbirofa & Saymaan, 2018:4), therefore the use of the results of this study would have a positive impact on the country's economy.

3.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 discussed the study's research methodology and design. The process of the CL expansive learning method was explained and the research paradigm outlined. The chapter further discussed the population, sample, data collection, data instruments and data analysis used by the study. The reasons for selecting these specifically for this study were highlighted. Ethical considerations and the study outputs were outlined as well. The validity and reliability of the study was described. Chapter 4 will discuss and analyse the results obtained from the discussions with the participants.

CHAPTER 4

MIRROR DATA FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focussed on outlining the research method and how the data for the research was collected. The study's ethical considerations and the outputs and uptake were also highlighted. In this chapter, the findings are presented based on the mirror data sessions that were held with academic staff and hospitality employers. As defined in the previous chapter, mirror data is the documentation or video recordings used by the researcher to stimulate comments in the CL sessions with the hospitality graduates. The mirror data was used to provoke the hospitality graduates during their first session in order to stimulate them to respond to the presented information. The findings are outlined and in the process themes to be used for the CL workshop sessions are identified. These themes came up from data the researcher gathered from the in-depth interviews with the academic staff and hospitality employers. The reporting of the findings were guided by the questions asked during the interview sessions.

The mirror data began with in-depth interviews to gather opinions and perceptions from hotel school academic staff and hotel employers on the challenges experienced by hospitality graduates' in terms of preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. Mirror data is the data that was collected prior to meeting for CL sessions with the hospitality graduates. For this study, mirror data included historical data as well. This data was used for the CL workshop sessions to stimulate hospitality graduates' participation on the research problem. In their mirror-data session, academic staff were asked to address key questions central to the main question related to hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. The interview protocol (Appendix B) for mirror data was followed as the researcher introduced the topic and explained how the interview process was going to be done. The academic staff participants were coded as Academic Staff (thereafter referred to as AS) with the relevant number allocated to each participant.

4.2 Mirror-data: academic staff interview

4.2.1 Graduates' preparedness for the FLM role

The first objective of the study was to explore employer and academic staff perceptions of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role. Academic staff who participated were asked the following question was posed to academic staff. What are your thoughts on the preparedness of hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry? The responses

indicated that the university prepared hospitality students theoretically for work roles but that the practical component was best done with some form of practice in the workplace. The following quotes illustrates this as follows

> I feel that hospitality graduates are equipped fully with theoretical knowledge which is not the case with the practical component. This is because they pass the given exams. It's not that hospitality graduates are not competent, they need that extra support to build their confidence (AS1)

> Hospitality employers should play a role in developing hospitality graduates for the FLM role because the foundation is already done by the hotel school (AS2).

Academic staff went on to highlight an additional difficulty/challenge with hospitality students, arguing that the student interest in the hospitality industry and their willingness to engage in learning was an important intrinsic motivating factor to consider.

> FLM role preparedness cannot be for all students because some do not have the passion for the industry (AS6).

This point was seconded by AS1 and 2 who coupled the lack of intrinsic motivation with the idea that students who were registered for the hospitality management programme were not necessarily there as a result of their own choice, as the following quote suggests:

> most hospitality graduates did the hospitality management course because they were not selected for their first choice courses on their application to the university (AS4).

The point that some hospitality students only do the hospitality course because that is what is available at the time was supported by AS6, who further emphasised that there was a need for hospitality students to have some hospitality industry experience before applying to the university, because this would help them to have an understanding of the industry.

> Hospitality graduates need to have a hospitality background from high school or from the hospitality industry. Students are young by the time they start their first year to know what they want as a life career, what students are sure of though is that they want to study (AS2)

Academic staff were in agreement that although some staff members believed that doing practicals and WIL did prepare hospitality students for work, some problems also emerged.

> The problem was that in some establishments, the WIL schedule is not followed by the employers which then fails the students in their preparation process for the FLM role. An example is [that] the third year WIL schedule which allows students to shadow managers, rarely happens; if it does, [it is] because in most cases the students are used as replacement for absent staff members or off sick ones. The WIL office must enforce the industry to follow the schedule to avoid students being section employees or employee replacements (AS1).

The academic staff had earlier on indicated that hospitality students should get practice to support their learning at the school. The above quote however shows that this does not always work because the hotel school rules are not followed, for example, the WIL schedule. According to AS1, a further issue that may have affected hospitality students learning during WIL may have been financial:

> The strain on the economy has seen some students being placed for WIL in establishments that cannot afford to pay them, and that for some students that was a deal breaker.

Enrolment numbers and staff ratio were considered to be a problem by academic staff as an increase in student numbers was not necessarily matched by increased staffing and other resources. This quote by AS4 highlighted this challenge:

> The volume of the students enrolled does not allow thorough training to happen. An example is how difficult it is to assess and observe thirty-two students cooking at the same time during a practical lesson. This way the enrolment policy is failing the students. It should be noted though that these changes were effected for equity access purposes, which was an advantage to the then underprivileged societies.

When asked for their thoughts on the importance of experience for the hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry, most academic staff were in agreement that hospitality graduates lacked the required experience for the FLM role in the industry. According to AS2,

> Hospitality students still did everything by the recipe which is not a practical exercise in the industry because employees have experience and they estimate the quantity of ingredients for recipes. There is no substitute for experience and as much as graduates had certain competencies, they still require experience which comes with time, to perform FLM roles.

The researcher asked if the lack of experience of hospitality graduates could be caused by the differences in how HEI practicals were done compared to industry work. AS2's line of thought was supported by AS1 who added that

> The practical component is important in the industry and the three years that the hospitality graduates are exposed to at tertiary level is not enough to prepare them for the experience needed in the industry.

On the other hand, AS2, stated that "that is the reason why employers have to chip in with induction and training of graduates to enhance their preparedness for the FLM role in the industry".

AS4 was of the view that the "curriculum seems to be too packed and lacking the focus on the industry needs". The issue of the overpacked curriculum was supported by her following statement:

> There are too many modules and everything is done 200%, I feel that there should be specialisation in hospitality management, for example, Bachelor of Communication in Hospitality Management, instead of exposing students to everything as this becomes overwhelming especially for those that fail some modules. My concern is that the hotel school system is letting down students by not assessing how the academic staff teach students but emphasises only on going through the content.

4.2.2 Historical reflections on hospitality graduates' preparedness

In response to the question on how hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role was in the past compared to current practice, the first change mentioned by academic staff was the

students selection process. The academic staff acknowledged that the past selection method produced better prepared hospitality graduates than the current one but it unfortunately did not give equal access to all students as those that did not have prior experience were not considered. This was reflected by AS1 who stated that

> Students with hospitality experience were interviewed for selection for enrolment at the hotel school, therefore this process left out the ones with a passion to study hospitality without the needed experience or exposure. When UoT began, the UoT policies were used and that fell away.

AS3 stated that as much as the UoT process seemed fine,

> There was still a need to interview students so that those students wishing to study hospitality could get to know of the long working hours, late working and public holiday working before registering for the hospitality course. This would help expose students to the expectations of the industry.

Hospitality students should be given an opportunity to shadow in the industry before or just after being accepted for a hospitality management course. This would allow them to make informed decisions on whether to continue or not.

All in all, from what was said, the academic staff seemed to be backing up the idea of interviews as a good step towards ensuring that hospitality graduates are prepared for the FLM role in the industry.

4.3 Hospitality employers in-depth Interviews

After collecting mirror data from academic staff, there was a need for the researcher to meet with the hospitality employers for yet another mirror data collection meeting. The reason for doing this was to ensure that all the subjects that played a role in hospitality graduates' preparedness contributed to the study. These contributions were essential because they provided information for use on the hospitality graduates' CL sessions. Further, hospitality employers, like the academic staff, are part of the community of the activity system being explored by the researcher. The participants were referred to as Employer with the assigned participant number indicated after the letter E.

4.3.1 Hospitality employers on hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry

All four five-star hospitality employers who are based in the Cape Town CBD agreed that the hospitality graduates they were receiving currently had changed and were not prepared for the FLM role. This was in response to the question of how they found the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role. E2 stated that "hospitality graduates do not want to work during

public holidays, weekends and overtime. They do not understand that in the hospitality industry, shifts change unexpectedly". This matches what the academic staff said about the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. The researcher would later find out from hospitality graduates why this is the case and how it can be dealt with.

Hospitality employers expressed their thoughts on hospitality graduates through some of the comments they made, for example:

> So, I basically think students are coming in today. I don't know, I think they think life is easy. I don't know what they are being told by lecturers but what I know is that, as a student, I didn't backchat or question management. At five o'clock when leaving the workplace, you could be told to work a double shift, you would gladly do it unless there was a genuine reason not to. With the current graduates, it is always, `No I can't' (E1).

The above quotation by E1 suggests the hospitality students' attitude to working in the industry, their interest and motivation, seem to be lacking, although, there is a need to look into other aspects of students' circumstances that may impact on work.

> Hospitality graduates think they will get employed in the industry for a few months and then be promoted to a manager where they would work normal shifts and be off on weekends. Although hospitality graduates are technically good, they do not have people management skills. For a five-star establishment, there is no way they can start at the FLM level. When hospitality graduates come here, they think it's a fairy tale type of thing, they think it's what they have seen on reality television or on the internet (E2).

Participant E2's comments are a reflection of how hospitality students have too high expectations about how they will work after graduation. They seem to not realise that they will have to work their way up through the organisation. To further support the observation that the current hospitality graduates are often not committed to the hospitality industry and believe they would immediately get senior positions and salaries, E2 stated that

> I have a feeling that hospitality graduates are joining the industry just for experience after which they would move to other industries or be entrepreneurs and this is the reason why they have a high expectancy when it comes to salaries. They have no idea that getting an FLM role in the industry is a foundation to their career, not being paid high salaries.

Despite the points highlighted above by her colleagues, E3 acknowledged that "there are still a few hospitality graduates who are passionate and are willing to learn". The view was seconded by E4, who stated that,

> Hospitality graduates have theoretical than operations knowledge and they do not have the Micros back of house operational knowledge, for example, creating recipes and changing prices of products'. The hotel school as a hospitality training institution needs to be industry focussed.

The hospitality employers felt that even though the hospitality students were quite well prepared theoretically, they did not always have the industry related practical knowledge they needed at work.

This was supported by E4 who noted that the "hospitality finance module done at the hotel school and what is done in the industry are two different things. Hospitality graduates lack

basic costing and stocktaking skills in the industry". There was a consensus among hospitality employers with E4's view that hospitality graduates lacked knowledge of work practices and this came through again in their approaches to leadership because

> No book could teach one to manage people of different backgrounds and age groups. One had to be on the ground to manage and get the reality of it instead of throwing weight on other people like hospitality graduates did when given an opportunity to lead (E1).

When asked if they thought that hospitality graduates had passion for the industry, E3 was the first one to express his feelings:

> I do not understand why most hospitality graduates chose to study the course when they are not passionate at all. This is despite the fact that the course is expensive.

E1 added that "most hospitality graduates lack discipline and respect, for example, they use slang, words like 'okay' or 'dude' to an establishment's paying guests."

These comments by the hospitality employers reflected what had already been mentioned by the academic staff who had indicated that they believed hospitality students lacked industrial practical know-how; however, they thought the hospitality employers should provide this. They also mentioned that hospitality students lacked passion for the industry.

To curb such behaviour, E4 suggested that "hospitality graduates must take part time jobs in the industry during their tertiary training period or even volunteer to work in the industry before applying to study the hospitality management course".

E3 indicated that "hospitality graduates took work related matters personally and are very emotional. They do not understand that the hospitality industry comes with a lot of pressure due to its unique skills needs."

This could be a reflection of the fact that hospitality students are not adequately prepared for the world of work. Perhaps shadowing at work in the first few weeks could give them a sense of the hospitality industry's needs and expectations.

4.3.2 Reflections on hospitality graduates' preparedness in the past

In response to the question whether past hospitality graduates were better than the current ones, most hospitality employers agreed. They all agreed that lack of respect and discipline was on the rise among current hospitality graduates. According to E1, "the current hospitality graduates lack grooming and have no discipline". In response to E1's comment, E2 stated that "it has got worse with the years, I deal with placements". E2 further suggested that the hospitality students should be exposed to the industry in the early stages of their course, as in the past, instead of waiting until the end of first year as currently practiced. E3 suggested that

interviews before first year enrolment should be reinstated because they assisted students with the knowledge of what to expect in the industry, therefore enabling them to make informed decisions before registering for the course.

> I do not think students are always cognitive of what they are getting themselves into, to be honest. As someone who wanted to study hospitality, I was never exposed to the industry before, but the way the interviews were done was to check what type of personality the person has and to find out what their interests are including their passion for the industry (E3).

The participant felt that the interviews played a huge role in giving hospitality students an idea of what the industry is all about.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The findings of the mirror data were collected and both the hospitality employers and the academic staff seemed to agree that hospitality graduates were not always as well prepared as they could be for the FLM role in the industry. There were varying reasons identified to justify those observations, which included that graduates lacked practical experience and understanding of the industry. There was consensus as well that current hospitality graduates are not passionate about the industry. Hospitality graduates seemed to do it for the sake of studying. Interestingly, they all agreed that the previous hotel school system for the hospitality students was more helpful to students than the current one. For example, both academic staff and hospitality employers supported first year enrolment interviews.

The mirror data assisted the researcher with finding themes that were then used in the next chapter with the hospitality graduates, as well as the process of the CL expansive learning.

CHAPTER 5

CHANGE LABORATORY RESULTS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The findings of the CL workshop sessions held with the hospitality graduates are presented in this chapter. The sessions held were aimed at meeting the objectives of the study included below.

These objectives are to:

1. Explore employer and academic staff perceptions of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role
2. Locate the gaps/challenges between the hospitality graduates' university preparation and what is needed by hospitality employers for the FLM role.
3. Use data gathered to envisage a way forward to bridge the existing challenges.
4. Test or examine the new ideas envisaged with the academic staff and through the researcher's own reflections.

The mirror data presentations done for the hospitality graduates by the researcher during the data collection period were guided by the above research objectives. All the data collection sessions with various participants started off with the introduction of the underpinning theoretical framework and methodology of the study so that participants could be familiar with the process. The CL workshop sessions were guided by the methodology process.

The study used the hotel school academic staff and the hospitality employers for mirror data, which was used as stimulus (refer to 4.1) for the expansive learning CL sessions. The process started with the questioning session, which then led to the second session. This involved a discussion where hospitality graduates analysed the challenges of the activity system. This was after the researcher had explained to the hospitality graduates how the activity system triangle works. The elements of the triangle (activity system) were explained as well. The CL sessions followed an expansive learning cycle which meant that after the analysis, modelling of new ideas and examining of the new ideas generated was done. The modelling involved formulating new ideas or proposing changes to bridge the contradictions. A new activity system triangle (refer to Figure 5) was drawn to reflect what the hospitality graduates saw as the potential future of a winning hospitality graduate activity system.

To test the findings of the hospitality graduates using the CL expansive learning cycle, the researcher then examined their suggested new ideas together with the academic staff, who are part of the community, to evaluate if these changes could work for the intended reasons of transforming the preparedness of hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry.

5.2 Hospitality graduates' CL workshop sessions using the expansive learning cycle

As discussed above, the CL expansive learning cycle comprises various stages; a questioning stage, analysis stage, creating a new model stage, examining, implementation of the model, reflection and consolidation of the new model (refer to figure 2 in chapter 3). Hospitality graduates were engaged in four CL workshop sessions where the first three stages were implemented with the aim of exploring the challenges of graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. These stages were done as per the summary plan (refer to Table 1 in Chapter 3) outlined in the previous chapter. For reporting purposes, the participants were referred to as 'Graduate' with the assigned number to a participant indicated in front of the word Graduate.

5.2.1 Questioning: Provocations from the mirror data (Session 1)

This was the questioning stage of the expansive learning process, as mentioned in Chapter 3 Table 1. In the first session, hospitality graduates expressed the challenges that their system was facing. Using CL to resolve the problems helped move from complaining towards finding new ways of working that might resolve difficulties raised. This stage started off with the researcher showing hospitality graduates the video clips of the main challenges outlined by the hospitality employers and the hospitality academic staff about student preparedness for work (mirror data). The challenges acted as a stimulus to provoke discussion amongst the hospitality graduates of the problems with the current hotel school activity system. Hospitality graduates then embarked on the CL expansive learning cycle where they raised the challenges so that they could analyse these problems.

Graduate 1 stated that she felt they were indeed prepared for the FLM role in the industry. She further stated that "after my final Food and Beverage Management WIL period, I was offered an opportunity as a Junior Duty Manager", while hospitality graduates from the Professional Cookery were adamant that for their department it was not as easy as that. Graduate 2, a Professional Cookery graduate said,

> If you are a Professional Cookery graduate, it's a bit different because it takes you time to get to an FLM role. So maybe, then again, it comes to say, it comes with what you're doing in hospitality management.

In response to the question why hospitality graduates had the expectation that they were prepared for the FLM role in the industry, hospitality graduates were quick to identify the third year WIL schedule as the one that that them the expectation of being employed for an FLM role in the industry after graduation. Graduate 3 indicated that the

> WIL schedule indicates that final year students (third years) have to be trained in all management and supervisory departments, for example, Human Resource Management, Marketing and Public Relations.

Graduate 3 stated that

> In most cases in our last placement, we tend to obviously not man up and say, I need to be trained on this. I've been in this department because that's what we're getting a lot with the students out there, being placed in one department for two months. This needs to change so that students can learn what they are supposed to learn during their WIL period.

One of the hospitality graduates indicated that she had to fight to be allowed by management to follow the schedule:

> Like I had to go up to my manager to say, look this is my schedule I have to do all of these before I leave and if for some reason the hotel is not abiding by your rules even if you remind them they're like no you can't.

Graduate 3 indicated that as hospitality students they were not given the freedom to insist that hospitality employers follow the WIL schedule as it was designed to assist students in their future career paths. According to Graduate 6,

> I managed to get an FLM role (Junior Duty Manager) after the second WIL period. I attribute this offer to being allowed by my employers then to follow the third year WIL schedule and that enabled me to show off my skills and at the same time to be mentored to be a better leader.

Graduate 3 stated that she

> …created a good working relationship with the front of house department despite being a Food and Beverage Management student because I had figured out that I did not want to work in the Food and Beverage department but the Front of House department instead, to avoid working long hours and public holidays. That way, I managed to work with the human resources personnel where I learnt a lot on marketing, reservations and auditing which was not part of my curriculum.

The above quotations from the hospitality graduates reflect that they had to negotiate for the WIL schedule be followed during their WIL period. This then would result in those who were not sufficiently assertive being denied that opportunity unless they could find employers who understood the importance of following the schedule. Hospitality graduates commented that the industry failed to accommodate all the students, which led to some being unable to get their first choice of WIL placement.

Graduate 6 noted that

> The WIL schedule that expects students to do supervisory or FLM roles is done at the busiest time in the industry, when operational managers are busy and they do not have time to train students.

The challenge noted by participants was that despite the curriculum exit outcomes, which state that a ND graduate possesses basic managerial skills, the hotel school restaurant and kitchen did not give students an opportunity to shadow its own instructors even at third year level. They still found themselves being posted in the scullery at third year level and still could not change prices on the point of sale in the restaurant. Graduate 3 stated that "we were made to work in the scullery from first year to third year level while we were management students". The training of hospitality graduates to take up the FLM role in the industry should begin at the hotel school because this would prepare hospitality graduates for the industry.

When asked about the point made by employers that graduates have no idea about hospitality industry working conditions, for example working on weekends and public holidays, almost all the participants agreed that most hospitality graduates did the Hospitality Management course just to get a qualification without intrinsic motivation. Graduate 6 said that "for most hospitality graduates, Hospitality Management is their third choice course and they have no option than to take it when they are not accepted for their first two choices". According to Graduate 2,

> The availability of free higher education through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is making it easy for students to study anything, even if it is not a programme they are passionate about.

Hospitality graduates however, agreed that although there were hospitality graduates who were not passionate about the industry, there were some individuals who were passionate and took the career very seriously. A rhetorical question raised by the Graduate 3 was "whose role is it then to prepare both the passionate and unpassionate hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry?" The analysis of this will be done in the next stage of the CL expansive learning process.

The researcher asked hospitality graduates if they felt they had enough experience to take up the FLM role after graduation. In response to the question, most hospitality graduates felt that they did not have the experience needed by the industry for the FLM role, although they felt they could still do the job well. Graduate 3 argued that "FLM role vacancy posts want candidates with experience and where we are expected to get experience from since we would have been at the hotel school for four years". When probed by the researcher on the possibility of hospitality graduates taking part-time jobs in the industry during their study period, Graduate 5 had this to say:

> Part time job! When? There are so many modules and for us the Professional Cookery students, at third year level, there was no time because we finished classes every day after five in the evening so there was no time for them to take-up part time jobs.

Another point raised by participants was that the hotel school restaurant facilities needed to be upgraded to match the industry standard. Graduate 4 stated that "The restaurant must upgrade its bar and restaurant so as to match the standards of the industry. There should be cocktails and smoothies in the bar, for example." The restaurant needed to keep up with the hospitality trends so that when the hospitality graduates got into the industry they were not lost. That would assist hospitality graduates because when they enter the industry, they start from scratch which then defines them as unprepared and lacking experience. Graduate 1 mentioned "the need for a focus on the hotel school enrolment policy or its implementation". All participants felt there were too many students enrolled compared to the previous years for the same number of lecturers. Graduate 1 stated that "An example is the 2019 BTech class of forty-six students with one research lecturer. This is a huge load for one person despite the fact that there are mentors allocated to the students".

Graduate 3 added that

> The hotel school kitchen and restaurant Instructors find themselves being forced to reduce shifts to at least three hours to accommodate students in batches, thereby reducing time spent in acquiring skills and knowledge needed to prepare hospitality graduates for the industry.

5.3 Summary of the challenges raised by hospitality graduates in response to mirror data

In achieving the second of objective of this study, which was to locate the gaps/challenges between the hospitality graduates' university preparation and what is needed by hospitality employers for the FLM role, the hospitality graduates' discussion and analysis of the research problem using CL, the following main themes emerged:

- Hospitality graduates felt that as students then, they thought they were prepared for the FLM role in the industry. They felt they just needed an opportunity and support for the role, and they did not see themselves starting at entry level job.
- WIL challenges were outlined, particularly the fact that the WIL schedule was not followed and the fact that there were too many students for the available WIL places.
- Most hospitality students were not passionate or interested in the course.
- Prior experience was a need for the incoming hospitality students, therefore the need to bring back the two weeks placement after students' enrolment.

- There was a lack of equipment for students to practice skills that would give them the experience needed for the object.
- Too many students were enrolled, forcing kitchen and restaurant hours to be reduced especially for first years which negatively affected the object.

These themes indicating difficulties experienced by the graduates were then further analysed, firstly through examining past practice.

5.4 Reflecting on the past

To analyse the challenges of the activity system, there was a need to visit the past so as to understand how the problems originated, as is typically done in CL work (Virkkunen and Newnham 2013). This assisted in analysing how rooted the problems were, which in turn assisted in determining the right path to take in facilitating new ideas for the future. It should be noted though that not all participants were familiar with what happened in the past as some graduated in 2017 and 2018. The ones familiar with former practices were those who graduated in the early 2000s.

As noted above, in the past, a student aspiring to study at the hotel school was exposed to an interview panel and had to pass that interview. This was meant to allow students with prior experience in the industry an opportunity to study. It should be noted though that even students without industry experience would be recruited because the focus was not only on the industry experience but on the personality as well. The reflections from the past were negotiated through question and answer, with the graduates mentioning how it used to be in the past. Currently, there are no enrolment interviews and to explain how this was a challenge, Graduate 4 stated that "students get enrolled for the hospitality management course without any knowledge of what it is". Graduate 5 suggested that the "re-introduction of interviews would assist students with informing them about the industry, avoiding a situation where they see it when they have already registered". That way, passionate students would be recruited for the hospitality management course. Hospitality graduates also suggested that instead of hospitality students waiting until the end of first year to be exposed to the industry, a two-week period in a hospitality establishment should be allowed for first years in the first two months so that they could get a sense of the reality of the industry when it was still early for them to decide on their careers. Graduate 2 referred to what was done in the early 2000s:

> First year hospitality students, after passing the informative enrolment interviews, went for two weeks in the industry in the first months of the course. For me, that was very beneficial to students' decision making about their future in the industry.

One of the participants, a professional cookery graduate, was dissatisfied with the "very high enrolment of hospitality students at the hotel school". Graduate 3 noted that

> The hotel school facilities have not been extended, meaning that it is not enough for the high number of students enrolled currently. The other point is on the lecturer student interaction and assistance which is not easy as the lecturers could not be able to inform students of their strengths and weaknesses.

This seemed to be a big challenge because the lecturers mentioned it as well during the mirror data meeting.

5.5 Analysis Stage (Session 2)

To explore the challenges of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in industry, the CL expansive learning cycle moved on to the analysis stage, as mentioned in Chapter 3 Table 1 and Figure 3. The introduction of the activity system into the discussion acted as a second stimulus (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:49). It assisted the hospitality graduates to understand the challenges theoretically as contradictions with the aim of trying to find solutions to the challenges. The participants identified the subject, tools, rules, community and division of labour of the Hotel School activity system. They were then given an opportunity to plot the items from the earlier discussions they felt fell under the given activity triangle points, firstly on their own and then collectively. This session was involved with reflection of what was said in the first session and the analysis of the activity system at the same time. The second stage of analysis involved the collective raising of challenges identified from the first session. This session involved two stages of analysis which were the questioning by the hospitality graduates and the reflection of the main challenges during the plotting of the activity theory triangle. The participants used the activity system of the hotel school where they analysed the past and the present with the aim of finding solutions for the future. The hospitality graduates who managed to do the task from the previous session of drawing their current activity system, presented their activity triangles identifying the contradictions which they felt needed to be dealt with to assist in preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role for the industry. The individual triangles were analysed by the group and at the end the analysis session yielded the following results.

5.5.1 Subjects and tools

The hospitality graduates agreed that hospitality students were the subject in this study. This is because they were analysing the system from their own perspective. The hospitality graduates reflected on what it was like when they were students.

Tools are instruments that are used in an activity by the subjects in working on an object and they are a way of carrying out operations in an activity system (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:34). Tools assist in the attainment of set goals of the activity system. All participants were in agreement that the tools of the hotel school for the hospitality graduates' preparedness needed improvements in terms of teaching resources. The hotel school restaurant and kitchen needed to be consistent about service times and days, and to keep up to date with hospitality trends to prepare hospitality graduates for the FLM role. The challenge noted was that for hospitality graduates to be equipped with the skills for the FLM role, they needed to have practiced it already at the hotel school, therefore the tools needed to be monitored and updated.

Hospitality employers should continue supporting the hotel school and the hospitality graduates in a bid to better prepare hospitality graduates for the industry. The challenge noted by the hospitality graduates was that employers were not keen to employ them for the FLM role because they felt that graduates lacked experience. Other tools for the system discussed were theory, practical learning, WIL in the curriculum, and academic staff evaluation. The difficulties that arose under theory/practice were that hospitality graduates felt there was more theory than practical experience in the curriculum. Practice exposed them more to the industry because the industry is more operational than theoretical at an FLM role. Hospitality graduates need to be good technically. Following on, the graduates identified WIL as an effective tool for preparing students for the industry, despite the challenges that came with it under rules and division of labour.

5.5.2 Rules

Rules are defined by Virkkunen and Newnham (2013:34) as laws, codes and agreements that the community follows when working with the activity. In this study, rules were what guided the operations of the hospitality graduates in the hotel school system. When the hospitality graduates discussed the rules, the researcher observed that disturbances were high amongst the enrolment rules and policies. "Fewer students in a class would mean that academic staff are able to give each student the attention they need" (Graduate 4).

Graduate 1 seconded this by stating that "the rules of the hotel school on WIL needed to be revised to enforce the benefits of WIL to hospitality students". A further challenge outlined with the system rules was the failure to enforce the students' WIL schedule follow-up. According to hospitality graduates, this led to exploitation of students as they ended up not learning what they were supposed to learn. Hospitality graduates had an issue again with the changes in the rules that saw enrolment interviews being removed.

5.5.3 Community

The community of the activity system are individuals who have an interest in working with the object (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:34) and examples of such are the hospitality industry employers and associations that play a role at the hotel school. Participants acknowledged that most of these were playing a vital role in ensuring that hospitality graduates were groomed to be future leaders in the industry through giving bursaries, awards, sponsorships, employment opportunities and training programmes during and after graduation. Participants felt that these communities should be able to employ hospitality graduates for the FLM role. Hotel school management, hospitality lecturers, food and beverage instructors and chef instructors were identified as part of the community. The hospitality graduates stated the need for the WIL rules to be enforced to allow the hospitality employers, students and academic staff as members of the community to work together.

5.5.4 Division of labour

Involved parties of the community should play their part in preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry. Each of the parties hold different positions in the activity and have different perspectives on the object, but they are all object-oriented. Responding to whether the hospitality parties involved were playing their part in preparing graduates for the FLM role, the graduates acknowledged that there were challenges, especially regarding students' evaluation of lecturers that were carried out, but did not add value to enhancing hospitality graduates' preparedness. The graduates felt that there was no feedback given by management or lecturers on their evaluations. Graduate 4 stated that "lecturers ask for evaluation feedback and we give them but there has never been any feedback given. There is a need for follow up by the hotel school management as this would show that they respect the voice of the student". Graduate 1 had this to say on the lecturers: "assignments given should not always be on what has been taught, some assignments should be on what students have to find out on their own, to prepare them for the industry because in the industry there are no premeditated challenges". Interestingly, hospitality graduates kept on raising new issues during the workshops that hampered their preparation for the FLM role. On the hospitality employers, Graduate 2 stated that "I blame the hospitality employers for not following the WIL schedule which hinders their opportunity to shadow managers and to practice the FLM role under supervision". If all parties play their part, hospitality graduates would benefit in terms of their interest in working on the object of learning, namely to be in an FLM role in the industry.

5.5.5 Object and outcome

According to the hospitality graduates, taking their cue from the explanation of the object and outcome given by the researcher, the object was the work needed to prepare hospitality students for the FLM role in the industry and the outcome was having prepared hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry. The object is defined as what is being worked on in the activity or what happens when all the different elements of the activity system contribute to and influence the hospitality students working towards the object of preparing to occupy FLM roles; while outcome is the long-term result of that particular activity (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:34). The challenge therefore was to work on the outcome using the tools, rules, community and division of labour at the hotel school and the industry.

5.6 Analysis of main contradictions (Session 3)

The third session continued with the analysis of the system and began on the modelling process. As mentioned in Table 1 in Chapter 3, hospitality graduates used the activity triangle and the historical analysis to do the analysis and modelling. In these sessions, the hospitality graduates and the researcher as interventionist took the opportunity to identify the main contradictions identified in the activity system analysis session. Tensions and disturbances that occurred during the first two sessions were a sign of contradictions in the activity system. When hospitality graduates talked about their difficulties, those were a reflection of manifestations of more deep-seated contradictions (Virkunnen and Newnham, 2013; Engeström & Sannino 2010). These are the contradictions (theoretical concepts) that affect the object of the study. Being aware of the contradictions enables us to look for systematic solutions rather than to respond to individual difficulties.
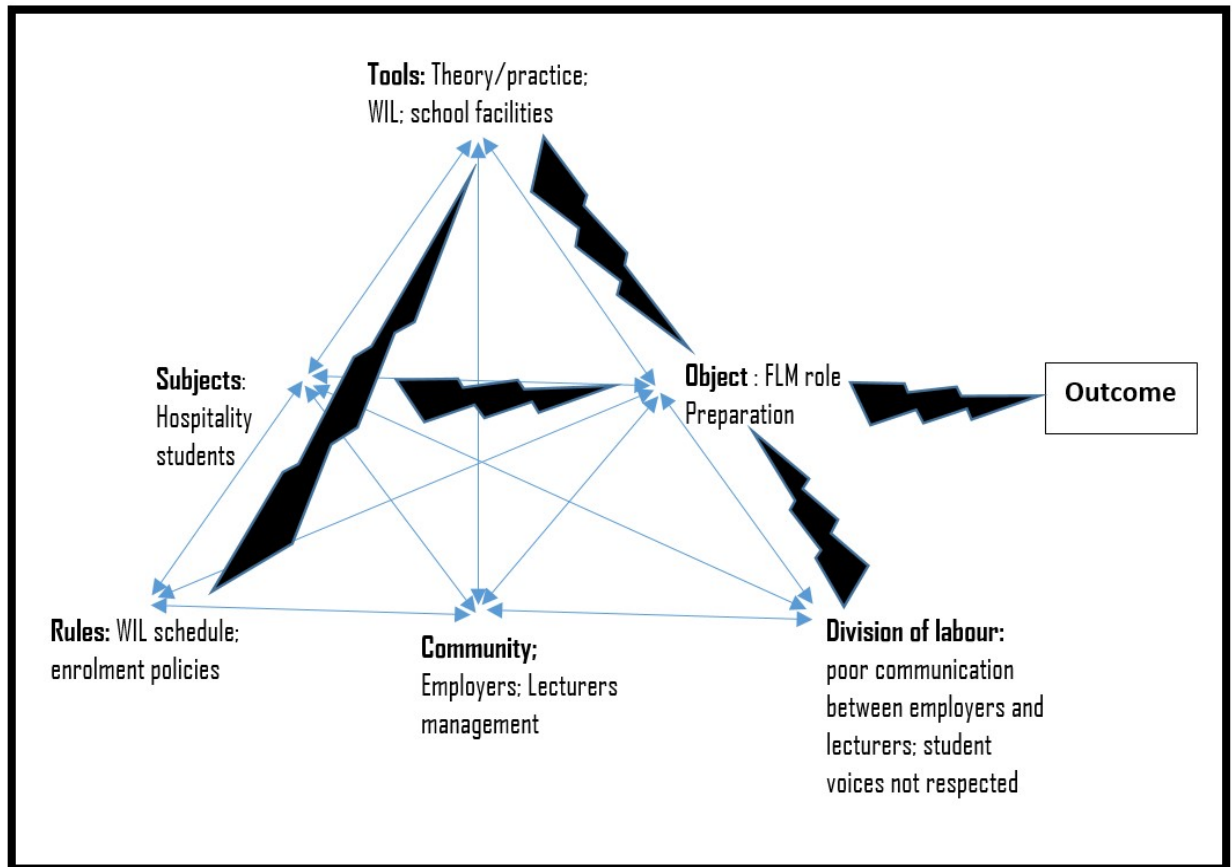
Figure 3. Contradictions in the activity system expressed by participants

Adapted from Englund (2018:707)

From the analysis done by the hospitality graduates of the activity system triangle, the challenges of the system discussed and identified in the earlier sessions were analysed by the hospitality graduates. The chevrons in the current activity system triangle (Figure 4), reflects the contradictions in preparing hospitality students for the FLM role. The participants identified existing contradictions and they are reflected by the chevron symbol. The main contradictions identified by the participants are as follows:

- Hospitality graduates reacted to the hospitality employers' view, mentioned in the first session, that hospitality graduates are not fully prepared for the FLM role and they lack experience. The contradiction of the hotel school preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry, and the industry feeling that graduates did not match the standard is a secondary contradiction between the object and the outcome on the activity system triangle. The roles of the community members have to be clear

regarding the object so that each part plays its role for the benefit of the hospitality graduates.

- The second challenge noted was that there was more focus on theoretical knowledge than practical. It was perceived that teaching only focused on imparting content knowledge as per the curriculum to the students. This is a secondary contradiction between the tools and the object of learning to become an FLM, which has negatively affected the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. This is referred to as a secondary contradiction because it affects two elements of the activity system (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:50). The tool in this case is not assisting the subject to work on the object. As outlined in the previous chapter, hospitality graduates were of the idea that because the FLM role involves many operational tasks, there is a need to balance theory and practice, with more emphasis on the latter. The graduates reported that they found themselves underperforming in the industry compared to students in the past who had started with the practical at first year level.

- On the academic staff evaluation by the hospitality students, the contradiction noted was that there was no follow-up either by academic staff or the hotel school management, which hinders the progress of preparing graduates for the FLM role. Student suggestions were not regarded as important, a primary contradiction within the division of labour (DoL).

- Hospitality employers and academic staff did not work closely together, another primary contradiction within the DoL, and that had a negative impact on the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. The secondary contradiction was thus between the object and division of labour. This phenomenon of uncommitted students is a secondary contradiction between the subject and the object. The type of students who are studying hospitality management are not always motivated, or have the qualities needed, for an FLM role in the industry.

- Another secondary contradiction reflected between tools and object was on the WIL schedules that provide a guideline to what students must cover in their six month WIL period. This WIL schedule is rarely followed by the employers, which hinders the process of preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role. WIL as a tool towards the object of the activity system is thus not supported by the rules, which is reflected in the contradiction of failure to instil measures that will ensure that WIL prioritises students' needs rather than the hospitality employers. It follows that the DOL between academic staff and WIL mentors presents challenges because the WIL mentors do not follow rules, and this is a recipe for failure for the object. The tools in this case then are not good enough to work on the object. Failing to follow the WIL schedule by the industry inhibits students from gaining all the experience they need.
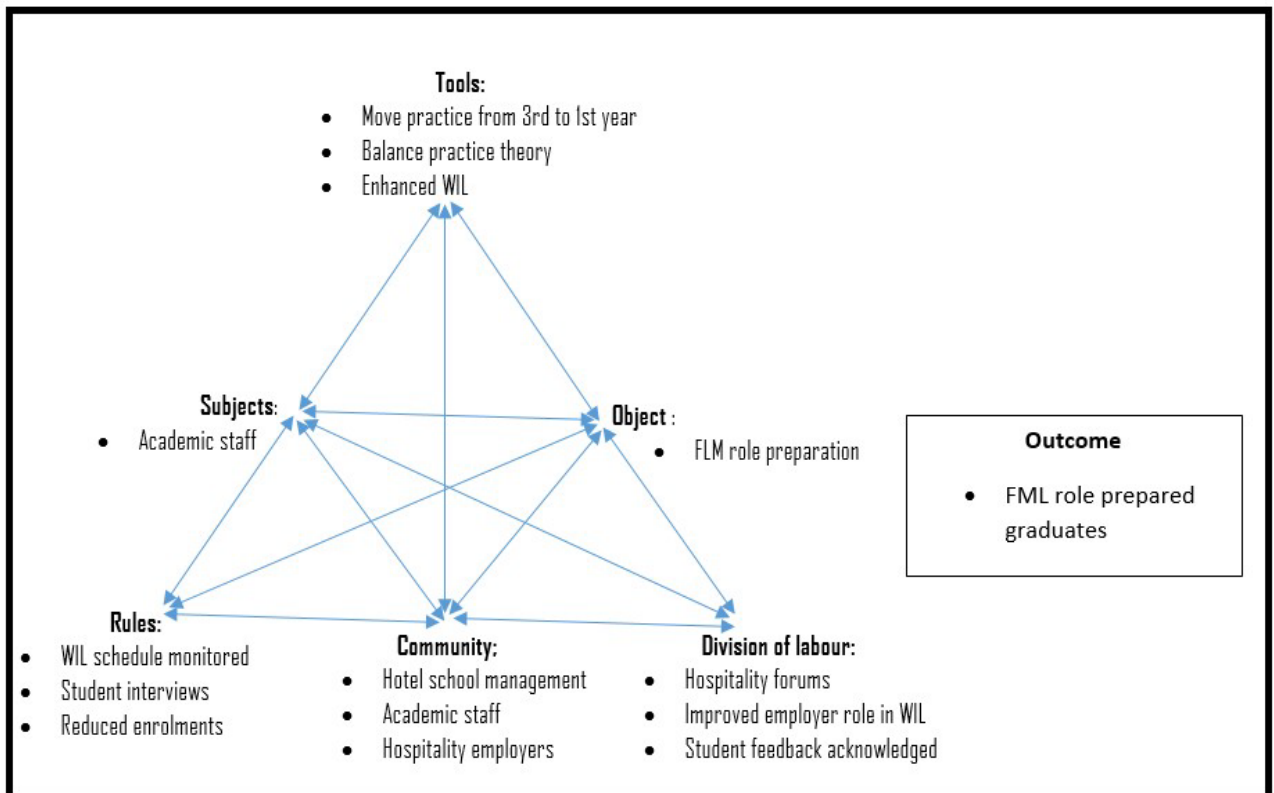
- The number of enrolled students calls for a corresponding increase or extension of facilities to accommodate them. The tools, in this case resources, are not good enough for the object and this contradiction is aggravated by the enrolment rules made by management, which increase student numbers. Further, the high number of first year hospitality students has seen some students being placed for WIL in establishments that are not their first preferences, and that has a negative impact on the hospitality graduates' preparedness.

5.7 Modelling (Session 4)

Modelling is referred to as a new idea that does not only transform the challenges of the activity system but explains the problem as well (Virkkunen and Newnham, 2013:50). To deal with the contradictions identified above, hospitality graduates suggested new ideas or changes to the activity system with the aim of ensuring that these contradictions are bridged. The hospitality graduates used the activity system triangle to show the emerging new ideas or changes that they discussed during CL session 2 and 3. The activity system triangle below shows potential future activity system for the future. The following changes for the identified existing contradictions were cited by the hospitality graduates:

- The use of the theoretical and practical tools for teaching and learning of hospitality students was seen as imbalanced by the hospitality graduates. They then proposed a solution that the two be balanced. Further, the major practical components included at third year level should already be included at first year level. Teaching and learning supervision was proposed as a solution to better monitoring of students and academic staff to enhance hospitality graduates' preparedness.
- With regard to staff evaluations, the school management needs to follow up on these to resolve academic issues as they occur.
- The hotel school community should have a healthy relationship whereby the hospitality employers and academic staff are involved in hospitality associations for the benefit of hospitality students.
- With regard to the activity system subject of uncommitted hospitality students, the hotel school should reconsider introducing interviews for finding students with the right personality for the industry.
- Regarding prior experience needed for the FLM role, hospitality graduates maintained that the third year WIL schedule tool should be properly monitored and followed to allow shadowing of hospitality industry management, thereby giving the needed experience to the students.

- Student enrolment policy or its implementation needs to be reconsidered as it is failing the students at the moment. Hospitality graduates felt that a decrease in the number of students enrolled would match the limited facilities. This, according to them, would assist with the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role because the industry itself would be able to absorb all of them for WIL.

Tools:
- Move practice from 3rd to 1st year
- Balance practice theory
- Enhanced WIL

Subjects:
- Academic staff

Object:
- FLM role preparation

Outcome
- FML role prepared graduates

Rules:
- WIL schedule monitored
- Student interviews
- Reduced enrolments

Community:
- Hotel school management
- Academic staff
- Hospitality employers

Division of labour:
- Hospitality forums
- Improved employer role in WIL
- Student feedback acknowledged

Figure 4. Proposed new activity system for the future

Adapted from Englund (2018:707)

5.8 Examining the new ways

After the four sessions of the CL intervention sessions, the academic staff engaged through the expansive learning cycle with the modelling decisions of the hospitality graduates. Taking the hospitality graduates' findings back to the academic staff was one of the expansive learning actions (see Table 1 in 3.3.1). The reason for selecting academic staff was that most of the contradictions identified by hospitality graduates related to teaching and learning. Examining

the proposed changes with the academic staff would allow them a chance to implement the ideas if possible, to verify if the changes could work; and if not give to suggest alternative ideas on improvement. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the level five lockdown regulations, the meeting scheduled with the academic staff did not materialise and an email form of communication was used instead. The email sent by the researcher requested the academic staff to give feedback on the above solutions or changes proposed for the existing contradictions of the activity system.

The academic staff responded to the idea of re-introduction of the interview concept as one that should be explored again, noting that it could bring about the needed change. One of the academic staff members felt that the enrolment interviews for first year would assist the students who had no idea of what the hospitality management course is about to at least get an idea before registering for the course. She stated that "I am a believer in the interview concept and think it will bring change". The other academic staff members, however, felt that interviews advantage certain students above others, which is why they were discontinued. One of them noted that "Interviews were discontinued as they gave a fair advantage to certain students and an unfair one [sic] to others". The advantage referred to here was that preference was given to students with prior hospitality industry experience, which disadvantaged those who were interested in the hospitality course but had had no prior exposure to the industry. There were therefore mixed feelings on whether interviews would be the best solution to resolve the current problem of hospitality graduates who are not passionate or not interested in the course.

With regard to the recommended reduction in the number of students enrolled, one academic staff member's response was that "smaller groups will help with more effective and exclusive teaching". The academic staff reported that the number of students had doubled, while the facilities had remained the same, as did the number of lecturers, which then put a strain on teaching and learning. This in turn affects the preparation of hospitality graduates for the FLM role. This is a reflection of how the system is currently failing students because effective teaching is hugely affected. This examination of the way forward conducted by the hospitality graduates led to the academic staff suggesting solutions to the challenges, but they were relatively powerless in this context as the challenge needs to be dealt with at a higher management level.

Academic staff felt that WIL played a vital role in equipping students with the necessary skills for the FLM role, although AS1 agreed that there was room for improvement in the structure of the WIL program to ensure that WIL schedules are followed. "WIL has a great potential of equipping our students, but if the employers do not give them the opportunity to cover all the

work sections then they will not benefit" (AS1). This means the structure of WIL and its monitoring should be improved. AS4 supported AS1 by stating that

> I do believe establishments are given WIL outcomes of an exit level students, it is unfortunate though at times that establishments cannot follow all of those outcomes due to operational requirements.

One of the solutions suggested by the academic staff was that the WIL office must have stricter rules for WIL mentors. This could even include the evaluation of WIL mentors by the hospitality students.

The proposed change to student feedback on evaluations of their lecturers would definitely assist the lecturers.

> Improve their skills if they buy into the process and change their ways, management should prioritise giving hospitality students feedback. The program needs to change. (AS3).

According to AS4 though, "There is a clear line regarding grievances that students need to follow for academic issues or lecturer concerns". Some further explanation on whether such "clear lines" are being adhered to would have been of assistance because hospitality graduates felt otherwise.

Regarding the view of hospitality graduates that practical experience and theoretical knowledge should be balanced, the academic staff had a different understanding:

> The practical component is regarded as sufficient throughout the three-year National Diploma. I believe in an audit done a few years ago, it was found that the National Diploma had too much practicality compared to theory, hence the reduction in WIL and Restaurant & Kitchen practicality in the new diploma.

However, this contradicted the view of one academic staff member during the mirror data interviews, who felt that "hospitality students were prepared theoretically rather than practically". The feeling was that students should be equipped by WIL and the hotel school restaurant and kitchen.

The academic staff were confident that the new ideas would bring about the needed changes in hospitality graduate preparedness for the FLM role in the industry.

5.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher engaged with the hospitality graduates using the CL method to explore the research problem further in order to theorise the challenges experienced by the hospitality graduates' preparedness activity system into contradictions, in order to find

solutions to eradicate those contradictions. The CL sessions were guided by the themes that were identified by the researcher during the mirror data collection with the academic staff and the hospitality employers in the previous chapter. These themes were discussed using the CL activity triangle as a framework and the expansive learning process as a methodology.

Discussion of the research analysis of the findings was done by the hospitality graduates through the CL sessions. The main contradiction that emerged during the analysis and modelling stages were that while hospitality students felt prepared for the FLM role in industry, they also felt that WIL could prepare them more effectively if the schedule was followed. The contradiction between the subject and object was outlined regarding uncommitted students who make it difficult to achieve fully prepared hospitality graduates. Another main contradiction discussed was that of the large number of hospitality students who are enrolled despite the fact that facilities have not been upgraded to cater for those numbers. In the modelling session, hospitality graduates proposed changes that they felt would help prepare them for the FLM role. These changes included strict follow-up of the WIL schedule by the WIL mentors. Concerning students who lacked commitment, a need to revert to the enrolment interview system was suggested, and the need for management to revisit the enrolment policy was outlined. The changes proposed by the hospitality graduates were then examined by the academic staff who also made suggestions to assist with the achievement of the activity object.

CHAPTER 6

**DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: CHANGE
LABORATORY AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

6.1 Introduction

Through the CL discussions in Chapter 5, analysis and modelling learning actions of the expansive learning, hospitality graduates formulated new concepts to resolve the challenges of the activity system. The discussions by the hospitality graduates in the previous chapter raised the main concepts of the study which included challenges with the WIL schedule, the number of students and insufficient placement of students. Hospitality graduates proposed possible solutions, one being consistency with regards to the implementation of the schedule. A further recommendation was made by graduates that facilities should be upgraded, or at least that the enrolment policy be revised to resolve the higher numbers. Hospitality graduates felt that most students were not aware of what the hospitality management course entailed and when they saw the reality of things, they lost interest. Hospitality graduates noted that prior experience was necessary for incoming hospitality students because such exposure would assist them to make the right choice of career.

In this chapter, the researcher proposes interventions based on the hospitality graduates' CL modelling of solutions on the way forward for the activity system, as well as the academic staff's comments on the model. This chapter further examines the model by relating what happened in the activity analysis to the readings of the literature review and the researchers' own interpretations. The mirror data is analysed as well. Literature is used as well to reflect on the main themes and solutions brought up by the participants. The chapter focuses on the researcher's recommendations for the study as well. The limitations of the study and the possibility of a future study and what it would entail are also discussed in this chapter.

6.2 Proposed Interventions

The findings from the CL sessions with the hospitality graduates identified the main contradictions and then modelled the way forward in resolving the existing contradictions. This address the following two objectives of the study which was to, use data gathered to envisage a way forward to bridge the existing gaps and test or examine the new ideas envisaged with the academic staff and through the researcher's own reflections.

The main themes that emerged from the modelling session included the following:

There should be a balance between practice and theory during the hospitality graduates' preparation for the FLM role in the industry. The major practical component should be started in the first year instead of third year.

Staff evaluations by students should be taken seriously by the hotel school management.

- The hotel school community (hospitality employers, academic staff, restaurant and kitchen instructors and hotel school management) must play their part in the division of labour of the activity system for the benefit of the hospitality students.

- The hotel school should consider introducing interviews for the first-year students who want to study hospitality management to avoid enrolling students who are not passionate and have no interest in the industry.

- Hospitality graduates stated that the WIL schedule needs to be followed because its outline is enough to give the experience that is needed for the FLM role. An example of management shadowing was given. The WIL office needs to be strict on WIL mentors regarding the WIL schedule and outcomes.

- As too many hospitality students are enrolled, hospitality graduates proposed that there should be a review of the enrolment policy, or at least extension of the facilities, to fit the current hospitality student numbers.

The above solutions to the contradictions identified were taken to the academic staff for further reflection. With regard to the reflection of academic staff on these solutions (refer to 5.9), the researcher noted that as much as the academic staff made contributions, they rendered themselves powerless to effect changes. The researcher feels that academic staff sometimes saw themselves on the outside of the system and their role seemed to be one of enacting the rules without challenging them. There seemed to be no way of verifying this; however, it could be a consideration for future research which looks at academic engagement within a faculty and or a department. This was because most of the decisions had to be made by management, which is actually a reflection of the hierarchical division of labour of the system.

For development and recommendations, the researcher expanded on what was said by the hospitality graduates during CL sessions and segmented the ideas to give more shape to what they stated. The recommendations also gave substance to the new ideas and solutions that the hospitality graduates formulated.

6.2.1 Practical versus theory teaching and learning interventions

On analysis of balancing practical versus theory training, it became apparent that academic staff had mixed feelings on the matter of hospitality graduates' preparation for the FLM role in the industry. Although most academic staff felt that there was too much emphasis on theory taught to hospitality students, some were adamant that theory and practice were balanced. As much as practical lessons are vital for hospitality students, theory is of equivalent importance, hence the need to balance them. Balancing these two would render hospitality graduates who are competent in both, which is good for the FLM role as it requires them to perform tasks and at the same time lead their subordinates in their FLM roles.

During the mirror data interviews, hospitality employers indicated that graduates were not prepared to take up the FLM role because it requires someone with strong technical expertise (Weber et al. 2013:319). The hospitality management curriculum is a skill-based one, considering that this industry is service-driven (Wakelin-Theron et al. 2018:4). A service-driven industry which requires technical expertise/competencies would require hospitality students to be equipped with the necessary skills which they would acquire from practical learning. To add to the hospitality graduates' views on theory and practice, Jaykumar (2018:143) found that hospitality institutions are still hard-skill based instead of being both hard- and soft-skill based as per the industry requirements. The researcher noted that most of the practical modules like food and wine pairing, Opera and Pastel (software applications) are only done at third year level. These are skills that hospitality graduates would be expected to use almost daily in the FLM role. A rearrangement of modules within the programme to move such modules to as early as first year would help to equip the hospitality students with these skills, so by the third year they would be familiar with and confident about using standard industry systems. Introducing software modules at third year level leads to hospitality graduates who are underprepared for basic functions, for example, hospitality graduates without any knowledge on how to change prices on the system for trade. Changing prices on the system is regarded as a basic skill in the industry by the hospitality employers. One wonders when during their tertiary education that skill should be learnt, and why it is not taught in the first place. The researcher therefore recommends that to prepare hospitality graduates for the FLM role, basic skills like inserting and changing prices on the point of sale should be included in the curriculum at first year level already as well as in the practical modules.

The researcher is of the view that hospitality students lack access to equipment needed for practice, in order to get the experience they need. This might be a reflection of a potential misalignment of the way the curriculum has been developed. It might also be a reflection of lack of time for practice due to more time being allocated to theory, or many students being

enrolled which then forces them to work shorter hours (refer to 6.2.5) to accommodate all of them. The reason for this view is that most skills that the students can access using the available equipment seem not to be accessed. An example is the Professional Cookery students who are employed full time in the kitchen after graduation and who are exposed mainly to cooking as compared to baking, to which they only get frequent exposure in third year. Such imbalances have a negative impact on the students' preparedness because they are not exposed to both skills equally; the result is that they struggle to choose the one at which they are better for employment purposes. For the above reason, it is recommended that baking and cooking be started as early as the first year. The researcher felt that hospitality graduates, because of their experience of trying to find FLM jobs, were in a better position to describe the reality of conditions in industry.

Theory and practice are not separate issues but are interdependent. Gamble (2009:3) refers to practical work as the ability to perform given tasks and states that these tasks can only be executed well by an individual who has adequate underpinning knowledge. As much as practical is important for hospitality graduates, there is also a need for adequate theory, which is why the emphasis for hospitality graduates is balancing the two. The researcher recommends that such balance be achieved through curriculum development where high order thinking is incorporated for hospitality students because the FLM role requires individuals to think on their feet. In all this, the researcher acknowledges that curriculum change is the responsibility of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which looks at the notional hours and accreditation in relation to the expected outcomes; therefore whatever practical or theory is included for the hospitality graduates should meet the required standard. Technikons in the past focussed on developing students as competent workplace practitioners. As technikons developed into universities of technology, there was pressure from the DHET and from within the university to increase the theoretical content of courses (McKenna & Powell 2009). The researcher recommends that this be revisited occasionally to ensure that it continues to match the needs of the industry and the higher education NQF outcomes for hospitality management students. The university, though, must always be aware that practice is underpinned by theory and there thus needs to be a balance between the two.

6.2.2 Hospitality students' voices feedback Intervention

Students' voices were highlighted as an important tool of the activity system by the hospitality graduates during the CL session discussions. This is supported by Spiller & Harris (2013: 260), who refer to student evaluations of teachers as a "teaching and learning tool". Hospitality graduates emphasised the need for their academic staff evaluations to be acted upon and for feedback be given. It is important for hospitality students to be given feedback because such

action gives academic staff an opportunity to review where they went wrong, and further, to better plan teaching and learning. For academic staff to effectively give feedback, it is recommended that they involve students with the discussions because in the process it would allow students to think of their learning, thereby evaluating it again. This will assist in education transformation, which will go a long way in preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role. Students' evaluations are part of professional development because they identify the learning and teaching needs (Spiller & Harris, 2013:258). If students' evaluations are not followed up, then the institution might be missing out on quality assurance and enhancement of teaching and learning at the institution (Spiller & Harris, 2013:258). As much as some of the academic staff agreed that this would benefit students, a few felt that there were existing channels for this process to happen. It is however interesting to note that hospitality graduates felt that these channels were only on paper, as they had not received any feedback in their entire three-year period at the hotel school. The academic staff unfortunately, did not give an outright answer on whether feedback is given to students or not. Feedback from the hotel school management may curb any arising problems that might negatively affect the preparedness of the hospitality students for the FLM role in the industry. To ensure that the students' voices through evaluations are heard and utilised effectively, the researcher recommends that the institution should allow different methods of evaluation done at different times, to allow time for management and academic staff to review it so as to report back to students. The timing of the students evaluations should allow them to be there when feedback is given. An example is instead of having students' evaluations done before they go for their WIL period, it should done when they come back so that they benefit from the feedback as they will be able to use it. The hotel school must have a proper body to deal with students' evaluations; this way the process will be a continuous one and would result in improvements to meet the requirements needed. Failure by the academic staff and management to give feedback frustrates students and this might lead to students being reluctant to partake in such activities, therefore such failure should not be an option.

Continuous evaluation by students, and continuous feedback by academic staff and management, would assist in deciding what would work and what would not work for the institution and its community.

6.2.3 Hospitality partnership Intervention

The community of the activity system which includes all the parties who are involved with the object should each play their part in working together. Jaykumar (2018:143) notes that one cause of hospitality graduate unpreparedness is the lack of partnerships between the hotel school institutions and the industry. The hospitality industry and the hotel school both prepare

hospitality students for a better career future and should work together in ensuring that what is done during their training period assists them for the FLM role afterwards. The academic staff felt that there was a good relationship between them and the hospitality industry employers, although they admitted that there was always room for improvement.

Quinn and Buzzetto-Hollywood (2019:24) recommend that students and other stakeholders must be involved in the curriculum processing because this will assist the students to know what industry expects of them. The development of the hospitality curriculum should be in line with the trends of the hospitality industry. This could be accomplished by ensuring that curriculum developers are individuals who would have an interest in the activity system object, for example hospitality employers, academic staff, UoT management, hotel school management, hotel school board members, and if possible, a few hospitality students. The current skill trends in the hospitality industry must drive what hospitality graduates learn at the hotel school so that the hotel school can produce prepared graduates for the industry (Quinn & Buzzetto-Hollywood, 2019:25).

The involvement of all the parties in the activities of the system would definitely keep hospitality students' expectations about the industry realistic. There should be a connection between what is learned in the classroom with what is done in the industry (Nachmias et al. 2017:134) to prevent gaps. Continuous engagement of hospitality students in various competitions run by hospitality organisations is recommended as it keeps students in touch with the reality of the hospitality industry. The literature supports the need for the division of labour of the parties involved in the preparation of graduates for the FLM role. Hospitality employers felt that training institutions should include them more in the preparation of the graduates. They even suggested motivational talks where they would enlighten the students on their journey in the industry. This they thought would assist in giving the students an idea of the realities of the industry, instead of only focusing on the textbook. The researcher supports this idea because such talks could be eye-opening for the students, allowing them to learn more about the industry, especially at first year level.

6.2.5 Hospitality students selection intervention

Since the hospitality industry is a high service skill industry, hospitality students enrolled for the hospitality management course should be passionate and interested in the industry. To ensure that this happens, hospitality graduates during their modelling session proposed the idea of bringing back the interviews for all first-year hospitality students who want to study hospitality management. During the examination of this suggested solution, the academic staff had mixed feelings, as some thought that was indeed a good idea, while others felt that the reason for its removal was that it was not fair to other students who might have excelled without

any prior experience or knowledge of the industry. There has been a change in the enrolment policy (interview system) without putting in place a way of acculturating students without prior exposure to the hospitality industry. It seems that academic staff as well have not been prepared to deal with the challenges of the current students who are not familiar with the industry, in comparison with those who previously would have passed enrolment interviews. The researcher feels that the curriculum itself has failed to fully accommodate the current students, of whom some have been exposed to the industry, while others have not. The researcher thus supports interventions such as the above ideas on competitions and motivational talks to improve student motivation to study.

According to Whitelaw et al. (2009:7), institutions train the wrong people because the enrolment is aimed at getting in a certain number of students to meet profit margins. This then breeds graduates who do not have the right attitude, passion and intrinsic motivation to be in the hospitality industry. The enrolment process is influenced by pressure from the government and from the faculty, and it seems to be backfiring as too many students find themselves cramped in a small space, especially when doing practicals. Academic staff themselves were not prepared for how to handle such numbers, let alone dealing with the high number of students who lack interest in the course. The negative impact on hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role cannot be taken lightly. A bigger number of students hinders teaching and learning attention to detail that could be given to each student. Hospitality graduates gave an example of hotel school restaurant and kitchen shift hours that had to be reduced from eight hours to three hours per shift to allow the numbers to be accommodated by the facilities and equipment. The four hours not worked on each shift does definitely have a negative impact on the preparation of hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry, considering that to cover the skills that could have been learnt, more time would be needed. The training restaurant and kitchen as a tool needs to match the hospitality trends. The recently upgraded curriculum would be even more effective if facilities are up to standard and could match the enrolled number of students.

The researcher feels that over-enrolment could be the case because the academic staff seemed not to have the power to change anything in the enrolment process. It is therefore recommended to university management that with every policy change all the parties involved should be involved. This will prevent a situation where things are done without considering their effects, for example, difficulties in preparing students for the FLM role and their lack of passion for the field.

6.2.6 WIL schedule intervention

On the findings that the WIL schedule has to be followed for the benefit of the hospitality graduates, the academic staff agreed that there is indeed a need for that. The academic staff agreed that the WIL office had a duty to ensure that hospitality graduates are allowed to follow the WIL schedule. The WIL office and management should take responsibility for the WIL period by ensuring that the WIL schedule is followed. As much as WIL has a strong influence on the graduates' career, its success can only be achieved if there is monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the whole WIL process (Rambe, 2018:1). There was a mutual feeling that sometimes hospitality employers use students for the benefit of the establishment, thereby failing to follow the WIL schedule. The example stated by one hospitality graduate was that the WIL period for third years happens in the busy months (July to December) of the industry, therefore there is no time to follow the schedule as everyone would be busy with the guests. According to Rambe (2018:14), employers focus on their work objectives and overlook the students' objectives. To enjoy the benefits of WIL, hospitality employers, lecturers and students should work together (Jeong & Jeong, 2018:120). Not working together is an unfortunate situation which requires a change from the hospitality employers. The researcher concluded that the WIL period was left under the control of the employers.

During the mirror data interviews, when hospitality employers were asked if they coached hospitality graduates during their WIL period, the response was they coached those who were willing to be coached. The researcher recommends that such activities are made compulsory by including them in the WIL schedule. The hotel school could as well have stricter rules to control the follow up of the schedule, because that would benefit the hospitality graduates. The change in such rules will avoid what is observed by (Atkinson, 2016:6), who states that "it is unfortunate that in most cases students' development during WIL is dependent on the willingness of employers to assist [in preparing] the students for the industry". The WIL period is a time when students put into practice what they have learnt, and failure to utilise the opportunity effectively will have an effect on their preparedness.

As much as there is a need for the WIL mentors to follow the schedule, academic staff and hospitality graduates were in agreement that WIL does benefit many hospitality students. Kort and Strydom (2014:121) are of the view that "work placements make a significant contribution to students' self-awareness, self-management, and self-confidence". This can be achieved fully if students are allowed to work in all sections as per their schedule. The recommended solution to hospitality students who do not get full exposure to the WIL schedule could be that they be given an opportunity during their second year period to volunteer to work in those missed areas in the industry or in the hotel school kitchen or restaurant, if possible. It is

however, not possible to rectify the problem for the third year since after their WIL period they graduate and are deemed ready for the industry. The success of WIL has an influence on the graduates' career, and success can only be achieved if there is monitoring, assessment and evaluation of the whole WIL process (Rambe, 2018:1). As suggested above, WIL can only produce positive results if hospitality employers, lecturers and students work together (Jeong & Jeong, 2018:120).

It is unfortunate that the world experienced a pandemic that adds to the existing WIL challenges. The covid 19 pandemic has seen closure of hospitality establishments under various lockdown levels world-wide, which has seen the reduction of mobility due to border closures and cancellation of events, accommodation and festivals (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2020: 383). This has had a negative impact on the hospitality students who now find themselves with no choice but to do WIL in the form of practical projects instead of having direct exposure to industry since many establishments are closed; and when open, they operate with fewer staff members due to low occupancy rates. This definitely has a huge impact on the preparedness of hospitality graduates for the FLM role since WIL, the hotel school restaurant and kitchen exposed students to the reality of the industry.

6.3 The strengths and limitations of using the CL theory in this study

The CL method was used to explore the challenges that exist between the employers and the graduates' expectations of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role. The participants of the study used the CL to develop interventions that addressed these challenges. The CL sessions allowed the participants to freely express themselves and in the process participate in learning actions that would benefit them in the future. The fact that the theory uses the expansive cycle allowed the flow of discussion from one session to the next until the modelling stage of the expansive learning cycle. The CL allowed participants to work together in reimagining their object (hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry) (Bligh & Flood, 2015:141). CL was used as a research intervention method in bringing about transformation for the future of the activity system. Bligh & Flood (2015:141) point out that CL is still a very useful tool for change in higher education practices, and can at least start a process of change although it often requires more long term experimentation with these new concepts.

Despite all these positives of the CL methodology which is based on AT, limitations were noted. Firstly, the theory is not a widely known one so the researcher had to spend time explaining to the participants what it is, and at the same time attend CL workshops herself to gain as much knowledge as possible. The whole CL process is time-consuming, and there were sessions in which some of the participants were absent, which is a challenge as the researcher would like

to have had all the participants in all the sessions. The process is very theoretical (Bligh & Flood, 2015:142) as well which is a bit challenging as it involves explaining what it is to the participants. It should be noted that overall, it is worth using CL because it brings solutions to complex work and educational systems (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013:50).

The researcher would recommend further research on this area as that will allow the continuation and the completion of the expansive learning cycle to bring about the needed change.

6.4 Summary of the study recommendations

The recommendations by the researcher took into account the existing contradictions in the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. These were based on the findings from the mirror data interview collection and the CL sessions. The following recommendations were made to ensure that hospitality graduates are prepared for the FLM role in the industry.

- **Curriculum development**: The hospitality curriculum should be developed in such a way that it balances the theory and practical teaching and learning, as explained in 6.2.1. Instead of introducing vital practical subjects at third year level, they must be introduced at first year level. It is important that student and industry partners' expectations are more carefully managed. While students may have the expectation of securing a management role, employers and industry partners felt that students required more experience to take on management roles. Career conversations and opportunity for dialogue between employers and student may be helpful in managing expectations and in so doing create more realistic ideas for employment in the FLM role in the future.
- **Student engagement**: Student voices should be listened to and feedback given to them by both the academic staff and the hotel school management; and if possible, a student voices evaluation committee should be formed to focus entirely on this issue. This is because student voices are regarded as a "teaching and learning tool" (Spiller & Harris, 2013: 260). To get the most out of the students, different evaluation methods should be used.
- **Industry as partners:** Each community member must play their role in the activity system so that the object is achieved. Hospitality employers must be actively involved in preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role before, during and after WIL. They must partake in curriculum development.

- **Enrolments and facilities:** The UoT must prepare staff members on how to handle arising changes for example, the enrolment process. Management should ensure that they have enough facilities if they are to increase the number of students.
- **Work integrated learning**: The WIL visits made by the hotel school should prioritise ensuring that hospitality employers follow the WIL schedule. Hospitality employers should mentor and coach students to equip them with the skills needed for the FLM role.
- **Prior Knowledge/student selection**: Hospitality students should be selected for their interest, and should volunteer to work in the industry during holidays or weekends for exposure purposes.

6.5 Limitations of the study

This study used the CL methodology which is very theoretical and required that the researcher teaches the participants about the CL and using the activity system diagram. This meant that time had to be allocated for the explanations before data collection. The discussions and analysis during the CL sessions were time-consuming which was a problem because the participants were busy individuals. The process itself is a long one, and because of the time limits, the study could not go through all the stages of the expansive learning cycle (refer to Figure 3). The study did not try all the stages of the cycle as it ended by presenting new ideas to the academic staff for examination. The implementation, consolidation and reflection of the new ideas were not covered.

Another limitation is that the study is limited to one UoT hotel school. The use of various hotel schools from different universities would have explored more broadly the preparedness of hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry. Such findings would have benefitted more hospitality graduates countrywide. This type of research has not been used much in hospitality education, therefore, the researcher had to go an extra mile.

The findings of this research reflect contradictions between the elements of the activity system of the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry. Figure 4 reflects the contradictions on the AT triangle. There are existing contradictions between subjects and tools, subjects and rules, subjects and object, tools and rules and between subject and division of labour. The use of CL proved vital because these findings were further discussed to help find solutions to the existing challenges. This has been helpful because those solutions were also examined, as a way of testing if the suggested changes would work in real life. The research is significant as it provides interventions needed to address the expectations for future employability and graduates transition into the FLM role in the industry.

6.6 Future study

Hospitality graduates are the future of the tourism and hospitality industry. They are the future leaders of the hospitality industry, therefore their preparedness for the FLM role is important. There is a need for an ongoing research on how hospitality graduates are prepared for the role. The researcher intends to use this study as the mirror data for her next CL research to further her studies. The future study will be done with the academic staff to reimagine the curriculum. The reason for this is to allow the academic staff to develop urgency as they go through the remaining stages of the CL expansive learning cycle. Academic staff are directly involved with the object, so they will be able find ways of implementing the suggestions put forward by both the hospitality graduates and the researcher. This would assist them to consolidate and spread the suggestions throughout the activity system to bring about the needed change.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR HOSPITALITY EMPLOYERS

APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: **BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**

At a meeting of the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee on **19 February 2019**, Ethics Approval was granted to **Ngizimisele Ndlovu (211094242)** for research activities of **M Tech: Tourism & Hospitality** at Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	**HOSPITALITY GRADUATES' PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FIRST LINE MANAGEMENT ROLE IN THE INDUSTRY** Lead Researcher/Supervisor: Dr X. Cupido

Comments:

Decision: Approved

	19 February 2019
Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Question	Purpose	Content
Opening	Giving the participants important information on the study, for example, topic, aim and objectives. Participants asked to sign a consent form.	Introduction to the interview
1	Such information gives the researcher an idea of the academic staff subjects and experience thereby assisting them to have an idea on how to question deeper for the benefit of the study.	Tell me about your experience as an academic staff and the subjects you are teaching.
2	To measure the employers' opinion on the hospitality graduates' preparedness.	In your opinion, do you think hospitality graduates are prepared for the FLM role in the industry?
3	This is to measure the effects of the curriculum development on the hospitality graduates' preparedness.	Are WIL and the practical done at the hotel school sufficient in preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role in the industry?

4	Historical data is essential when using the CL theory, so the academic staff views on the past would be useful data for the study especially when modelling solutions for the future.	What are the notable changes from the Technikon period to the UoT one in relation to hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role?
5	To investigate if the requirements of the FLM role are met already at the hotel school during the course period.	In your opinion, are hospitality graduates exposed to too much theory than practical at the hotel school?
6	To investigate if the curriculum changes have a positive effect on the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry.	How often does the curriculum change and do you think the changes have any effect on the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry.
7	To measure the opinions of the academic staff on the interview system.	In your view, are interviews for first year hospitality management enrolment important?
8	The comments will assist the researcher in analysing the relationship as both parties will be asked the same question.	What is your comment on the importance of a good relationship between the hotel school and the industry for the benefit of the hospitality students?

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR HOSPITALITY EMPLOYERS

Question	Purpose	Content
Opening	Giving the participants important information on the study, for example, topic, aim and objectives. Participants asked to sign a consent form.	Introduction to the interview
1	The number of years in the industry would somehow reflect the individuals' experience with the hospitality graduates.	Please share your experience and involvement in the hospitality industry.
2	To measure the employers' opinion on the hospitality graduates' preparedness.	In your opinion, do you think hospitality graduates are prepared for the FLM role in the industry?

3	Historical data is essential when using the CL theory, so the hospitality employers' views on the past would be useful data for the study.	From your experience as a hospitality manager, have you noted any changes with the preparedness of graduates over the years? If yes, what do you think causes that?
4	To evaluate during analysis if with first year enrolment, prior experience should be prioritized.	Do you think prior experience of hospitality students for hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role is essential?
5	To investigate the type of hospitality graduates who the hotel school is sending to the industry.	Are hospitality graduates passionate about the hospitality industry? Why?
6	To measure the level of work that needs to be done by parties involved with preparing hospitality graduates for the FLM role.	What should be done or changed to help produce hospitality graduates who are prepared for the FLM role?
7	To investigate the hospitality employers' involvement during WIL and to find out if it is adequate for the hospitality graduates' preparedness for the FLM role in the industry.	Work Integrated Learning - Are graduates guided and monitored during this period? Do you take accountability for their training?
8	The comments will assist the researcher in analysing the relationship as both parties will be asked the same question.	What is your comment on the importance of a good relationship between the hotel school and the industry for the benefit of the hospitality students?

APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

Ken Barris, PhD

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10 June 2021

To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I have edited the following thesis by Ngizimisele Ndlovu to professional standards:

Hotel school graduates' preparedness for the first line management role in the hospitality industry in the Western Cape.

Best regards