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THE INFLUENCE OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION AND INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE ON FIRST-LEVEL EMPLOYEES: A STUDY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY OF MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the employees' competencies in the Malaysian Hotel Industry. The variables are examined in a limited number of hotels since the purpose is to gain a better understanding of the preferences and practices among the hotels. The study uses a cross-sectional design with the periods of data collection extending over 6 weeks. The study revealed that the industry experience was very important to all areas (restaurant, kitchen, housekeeping, and front office areas). On the number of years of work-related experience required, the respondents preferred that the restaurant front-line employees had a minimum of 5 years of experience. Meanwhile, for academic qualifications, the respondents indicated that academic qualifications were very important for the kitchen, restaurants, and front office front-line employees. However, academic qualifications were considered slightly lower in importance for the housekeeping employees. This study provides some information on hospitality literature that can be used for future practice and further research.

Keywords: Academic Qualification, Industry Experience, Hotel Industry, Hotel Employee

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, hospitality and hotel management are considered as one of the fastest-growing industries in the world, which offers a great employment opportunity. This industry has shown no sign of slowing down with more than 100 million people employed despite the unforeseeable economic conditions. For Malaysia, it indicates a steady growth in the tourism industry over the years. According to Tourism Malaysia (2018), the statistics show that there is an increasing number of tourists between 2010 and 2016, with total receipts of RM82.1 billion (Razak, 2020). As the business of hospitality and tourism has grown, there is a need for skilled employees. However, attracting and retaining qualified and skilled employees is one of the consequential matters facing this industry. According to Baum (2015), hotels rely a lot on low-skilled or unskilled workers and thus, the lack of clarity on the concept of talent is more 'pronounced' within this industry.

In the tourism industry and hospitality sector the need for experienced and educated employees is essential. These competencies will increase the level of service quality in the hotel. Further, to survive in the market competition, each hotel needs to select an employee

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with qualifications and skills. The importance of education in the hotel industry among the employees is important since it reflects the strategy of the hotel, positioning of the hotel, and handling the critical. One of the studies by Blayney and Blotnicky (2010) highlighted that there is a relationship between the demographic factors of age, gender, education, and tenure of leadership competencies in Canadian hotel GMs.

The balance between academic qualification and industry experience could revoke the understanding of the employer when hiring candidates for the placement. The employer would determine whether to prioritize academic qualification, industry experience or a combination of both. This could gain insights into their preferences, priorities and challenges related to academic qualification and industry experience in first-level employees. It is also supported by Peacock (1995) explored the relationship between education and hospitality managers' success patterns. For the future career of first-line employees, education is one of the important factors to be a future manager. To be promoted as the hotel GMs or to a higher-level management position, it is compulsory for the employees to have an education. Some five-star hotels required employees to have at least a university degree to be promoted to a management position (Ahmad & Zainol, 2011). Indirectly, it encourages first-line employees to further their education and improve their work performance. Various positions required different educational levels to operate the job (Tavitiyaman, Weerakit & Ryan, 2014).

Understanding these capabilities will enable hospitality educators, hotel management, corporate training and development programs, and medium-scale hotels to become more successful at developing future hotel industry employees, which in turn increases excellent service in the hotel industry.

According to the numbers published in the newsletter by the Department of Statistics of Malaysia (2020), workers in the food and beverage service sector are predominantly individuals with SPM/SPM (V) qualifications or equivalent, totalling 542,094 people, contributing to 60.8 percent. This is followed by workers with qualifications below SPM/SPM (V) (174,886 people; 19.6%) and certificate holders (60,174 people; 6.7%). As in the accommodation service sector, workers with SPM/SPM (V) qualifications or equivalent and below constitute the majority group, amounting to 79,447 people or 60.8 percent of the total workforce in 2015. Workers with diploma/STPM qualifications or equivalent totalled 27,067 people (20.7%), while those with bachelor's degrees and above accounted for 14,125 people (10.8%). Therefore, employers must find challenges or barriers when trying to balance academic qualifications and industry experience in their hiring and promotion process. The challenges could include difficulties in evaluating the relevance of academic qualifications, assessing the transferability of skills gained through industry experience, or addressing the needs and expectations of different stakeholders.

Mismatch skills of the employees will directly reflect the quality of services and the product (Garg & Dhar, 2016) and the profit (Becker & Tews, 2016). Aside from that, the problem is coming from the disappointment that graduates experienced during their practices in the industry which dwindles their willingness to further professional (Anandhwanlert & Wattanasan, 2017).

Despite the importance placed on academic qualifications and industry experience when hiring and promoting first-level employees in the Malaysian hotel industry, there is a lack of research addressing employers' perspectives on the ideal combination of these factors. Moreover, existing studies tend to concentrate on the competencies of hospitality graduates, leaving a gap in knowledge regarding employers' viewpoints.

Understanding employers' perspectives is crucial for aligning education and training programs with industry requirements and ensuring a successful transition of employees from academia to the hotel industry. By exploring employers' viewpoints, as mentioned by (Arawati, et.al, 2011), it has been demonstrated that Malaysian employers perceive that the graduate employees" work skills are still below their expectations. In the findings, the policymakers need to identify appropriate national work skills requirements, for higher education to focus on specific skills and the organizations should focus more on the adoption of graduate skills.

The hospitality industry is well known for its pleasure, luxury, and outstanding customer service. The customer at present is travelling for both business and pleasure. Therefore, they expect to have a good service for their preferences. Being labelled as a service sector, the industry requires manpower to cope with the demands of customers and to ensure smooth operations can be provided to their hotel guests. Sangaran & Selvanayagam (2021)

A comprehensive understanding of the various aspects of the hospitality industry is crucial for both business owners and employees, as it encompasses event planning, restaurant services, lodging management, direct operations oversight, hotel administration, marketing strategies, and computer services. To effectively fulfil the organization's objectives and provide exceptional service to guests, employees at all levels within the hospitality industry must cultivate a comprehensive understanding and acquire a diverse set of skills. This ensures that future managers are well-equipped to lead and navigate the various aspects of the industry.

Examining the academic qualifications and industry experience of employees is important as it directly influences the quality of the service they can deliver. The integration of academic qualifications and industry work skills is instrumental in developing expertise and proficiency and enables the employees to provide exceptional service. By assessing these aspects, organizations can gain valuable insights into employees' theoretical knowledge and practical capabilities, fostering a well-rounded skill set that positively impacts service delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An employee needs to have relevant industry experience if they need to work in the hospitality sector. Many courses in hospitality degrees enable them to put academic learning into practice while they are in the industry. This practice provides a good experience for both employers and employees to get a feel for which area they are interested in. The hospitality industry provides good exposure for the employee on early responsibility.

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

In the modern era, academic qualification is essential, and it is the first thing that the potential employer will investigate. Academic qualification is the only way to find an efficient and dependable employee. Therefore, in a way, it ensures a successful career. This is because academic qualification helps employees their career promotion, instead of a good life by acquiring a good job.

Academic qualification is evidence of the possession of experience and knowledge. It provides more career options and opportunities (Okay & Scholarios, 2017). Usually, employees with academic qualifications have more knowledge and problem-solving skills to achieve their prominent positions. A good academic qualification helps the employee gain more knowledge for professional development and build critical thinking (Hegarty & Den, 2016).

Indirectly, it will boost the employee's motivation and confidence level for further training and competing for a higher position. Thus, academic qualification not only provides broad knowledge but also has additional benefits as well, especially for career promotion.

The academic qualification offers interdisciplinary skills that make the employee strong and widen the mental horizon in the specific field. Based on the previous study, there is a significant relationship between academic level and career success (Chon & Zoltan, 2019). Academic qualification unveils success in life by getting a good job with good pay instead of displaying that the person has strong basic in learning. To prove someone's capability, they need to be tested for their competencies as an academic qualification. Thus, it is obvious academic qualification plays an important role in contributing to career success instead of securing a job. Furthermore, the Malaysia Centre of Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) pertaining to human capital development in Malaysia managed to increase the annual output for trained and qualified Hospitality and Tourism employees by 50,000 in 2020. Therefore, increasing the number of qualified graduates with Diploma or Degree level qualifications from 13 percent in 2009 to 50 percent in 2020 (Hussain et al, 2020). There are great prospects for Hospitality and Tourism education in Malaysia that will support job opportunities.

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

According to Lian (2020), work experience can be defined as a person's ability to carry out certain tasks assigned to him/her. The longer and a lot of experiences gained by a person, it indicates that they have a greater capability than those who are less inexperienced. Employees who are more experienced are better at work because they possess and learn many activities and problems in the workplace. This is the added value gained by employees which can indirectly support the organization. Furthermore, the value can support them in their future career (Siddik, Syafaruddin & Widodo, 2017). Employees with experience are a greater asset to the employer. The transferable skills that they have such as communication and teamwork are needed skills for the organization. This is important because employees using prior work experience feel it simple to perform the current tasks assigned without any problems, but they would also require being encouraged to use the prior experience in the present tasks. (Njogu, 2017). They can understand how the organization works, and the operation and also build confidence when they have to interact with adults confirming interest in a career.

Further, hiring experienced employees helps improve the quality of services and products because they already know the desired results and ways in which to achieve the desired results which uses the learnt knowledge and skills in delivering quality services to the customers. (Njogu, 2017). In addition, experience can be considered as a prime concern, especially for leadership positions in various organizations. Also, leadership and performance differ from any culture, and it depends on the life patterns, beliefs, and experiences of the people. Research conducted by Anbazhagan and Kotur (2014) shows that work experience influences the performances of employees. It increases gradually but after 20 years of experience, the performance of the employees starts to get lower.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Training is often defined as the systematic process of altering behavior permanently. The objective is to meet the specific needs of the organization. It is a complex process with a mixture of activities intended to improve the performance of individuals or groups within the organization. It is the function associated with building employee competence and is designed to ensure that each employee is properly equipped with the knowledge, skills, and

proper attitude to execute the job successfully. Preparing and progression can be seen as a key tool in the performance of HRM practices and arrangements. (Zein. A.L & Nourreddine. O. H, 2019).

Staff training is a vital part of Human Resource Management exercises, more organizations have recognized that it is so vital to keep up making in the varying and complex factory. (Zein. A.L & Nourreddine. O. H, 2019). Directions to draw excellent work power is significantly important for the organization to have an adequate supply of required talents. The hotel must prepare the employees to do the best practice they can to do with their ability. Hence, some of the training methods applied in the hotel include on-the-job training, individualized instruction (computer-assisted), role play, group training, simulation exercise, modelling, rehearsal, and scenario. Service organizations need to assess the training needs of service employees. Often early detection will prevent a needless amount of money from being spent on correcting situations. Some of the cues for training needs are customer dissatisfaction, the number of accidents on the job, a disorganized work system, escalating operating costs, a decrease in productivity level, incidents of high waste and spoilage, and high turnover and absenteeism rates among employees.

Most training manuals explain the technical skills needed to perform a job. Research has indicated that the difficulties with service interactions are caused by two major customer groups and nine categories which explain the types of difficulties. They are (1) Unrealistic customer expectations due partly to unrealistic demand, the demand against the organization's policies, unacceptable treatment, drunkenness, actions that break societal norms, and customers who require special needs that the organization cannot accommodate, and (2) Unexpected service failures caused by unavailable service, slow performance, and unacceptable service level. This placed the communication burden on employees. However, these service features also provide a unique opportunity for service employees to demonstrate their innovativeness and flexibility in the recovery process if things go awry. Therefore, it requires contact employees whose training and interpersonal skills can keep a bad situation from becoming worse, the development of programs to train them in using prescribed responses in a given situation, the provision of general training in communication skills, the development of decision rules in choosing appropriate responses to a given situation, and by providing role-play situations in training whereby ideal and worse case scenarios are played out to help employees gain/upgrade communication and interpersonal skills.

There are four approaches to service training: (1) training for potentials which can maximize employee potential rather than training for specific tasks, (2) intelligent philosophy that emphasized employee's basic understanding of how an organization works, (3) basic financial and business concepts which showed how each can contribute to profitability and that behind all this is the belief that all employees are intelligent. They can adapt to the new situation given the responsibility, they can monitor and control input, process, and output, and (4) intelligent training which involves sharing information, that incompetence is not tolerated, showing how the 'game of business' is played, that understanding the rules of the game is important, that decisions are made in a certain way, and that there are factors to consider before beginning the game. An added perspective on training for service involves training employees on the understanding and appreciating of the organization's point of view, letting employees set their standards and budgets for their work, involving them in standard-setting, and giving them responsibilities and accountability on their job.

RECRUITMENT SOURCES

Managers and hiring personnel need to understand how to build new demand for the available jobs. (McGinley et al., 2017). Recruitment, as defined by Dowling and Schuler (1990), involved the 'search for and obtaining potential job candidates in sufficient numbers and quality so that the organization can select the most appropriate people to fill its job needs'. Among the factors that influenced the recruitment activities in an organization is the organization's stage in the life cycle, the organization's financial position, its size, the industrial sector it is in, and the cultural variation of the labor pool. Some of the recruitment sources are local newspaper advertisements, electronic media, trade papers, commercial employment agencies, college recruitment, corporate websites, and headhunters.

METHODS

The study uses a case study design since the objectives are to understand the employees' competencies and employees' communication skills. Service quality levels, training, and development activities and recruitment sources and the turnover rates in the hotel organizations. The variables are examined in a limited number of hotels since the purpose is to gain a better understanding of the preferences and practices among the hotels. The study uses a cross-sectional design with the periods of data collection extending over 6 weeks.

DATA COLLECTION

Primary data are collected via mail survey addressed to participating hotel organizations. It was requested that the respondents to the survey questionnaire should be any management staff in the human resource management department or division. Secondary information was derived from research reports (thesis, and journal articles) and information from newspaper articles.

POPULATION AND STUDY AND SAMPLE

The study examined selected 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star hotels in the Klang Valley. It is a convenient sample, whereby the sample was selected from the list of hotels in the area as published in the directory of hotels by Tourism Malaysia. Thirty hotels are solicited for participation in the study.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Research instruments are required to guide the study. The instruments consisted of structures and open-ended questions aimed at finding out: (1) Qualifications and Experiences, (5) training and development programs. (6) Recruitment Sources, Questions on the respondent's and organization's profiles were included to ensure the reliability of responses and to cross-tabulate with the variables. The seven instruments are compiled in the form of a survey questionnaire that is mailed out to the hotels. The following are the variables and the listing of the dimensions of each variable.

Qualifications and Experiences: • Requirement of Industry/Work Experience • Requirement of Academic Qualifications	Department: • Restaurant, Kitchen, Housekeeping, Front Office
Recruitment Sources	Main recruitment sources of employees: • Restaurant, Kitchen, Housekeeping, Front Office • Internal recruitment Source • External recruitment Sources •

The type of scaling method used was the subject-centred approach where the hotel variables were examined on the variations and all the variation was attributed to the differences among the hotels. The following were the types of scales used: (1) Nominal Scale for the demographic profiles, (2) Ordinal Scale for the ranking of the importance of some attributes, and (3) Interval Scale where differences between the mean score of the attributes are compared. A 4-point Likert-like scale was used that ranged from 1 – Very Satisfied/Very Important to 4- Not Satisfied/Not Important; and (4) ratio Scale for questions such as number of days and years, and length of period.

RESULTS

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The number of hotel organizations included in the study was 21. An analysis of the profile of respondents indicated that of the 21 hotel respondents, 67% of the respondents held positions as either personnel executive or training manager. 19% were human resource managers, whilst the other 14% were human resource supervisors.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents.

Position	**Number**	**Percent**
Human Resource Manager	4	19
Personnel Manager. Training Manager	14	67
Human Resource Supervisor	3	14
Total	21 (hotels)	100

INDUSTRY EXPERIENCES

Table 2 illustrated the importance of industry experience for the front-line employees in the restaurant, kitchen, housekeeping, and front office areas. It also showed the number of years of industry experience required for each of the four areas. The study revealed that industry experience was very important for all areas. The respondents indicated that, on the level of importance, for the front-line employees in the restaurant, the mean score was 1.81, for the kitchen the mean score was 1.62, the mean score for the kitchen was 2.10, and for the front office, the mean score was 1.86. This meant that industry experience was considered very important for the restaurant, kitchen, and front office areas, whilst for the housekeeping, it was noted at a slightly lower level of importance. Nevertheless, overall industry experience was

considered very important at 1.85. On the number of years of work-related experience required, the respondents preferred that the restaurant front-line employees had a minimum of 5 years of experience. For the other three areas, the respondents preferred slightly higher years of experience. Overall, the results indicated that the more experienced, the better it will be for the employees.

Table 2. First-Level Employees' Industry Experience

The requirement of Industry/Work Experience	**Level of Importance**	**Years of industry/work experience required**		
		Less than 1 year	**1-5 years**	**More than 5 years**
Restaurant	Important 1.81	Very Important 1.57	Very Important 1.33	Important 2.00
Kitchen	Very Important 1.62	Important 1.76	Very Important 1.29	Important 1.95
Housekeeping	Important 2.10	Very Important 1.71	Very Important 1.33	Important 1.95
Front Office	Important 1.86	Very Important 1.62	Very Important 1.14	Important 1.95
Overall	**Important 1.85**	**Very Important 1.67**	**Very Important 1.27**	**Important 1.96**

Based on the findings from Table 2, the overall results indicated that the more experienced, the better it will be for the employees. Experience provides employees with opportunities to develop and refine their skills in real-world settings. Through on-the-job experience, employees acquire industry-specific knowledge, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and adaptability to different situations. Understanding the impact of experience can help organizations design effective training and development programs that complement and build upon employees' existing experiences.

FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEES ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

Table 3 showed the level of importance of academic qualifications for the front-line employees in the restaurant, the kitchen, the housekeeping, and the front office areas. The respondents indicated that academic qualifications were very important for the kitchen, restaurants, and front office front-line employees. Academic qualifications were considered at a slightly lower level of importance for the housekeeping employees. However, the overall results indicated academic qualifications as very important as the mean score was 1.84. On the minimum acceptable qualification, the respondents' perceptions were as follows: the minimum acceptable academic qualification for the restaurant area was SPM (1.14), followed by the Diploma and the bachelor's degree both at (1.52). The SRP (2.00) and the MLVK (2.00) were considered of lesser importance for the restaurant front-line employees. Similar findings were revealed for the kitchen and the front office areas where the minimum qualifications preferred were also the SPM (1.29), followed closely by the Diploma (1.33), and the SRP (1.43). The other two qualifications, the MLVK (1.52), and the bachelor's degree (1.52) could also be considered in the selection of front-line employees for the kitchen and front office front-line employees. For the housekeeping area, the SPM 91.29) was also considered as the preferred academic qualification and other qualifications such as the SRP were also considered. Other acceptable qualifications for the housekeeping and front office front line employees were the Diploma (1.52), and the bachelor's degree (1.52).

Table 3. Academic Qualifications for The Front-Line Employee.

Requirement of Academic Qualifications	Level of Importance	Acceptable Level of Academic Qualifications					
		PMR	SPM	MLVK	Certificate in area	Diploma	1st. Degree
Restaurant	Very Important 1.62	Relevant 2.00	Very Relevant 1.14	Relevant 2.00	Very Relevant 1.52	Very Relevant 1.52	Relevant 1.82
Kitchen	Very Important 1.71	Very Relevant 1.43	Very Relevant 1.29	Very Relevant 1.52	Very Relevant 1.52	Very Relevant 1.33	Relevant 1.86
Front Office	Important 1.90	Very Relevant 1.43	Very Relevant 1.29	Very Relevant 1.52	Very Relevant 1.52	Very Relevant 1.33	Very Relevant 1.52
Housekeeping	Important 2.14	Very Relevant 1.43	Very Relevant 1.29	Relevant 2.00	Very Relevant 1.52	Very Relevant 1.52	Relevant 2.20
Overall	**Important 1.84**	**Very Relevant 1.57**	**Very Relevant 1.25**	**Relevant 1.76**	**Very Relevant 1.52**	**Very Relevant 1.43**	**Relevant 1.85**

1.00 – 1.74	1.75 – 2.49	2.50 – 3.24	3.25 – 4.00
Very Important/ Very Relevant	Important/ Relevant	Slightly Important/ Slightly Relevant	Not Important/ Not Relevant

In the findings, the respondents mentioned that academic qualifications were important. The qualifications required for front-line employees varied across different areas. The restaurant area placed high importance on SPM, while the kitchen and front office areas emphasized a combination of SPM, Diploma, and PMR. For housekeeping, SPM was the preferred qualification, but other qualifications such as PMR and Diploma were also considered acceptable. The bachelor's degree was deemed as an acceptable qualification for all areas but was not consistently prioritized as the top preference.

IN-HOUSE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Table 4 indicated the respondents' responses to the three questions as they relate to the front-line employees. An overwhelming 90% indicated that in-house training programs were provided. On average, each front-line employee was given approximately 13 days of training in a year. Some of the common types of training programs provided were customer services, upselling skills, product knowledge, on-the-job training, and first aid.

Table 4. In-House Training/Development for the Front-Line Employees.

	In-House Training/Development Programs			
	Yes	No	Number of Days in a Year	Type of programs
Restaurant	19	2	15	Customer Services Upselling Skills Product Knowledge OJT First Aids
Kitchen	19	2	12	
Front Office	19	2	15	
Housekeeping	19	2	13	

It revealed that a significant proportion of organizations provided in-house training programs to their front-line employees. The programs covered various areas, and this indicates a commitment to employee development and skill enhancement within the hotel industry.

Hence, understanding the impact of academic qualifications on employee performance holds the potential to shape the structure and implementation of training and development programs within the hotel industry. By gaining insights into how academic qualifications influence employee performance, organizations can tailor training initiatives to address any knowledge or skill gaps, effectively equipping employees with the necessary competencies for their specific roles.

OUTSOURCE TRAINING PROGRAMS

Table 5 showed that slightly over 71% of the respondents indicated that their hotels did provide outsourcing training programs for front-line employees. On average, the number of days of training provided through the outsourced programs was approximately 4 days. The common types of outsourced programs were food handling, customer services, hotel operations, and selling skills.

Table 5. Outsource Training/Development for the Front-Line Employees.

	In-House Training/Development Programs			
	Yes	No	Number of Days in a Year	Type of programs
Restaurant	15	6	4.29	Food Handling Customer services Hotel operations Selling skills
Kitchen	15	6		
Front Office	15	6		
Housekeeping	15	6		

RECRUITMENT SOURCES FOR FRONT-LINE EMPLOYEES

As indicated in Table 7, the emphasis for recruitment sources was on internal sources. This meant that the hotels preferred to promote employees from within. For the restaurant and kitchen front-line employees, 10 of the 321 or 86% of the hotels' respondents indicated that their hotel did use internal sources. The other 14% stated that their hotels did not use an internal source of recruitment to get frontline employees for those two areas. For the housekeeping front-line employees, respondents from 15 hotels indicated that their hotels preferred internal

recruitment sources also. For the front office front-line employees, respondents from 17 of the 21 hotels stated that their hotels did depend on internal recruitment sources.

On the external recruitment sources, all hotel respondents indicated that their hotels attracted new employees from other hotels, from colleges, through recruitment agencies, referrals, and advertisements, and via walk-ins for front-line employees for all four areas. For the restaurant, the hotel's respondents indicated that they derived their front-line employees mainly from other hotels (40%) followed by those from colleges and recruitment agencies. The kitchen front-line employees mainly came from colleges (28%) and other hotels (25%). The housekeeping area derived their front-line employees through referrals from their current employees (40%, and through walk-ins. For the front office, the external sources of recruitment were mainly through colleges (30%) and through referrals (25%).

Table 6. Recruitment sources for First level Employees.

	Main Recruitment Source of Employees							
	Internal		**External (%)**					
	Yes	No	Other Hotels	Colleges	Recruitment Agency	Walk-ins	Advertisement	Referrals (employees)
Restaurant	18	3	40	15	15	10	10	10
Kitchen	18	3	25	28	10	12	5	20
Housekeeping	15	6	12	15	10	20	3	40
Front Office	17	4	10	30	15	10	10	25

CONCLUSION

In the hotel industry, recruiting new employees with academic qualification and industry experiences are excellent as it leads to better performance for the hotel. Recruitment exercises should be properly carried out to ensure that the hotels have a sufficient pool of candidates to select from. Studies should be carried out to determine which recruitment channels have been more effective in the past. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights to hotel industry employers in developing effective hiring and selection processes. Understanding the significance of academic qualifications can help employers identify the right candidates for specific job roles, considering the educational requirements that align with the desired skill set and job responsibilities. Hotels should establish a close rapport with educational institutions so they can get first-choice employees for their organizations. Hotels can conduct recruitment exercises on campus. Educational institutions should find ways of increasing the awareness of potential students in the selection of appropriate programs. Educational institutions can conduct job/career fairs to promote their programs to potential students who might not be aware of the career opportunities in the hotel industry.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding this manuscript.

CONTRIBUTION OF AUTHOR

All authors are participants in the data collection and analysis and writing and revising the manuscript.

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