

How Hospitality Industry Managers' Characteristics Could Influence Hospitality Management Curricula

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Abstract: This doctorate research (EdD): work in progress describes the value systems and other driving powers of hotel upper segment restaurant managers (HUSRM's) and the way that these can influence hospitality management curriculum design. The transcripts of the digitally recorded semi-structured interviews were analysed applying grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss) and using NVivo7 QSR software in order to conceptualize on the answers provided by the respondents. The research generated some elements in the ongoing construction of theory about the characteristics of this specific category of professionals and the application in education. By using grounded theory methodology, theory is constructed from the empirical data. The outcomes of the research provided an overview of the divers value systems and driving powers of the respondents. Recommendations were made to have these value systems, driving powers and other characteristics to be taken into account by hospitality management schools in the curricula content and proximity to the industry. A moderate alert was issued in relation to schools' size and format as perceived by the respondents. The research is going to be moved into a next phase that involves expanding the interview sample.

Keywords: upper segment restaurants, value systems, driving powers, hospitality management curricula.

1. Introduction

In the hospitality industry and more specifically upper segment hotel restaurants providing hospitality, the enjoyment of high quality food and beverages is viewed as part of a special culture. In this culture hospitableness is one of the central themes. Philosopher Telfer (1996) refers to 'hospitableness' as depending on devotion and a spirit of generosity rather than on skill. Practitioners or former-practitioners in the upper segment, like the researcher, can find reward, satisfaction and opportunities for personal learning and growth in the notion that hospitality and being hospitable carries substantive intrinsic value.

Telfer (1996) quotes three historic reasons for offering hospitality in a cultural perspective. Firstly, hospitality originally involved meeting travellers' needs before modern means of travel and facilities existed. A biblical sense is referred to here where strangers should be looked after if they are in need. Secondly, giving, receiving and sharing food is a bond of the trust and interdependency set up between host and guest. In some cultures this is a permanent bond between people (e.g. traditional Bedouin will not fight anyone with whom they have eaten salt). Thirdly, giving food (and beverages: note author) is a gesture of friendliness. Particularly where hosts try to give their guests agreeable food it can be considered as an act of pleasing as well as sustaining them.

On the other hand however it would be fair to agree with Johnson et al. (2005) that because restaurants operate in a highly competitive business environment, it is often critical for the restaurateur to develop or try to develop a distinctive dining experience for increasingly discerning customers. The philosophy of one of the leading quality hotel chains of the world, Ritz-Carlton, is particularly interesting. This professional organisation, immerses its workforce in the organisational value of considering themselves as 'Ladies and Gentlemen Serving Ladies and Gentlemen (Henry, 2003). Interestingly, the verb 'Serving' is written with a capital letter in order to refer to a higher meaning of hospitality.

The dynamics and special characteristics of the strong entrepreneurial nature of upper segment quality restaurant operations are worthwhile further exploring. Morrison et al. (1999) emphasize the dynamism of the process of entrepreneurship in the hospitality industry and the potential positive outcomes of that process. In the upper segment of the hospitality industry, the quality of service and food and beverages is considered to be paramount. The following question initiated the research: *'Is it possible to research the upper segment restaurant entrepreneurs and managers in order to distil some of the important characteristics they share and feed this knowledge into the practice of hospitality management education?'* This research has been designed to generate findings and conclusions that can be used to educate and prepare starting professionals (i.e. students) for the hospitality industry or maybe even other service oriented industries.

A fair amount of scepticism towards the possible findings of such a research should always be apparent. It might turn out as a result of this research that the characteristics (values systems and other driving powers)

of entrepreneurs in this restaurant practice are rooted in unethical foundations merely connecting to selfish, purely financial, self-indulging motives that should not be reproduced in education. Knowledge about the characteristics of the successful entrepreneurs and managers in the upper segment restaurants is very limited and merely of descriptive and anecdotic nature. Dominantly journalists have looked at their restaurants (the scenery), their menu's and their professional careers (in a quantitative manner; where have they worked and for how long). Not many attempts have yet been made however to look at their specific value systems and driving powers in order to define the grounding principles that brought these successful entrepreneurs and managers in the upper segment to the point they are now.

The outcomes generated by this research will provide a contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of hospitality management. An even more unique contribution of this research lies however in the theory building on how these entrepreneurial and managerial characteristics can influence hospitality management curricula and therefore the education and development of future professionals for an important industry. The programmes in this sector originated from a strongly industry influenced orientation which Airey and Tribe (2000 in: Lashley and Morrison, 2000) labelled 'vocational and action' in nature as opposed to 'liberal and reflection'. In the past decade however programmes in hospitality management particularly those at the (under)graduate level have been adopting a more reflective, liberal and academic content.

While the development of hospitality management curricula is increasingly heading in the direction of academic and reflective modes the risk may be presenting itself that the connection with the hospitality industry and its professional orientation will become looser. Comments to the spirit and manner in which hospitality management education in The Netherlands is offered can be heard among professionals from the industry. One of the concerns they raise is the lack of quality in hospitality (management) education and availability of trained staff. The connection of the curriculum with the professional hospitality world is important and can be phrased as follows as an example in one of the hospitality offering universities in The Netherlands (Bosko, Dekker and Van der Hoek, 2005):

'our education can be a help to the progress of the professional practice. It is a case of interdependence. In our programme this is personified by lecturers who join us as staff members after a former career in the hospitality industry'.

The search for 'the constant factors in hospitality manager's actions and attitude have been important for the direction an institute offering a hospitality management programme' (Bosker, Dekker and Van der Hoek, 2005). In an even stronger manner hospitality management can be defined as a 'way of life'. A translation from these constants into competencies that guide an educational programme could very well be a leading motive for designing the curriculum. Research into competencies (of successful and representative hospitality practitioners) has been formulated as one of the main points of attention in keeping the educational programme both current as well as legitimate (Bosko, Dekker and Van der Hoek, 2005). The relation between research and curriculum design can be visualized in the following framework.

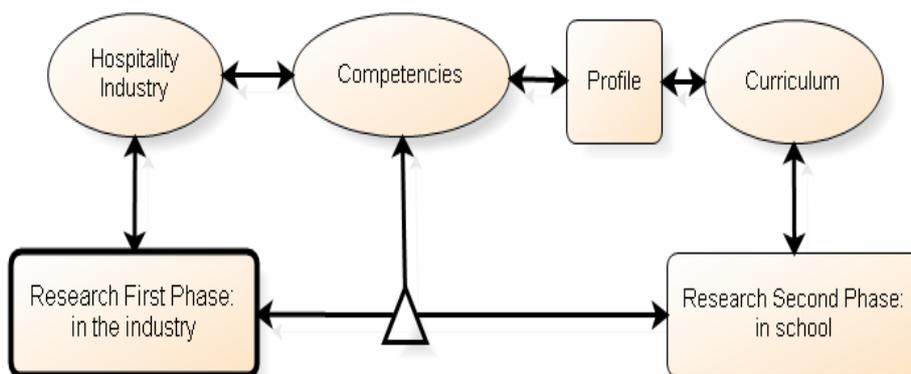


Figure 1: Relation between research and hospitality industry/competencies/curriculum (modified version of framework Bosko, Dekker and Van der Hoek, 2005)

As can be seen in the upper part of the model the relation between the hospitality industry and the competencies derived from it, is presented in the first balloon. From the competencies a (educational) profile is derived that eventually is translated into the curriculum. A major source of influence is research in the first phase applied to the hospitality industry to outline and continuously monitor the competencies needed for

practitioners in that industry. A second phase of research is used to keep track what the output and evaluation of the curriculum is in order to modify the competencies definition from that side.

An extensive exploration of the value systems and other driving powers that influence successful entrepreneurs and managers in the upper segment restaurants and the influence this can have on curriculum design would be yielding a contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of hospitality management education. A better understanding of value systems and driving powers as generated by this EdD research would serve as beneficial for the first phase of 'problem analysis' in policy making as defined in figure 1.

1.1 Definition of terms

The relevant terms in this research and their interpretation are:

- Hospitality industry = the industry, professional field that is generally considered to be part of the bigger tourism industry. International tourism is expected to increase in revenue from almost 500 billion US\$ in 1995 to 2000 billion US\$ in 2020 (WTO, 2006). Employment figures showed 207 million jobs in 2000 which was 8,2% of total global employment (UoL, 2006).
- HUSRM = Hotel Upper Segment Restaurant Managers; the specific, relatively small, group of entrepreneurs/practitioners within the hospitality industry with an significant achievement in operating high quality restaurant operations for more than 5 years and recognized by quality assessing institutions (Michelin, Lekker) for their performance (author)
- Value systems = the system of values that people have incorporated and from which personal behaviour and actions are triggered (definition author combining different sources)
- Driving powers = the combination of factors that consciously or subconsciously support an individual's behaviour and actions in life (author)
- Characteristics of HUSRM's = the combination of value systems, driving powers, socio-demographic variable and biographic notions relating to this specific group of practitioners (author)
- Hospitality management curricula = educational programmes that prepare students at diploma or degree level in the interdisciplinary subject area of managing service and hospitality offering oriented organisations (author)
- Grounded theory = the constructionist research methodology (Charmaz, 2006) oriented towards the inductive generation of theory from empirical data that have been systematically obtained and analyzed (Glaser and Strauss, 1967)

1.2 Aim and research questions

The central aim for this research is to define the influence that the characteristics of hotel upper segment restaurant managers (HUSRM's) could have on hospitality management curriculum design.

Research questions

- Which value systems drive HUSRM's in their business and life.
- Which other driving powers have brought the HUSRM's to performing in their business and life as they do.
- How can the characteristics of the HUSRM's be used in hospitality management curricula.

2. Literature review

Morrison et al. (1999), looking at the effectiveness and success of entrepreneurship, consider energy, health, emotional stability, intelligence, capacity to inspire and personal and ethical values as desirable but not so acquirable. Some of these characteristics relate to personality traits i.e. energy, health, emotional stability, intelligence and capacity to inspire while personal and ethical values obviously fall within the values domain. Olver and Mooradian (2003) tried to discover and present the relation and possible integration of personality traits and personal values. The former were defined as endogenous basic tendencies tied to underlying biophysical response systems, they are strongly heritable, surprisingly immune to parental and social influences and remarkably stable throughout adulthood. The latter, personal values, are considered to be learned beliefs about preferred ways of acting or being which serve as 'guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity'. When looking at the relationship between personality traits and personal values,

Olver and Mooradian (2003) concluded that personality and values both capture distinct and differential characteristics of the individual. They also provide a base of evidence that suggests that personality traits and values are relatively strongly interrelated. Because personality traits are considered to be endogenous variables ("nature") they cannot be significantly influenced or modified. Personal values however are part of the "nurture" elements that constitute a person's behaviour and actions. In this study a strong focus was on personal values that sit within the nurture dimension while in the driving powers elements of personality traits (the nature element) are represented. Tepeci and Bartlett (2002) concluded that workers' preference for a particular organisational culture is by far the strongest influenced by 'personal interests' including personal values.

For the researcher being a practitioner-researcher in (hospitality management) education it is then, profession oriented, the most interesting in terms of research activity to concentrate on a topic where the nurture (teaching and learning) element can be defined. Lingsma and Scholten (2001) confirm the importance of values for learning, where they refer to McClelland's 'iceberg model' describing learning processes of people. Values are considered to be part of the large underwater part of the ice mountain that most strongly influences the learning and changing of people over time. If the underwater part of the ice mountain in people's learning and changing that contains their values can be influenced, the strongest effect is achieved because it is connected to the will of people to learn or change.

The empirical grounding for the assumed relation between values and behaviour is still in progress and to date has not produced a clear cut and fully covering evidenced concept yet. Bardi and Schwartz (2003: 1218), although recognizing correlations between values and behaviour, hold reservation before emphasizing causality. Similarly, Tepeci and Bartlett (2002: 152) make a distinction between situationalist and personalist streams of thinking. The situationalists hold the view that behaviour can be predicted by assessing the person's situation or organisation while personalists suggest that personality traits, values and beliefs are primarily responsible for behaviour. Also conflicts between attitude and actions in a particular context may be activated that do not necessarily follow the general values a person holds (Feather, 2002: 447).

A wealth of literature has been published on leadership in major companies and multi-nationals and research institutes have been set up to study the subject (Hou, 2001: 262 and Dawes, 1999: 20). In 2000 over 2000 books were published on aspects of leadership (Gillespie, 2001: 167). There is however limited research specifically about value systems and other driving powers of hotel upper segment restaurant managers although examples are present like Morrison (2001) who looked at the biography of two entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry and Legohérel et. al. (2004) examined hotel/restaurant managers, their personality characteristics, attitude towards risk and decisional orientation. Both studies however had no correlation with the upper segment of the hotel and restaurant business. There is no research available on the effect that these characteristics can have on curriculum design in hospitality management education.

3. Methodology

This study is aimed at finding the connection between the characteristics of a particular group of professionals and curriculum design in hospitality management education. It focuses on the core of the hospitality industry. High quality restaurants are a very competitive segment within the hospitality industry that traditionally has been left outside the academic research world with a few exceptions such as Gehrels (2004), Johnson (2005), Gehrels, Kristanto and Eringa (2006) and Gehrels and Kristanto (2007). Looking from an epistemological point of view the orientation in this research is within constructionism (Crotty, 2003 and Charmaz, 2006) following the definition of Flick (2006): 'constructionism informs a lot of qualitative research programs with the approach that the realities we study are social products of the actors, of interactions and institutions'. Knowledge is seen as being constructed in a process of social interchange between the subject (the researcher) and the object (in this case the managers being researched).

It is important to define the founding principles for doing this research being in the constructivist tradition. In this way an objectivist/positivist approach is rejected. This type of research would traditionally start from the theory/literature to produce hypotheses that can be tested. The essential philosophy of objectivism/positivism is that research should be value free and objective. In this particular EdD research approach however the results, analysis and theory building generated interacts with the researcher's understanding and interpretation. In the encounter with the research sample (the HUSRM's) reality is constructed and not value free.

Grounded theory as applied in this research was first presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and taken further by Glaser, Strauss, Strauss and Corbin, Locke (2001) and many others. The essence of grounded theory is that theory is derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Clearly this research is done in a very specific context which does not assume 'grand generalization'. The sample in this research consisted of the earlier described specific hotel upper segment restaurant managers (HUSRM's). As presented in paragraph 1.1, HUSRM's are defined as: hotel upper segment restaurant managers; the specific, relatively small, group of entrepreneurs/practitioners within the hospitality industry with an significant achievement in operating high quality restaurant operations for more than 5 years and recognized by quality assessing institutions Michelin Guide (Michelin, 2007) and Lekker Top 500 Restaurant Guide (Nijssen, 2007)) for their performance.

The assumption underlying this research is that there must be significant points of interest in the characteristics of this specific upper segment category of managers that could influence curriculum design in education in order to benefit future managers in the professional world. As an important component in the definition of the sample lies in the description 'upper segment' which in this research is connected to two reputable publications in The Netherlands that are considered to 'set the tone': Michelin Guide and Lekker Top 500 Restaurant Guide. To pinpoint the successful hotel upper segment restaurants and thereby identify their HUSRM's, the following criteria in the two quality assessing guides were taken:

1. Michelin: 4/5 hotels black or 3/4/5 hotels red (H) and possibly star(s) 
2. Lekker: quoted (preferably in the top 100 or quoted as being among the best restaurants in their city Amsterdam: BoA)

For this sample 6 hotel upper segment restaurants in Amsterdam in the category were taken and their restaurant managers were interviewed.

Table 1: Companies of interviewees

Hotel	Restaurant	Michelin 2007	Lekker 2007
Amstel	La Rive	HHHHH Red / 	5 BoA
The Grand	Café Roux	HHHHH Black	100+ BoA
L'Europe	Excelsior	HHHH Red /	92 BoA
Barbizon Palace	Vermeer	HHHH Black / 	22 BoA
Bilderberg Garden	Kersentuin	HHHH Black	100+ BoA
The Dylan	The Dylan	HHH Red	70 BoA

Data were generated through semi-structured interviews. This format allows the researcher to ask supplementary questions to attain deeper insights to the meaning of the answers given (Johnson et al., 2005). The interviews were digitally recorded and the recordings were filed into the research project as defined with NVivo7 software to make sure the rich data could be handled.

4. Results and analysis

The six interviews of this first stage of the study were organized between September and December 2006. The interviewing was done by a junior researcher who incorporated the results in her own dissertation research. The respondents were first approached by telephone and when they agreed to participate an appointment was made for the interview. The anticipated time for each interview of maximum one hour was not exceeded. It turned out that the respondents were quite busy people who aimed at a efficient interaction with the interviewer which resulted in an average time of interviewing of between 22 and 46 minutes. The age of the respondents who were all employed as either restaurant manager or maitre d'hotel was between 32 and 52.

In this first stage of the research we wanted to see if there would be a correlation between the age and years of experience of the interviewees and the length of the interviews. There was no correlation because it turned out to be the youngest interviewee that generated the longest interview while the oldest interviewee generated the second interview duration. The length of the interviews seems to be more related to the preparation and background of the interviewer because in two pilot interviews done by the senior researcher interview times were 1 to 2,5 hours with similar respondents. After analyzing the interviews it became clear that the number of follow-up questions is considerably higher when the researcher/interviewer is really "into" the topic and background of the research. This notion is confirmed by Arksey and Knight (1999: 104) where they highlight the importance of background knowledge for competent interviewing. Furthermore Rubin and Rubin (2005: 136) stress the crucial nature of asking follow-up questions in order to obtain depth and detail

in the interview but also acknowledge the difficulty novice interviewers have in working out follow-up questions while doing the interview.

The analysis of the interviews was done by reading and re-reading the transcripts that were generated from the digital recordings there by following the suggestion of Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe (2006: 122) when applying grounded theory approach of systematically analysing the data as to '*tease out themes, patterns and categories*'. In order to systematically register the information gained from the transcripts NVivo7 software was used. The interesting elements in the respondents' answers were coded in the text and then stored in the so-called free nodes in NVivo7. This procedure allowed the researcher to keep a proper overview of the themes and concepts that appeared. Prior to creating the free nodes a basic structure of so-called tree nodes was designed that followed the main questions put forward to the interviewee. The main questions essentially captured the research questions as they were defined at the beginning of the research.

After analyzing the first two interviews the free nodes partly could be fitted into the tree nodes after which the answers created the branches of the trees. For example the first interview question got the interviewees to talk about their education and experience. The tree node initially created for this consisted of 'education' and 'work experience'. After analyzing the first two interviews branches were created such as: 'secondary education' and 'higher education' and after that sub-branches such as 'general secondary education' and 'vocational secondary education'. The creating of more sub-tree nodes generated refinement to the examination of the respondents' answering. The free nodes not only generated tree nodes in a predictable direction as given above in the example of education but also led the researcher in new directions exploring the respondents characteristics. For example some respondents recalled particular critical incidents in their life that stimulated their interest for the hospitality industry. These specific "new" notions captured in free nodes were then transferred into new main categories (tree nodes).

The main categories created after looking at the research questions and additionally incorporating the information gained from the detailed reading of the interviews were:

1. Value systems
2. Driving powers
3. Other characteristics
4. Important elements of the profession
5. Influence on hospitality management education
6. Education
7. Work experience
8. Other issues of importance

Although education and work experience showed an apparently great diversity, careful examining showed that all respondents had a background in secondary vocational education having been through either the working-learning part-time format (2 respondents) or the full-time MHS (Middle-level Hotel School) format (4 respondents) including one year of internship. Work experience and career paths were all generated in a diversity of hospitality companies (hotels and restaurants) and dominantly for all respondents in food and beverage department of hotels and/or independent restaurants. One respondent (the oldest) indicated to have been working in a variety of other companies outside the hospitality industry. In the category '*value systems*' and '*driving powers*' the six interviewees were asked to talk about their values and driving powers related primarily to their professional life (Interview questions: '*Can you tell me something about the things that you value in the profession of restaurant manager in the hotel upper segment restaurants?*' and '*What drives you in your life as a restaurant manager in the hotel upper segment restaurants? Could you tell me about your most important values?*')

We found out that the hotel upper segment restaurant managers held a wide range of value systems and driving powers. In value systems most notably '*guest oriented*', '*enjoying work*' and '*being curious (having an urge to learn)*' were mentioned. All three values were mentioned by three respondents. The value '*guest oriented*' was illustrated as '*the highest value is probably to be guest oriented*' and '*every guest should really feel the warmth of coming home and feeling at home, and should be welcomed in that way*'. With an even stronger meaning of this guest oriented value one respondent described it as: '*if guests come to a restaurant it will be under different circumstances and they may be nervous, it is then very important to greet them and make them feel at ease. It is our duty to take away feelings of anxiety. Welcoming and saying goodbye to guests are the most crucial moments*'. The strong connection the value '*guest oriented*' holds to the

profession was explained by one restaurant manager as follows: *'I think that trainees should be inspired by restaurant managers, they should learn the values of the classic cuisine. I want to teach our trainees that the guests are most important and we should fulfil all their wishes, even when you have to be the underdog'*. Clearly this statement indicates a firm dedication to defining this value of being guest oriented into professional practice.

'Enjoying work' was an interesting value to be picking up from the interviewees because in another category that was touched upon in the interviews respondents indicated that their work environment is challenging. Working a lot of hours (sometimes 10 to 11 hours a day), working at other peoples holidays like Christmas and experiencing stress were mentioned as features of the work. Still three respondents explained that they see enjoying the work as a core value: *'you have to really, really like the work'*, *'I really enjoy myself'* and *'I always tell my staff that is of the utmost importance that they have a good working time here'*. *'Curiosity'* as the denominator of the urge to learn was another important value mentioned by three respondents: *'I learn new things every day'* and *'I am curious and read a lot about the business,..I try to keep myself up-to-date'*. The other values that the respondents were mentioning are shown in the model below.

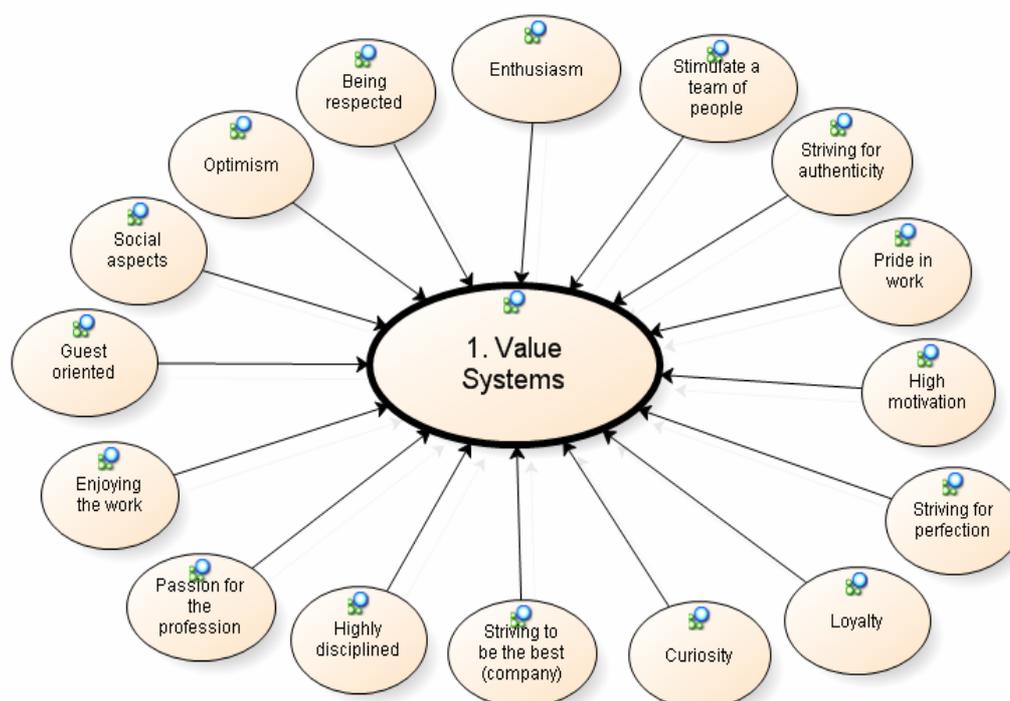


Figure 2: Value systems grounded in the interviews

In the category of driving powers a rather diverse range of issues were mentioned by the respondents. As a stimuli to go into the hospitality industry and into the specific profession some special experiences at young age were mentioned by the respondents: *'a first experience with an upper segment restaurant on a date with a girlfriend'*, *'the hospitable environment created by a grandmother that organized parties and meals'*, *'being involved in hospitality work by two girls next door at a young age'*, *'helping a brother who was already working in the industry'* and *'getting acquainted with the hospitality industry through excursions'* are all examples of particular experiences that stimulated the respondents to choose for a career in restaurant management.

Another category of driving powers lies within the pull factors related to the assumed attractiveness of the hospitality industry and push factors relating to negative experiences related to other industries (or segments within the hospitality industry). Examples were given as: working with the specific products in the upper segment such as wines and good food and the ambiance in the companies within that segment. Also the intrinsic characteristics of the profession have provided the driving powers for some as the examples taken from the transcript illustrate: *'to organize everything perfectly within the right frames which includes coaching the staff to deliver the products at the right way and time'*, *'we are able to set a very high service standard here, which is for me a motivation and driving power to work here'*, *'in the end I always liked the service side more, because of the interactions with the guests'*, *'but for me this social aspect always has been important'* and *'what further more is important as restaurant manager is coaching and to be the host, the person in*

charge to approach and for me to approach the guest, have contact with the guest'. One respondent expressed an initial feeling of ambiguity about his profession because of the fact that his father is an economist and 'he is carrying plates' as he described it.

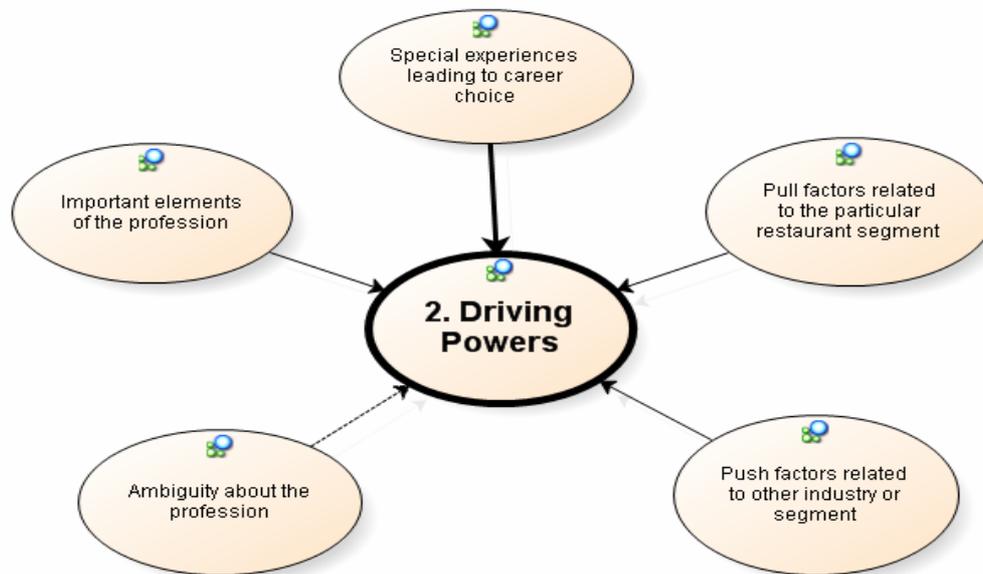


Figure 3: Categories of driving powers

In addition to 'values' and 'driving powers' there appeared to be a third category of what we called 'other characteristics'. In this category most quoted were characteristics qualified as 'values referring to the company'. Almost all managers had a specific notion that their work and personal functioning was to a major extent directed by values located in their company. The restaurant managers referred to company related values as: 'it is very important that I am not the only person who thinks that we are responsible for exceeding the experience of the guest, but the whole team, 12 people, should have this attitude and should feel the same about this', 'so that's why the others have to have the same kind of spirit in order to deliver the same service. All our waiters should be optimistic, and this is also where we look at when we hire new staff', 'I really want to be proud of my team, but they have to deserve it, and therefore they have to be willing themselves', 'I think the standards that we set are very important. These are standards from Sofitel, but also the standards that the management of The Grand makes itself' and 'we are working here with a young team, we do a lot with training and coaching, which I really like'.

Another characteristic that influences the thinking and acting of the restaurant managers in this sample is their 'potential ambitions'. There is no unity in their ambitions and answers ranged from the traditional line promotion scenario expressed as 'maybe in a later stage a function in the management of a hotel will attract me as well' or 'within this company I would like to go one step, or two steps, higher, as long as my position still got to do with guests, the sky is the limit. But it is not in my planning to still carry plates when I am fifty years old'. Another respondent added the dimension of family life and the restrictions connected to that 'also in my private life things changed, I have two children of 1,5 and 4 years old, and I think, it's also one of the reasons I am more happy with my job, I am not going to switch jobs as fast if I did when I was younger'. Obviously some respondents have the ultimate goal of starting some business of their own 'there is a dream to start a small Bed & breakfast in a foreign country together with my girlfriend' which another respondent formulated like 'I have some goals left, I am not finished in this field yet. I would like to start my own business' while simultaneously adding the limitation 'but I also have a family, my wife and three kids, and they have to be supportive on every aspect which it will take'. Other less quoted characteristics were about the fact that they thought skills are not the most important element in their work, the crucial importance of a good attitude and the coincidence of particular steps in their career or even as one respondent stated the absence of real career planning.

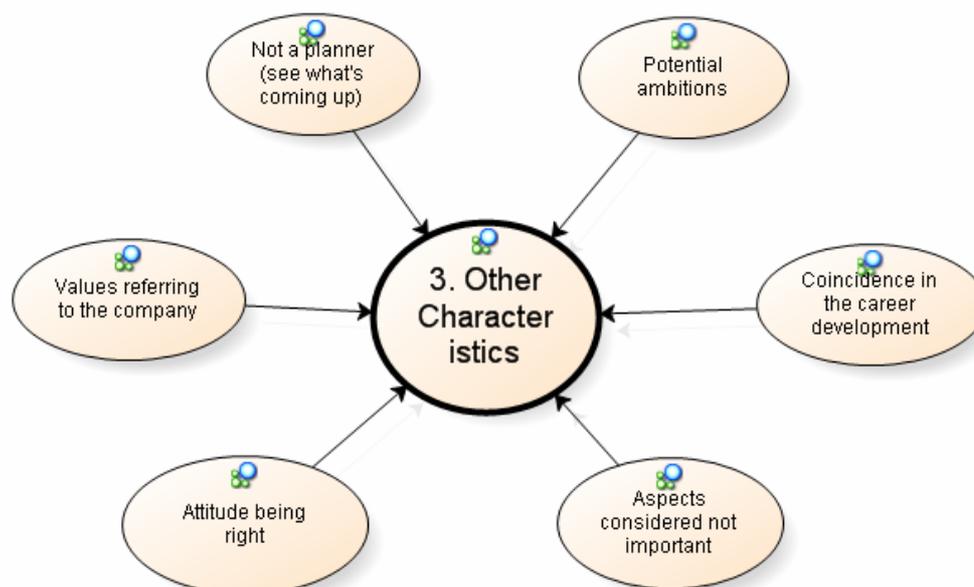


Figure 4: Other characteristics connected to the respondents

Interestingly the respondents related a lot to the elements that they felt are important in their profession as restaurant manager and/or the challenges that should be faced in that same profession. Elements were mentioned such as: *'having knowledge of people, the profession and the trade'*, *'having strong discipline'* and *'the willingness to do long hours'*, *'being calm in stressful situations'* and *'being the example for the rest of the team'*, *'directing good organisation and communication within the team'*, *'planning both long-term for the operations and financially'*. Then as the challenges of the profession firstly and most dominantly the number of hours (10 to 11 per day) and the stress incurred by the work were mentioned.

A category of answers that we were looking forward to when starting this research was obviously connected to the research question 'What do you think students of hospitality management educational programmes should learn from your value systems and driving factors? In the analysis of the answers there appeared to be three subcategories that were arranged as:

1. Schools' content direction
2. Schools' connection to the hospitality industry
3. Schools' awareness of structure and format.

Then as a separate influence the respondents identified the need for schools to be aware of the individual differences among their students and particularly to acknowledge the fact that some students have some awareness of the upper segment of the industry while others have not. In the first category of *'schools' content direction'* respondents indicated the importance to both communicate the pre-condition for a career in the upper-segment as well as the specifics of that segment. Positive attitude being a vital attribute was expressed by one respondent as *'I think it is important for students to realize that you really have to commit to your job or traineeship'*. A further need *'content-wise'* for schools would be to define the profession's characteristics and to communicate the positive elements as well as the challenges of the profession to students. One respondents summarized the positive elements as *'...we are in a beautiful industry, in which we have to transmit that feeling to our guests, colleagues and other people...that if you are really enthusiastic about the company you are in, there is future in the hospitality industry, that there are a lot of opportunities to be promoted within a company if you work hard and have the right attitude....that you need a big social sensitivity to succeed in this industry....'*. A colleague added *'students have to know better that working in this segment is not only about 'shining gold'* to emphasize the challenging side of the upper segment in the industry.

The second category of answers indicated the strong necessity for schools to provide connection to the industry because people in the industry can provide important learning opportunities to students and as one respondent mentioned in a more philosophical manner *'I think that it is not only at the operational level, but also for what you are going to do after work and in further life, because it is always going on. If it is correct what you are doing here, you are also going to do well outside the company. You will take this further in decisions that you make in the future'*. Three respondents emphasized the importance of the practical

experience for students in internships or through other activities for their awareness of the upper segment in the hospitality industry and of life in general.

An explicit concern was raised by some respondents about the structure, format and size of the schools and in comparing the MHS colleges to the HHS degree programmes concluding that the former provided a much better foundation for the practitioners in the upper segment than the latter.

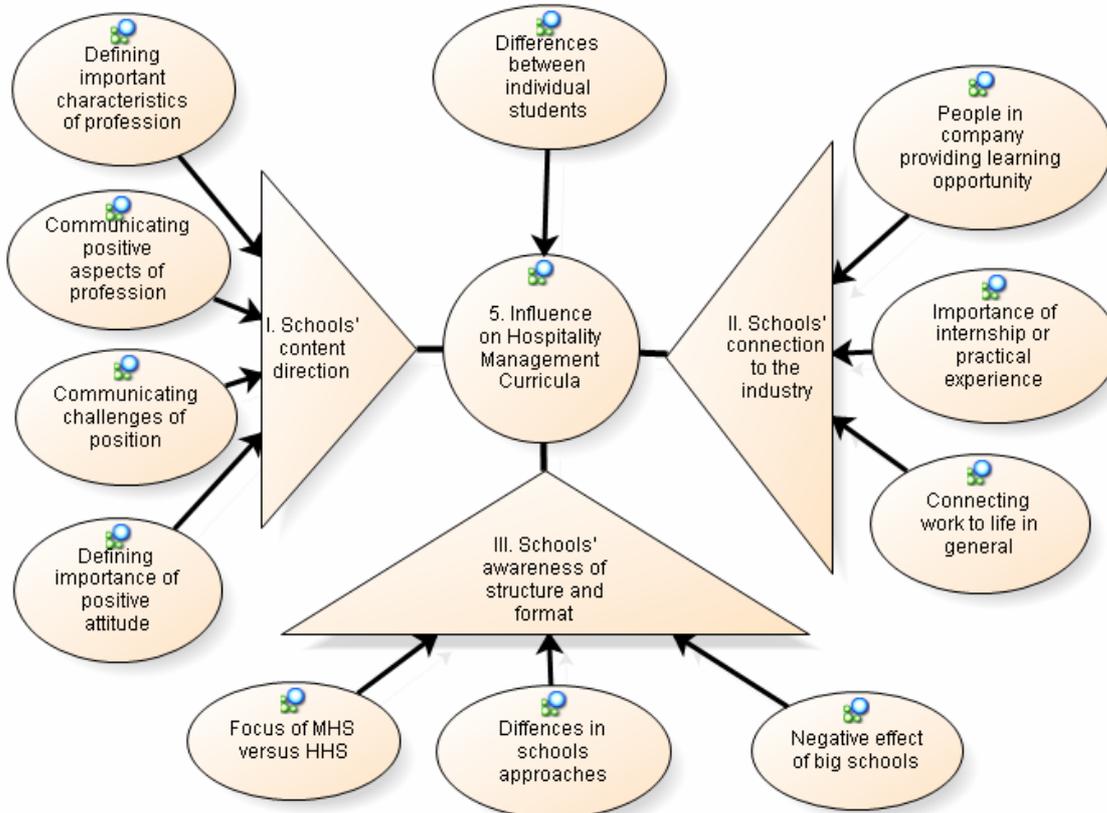


Figure 5: Influence on hospitality management curricula

At the end of the interview the respondents were asked to raise any other issues they felt to be of concern for the topic. The issues raised were about the greater difficulties of restaurants in the upper segment to get good staff, emphasizing the importance of teachers in hospitality education to treat their students as guest in order to raise their awareness of hospitality and a re-confirming of the importance for students to be proactive and take the learning opportunities they get in many companies.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations in this chapter are interwoven, while at the end a summarizing set of recommendations is offered. When looking at the results of this study it is fair to say that the six restaurant managers, all male, were in their mid-careers and all but one between 32 and 42 years old. The range of values the six managers felt to be important was quite varied and further categorization would be useful. In the 10 value categories (Schwartz, 1992, Bardi and Schwartz, 2003: 1208) *'conformity (guest oriented, highly disciplined)'*, *'self-direction (curiosity)'* and *'hedonism (enjoying work)'* would be represented although *'achievement (pride in work, high motivation, striving for perfection, striving to be the best as a company, passion for the profession, being respected)'* was also highly represented.

It is difficult to offer very extensive explanation for the appearance of these value categories at this stage of the research. The high representation of value categories *'achievement'* and *'conformity'* may be related to the career paths and educational levels of the restaurant managers. They all went through a relatively long and hard working career development having educational achievement at secondary vocational level complemented with many years of *'working through the ranks'*. It seems that achieving the best in their work and conforming to the strict quality setting of their work environment (upper segment restaurants) has brought them to the position of restaurant manager. In the forward feeding of their values to hospitality management education this could be important information for future managers (now students) because it

explains the nature of career development in a labour intensive (10-11 hours per day) industry upper segment. It is then simultaneously interesting to observe the mentioning of *'enjoying the work'* as a hedonistic value category although this *'enjoying the work'* could also be explained as a sense of conformation ('one has to like the endurance element incurred by the profession in order to sustain').

In the driving powers for these professionals it is interesting to see that *'special experiences'* in a life before the profession in some cases led to the initial interest setting. The restaurant managers were sensitive to social settings in their youth, sometimes in a context with family or friends, that stimulated their interest in the world of professional hospitality offering. The driving powers of *'pull (feeling attracted to the specific industry or segment)'* and *'push (disliking other industries or segments)'* have most likely further channelled the interest of these professionals. Taking the particular appreciation for the intrinsic qualities (*'elements of the profession'*) as further driving power supports the process of further development the respondents have gone through in their careers in the upper segment.

A preliminary conclusion drawn from the *'driving powers'* that the respondents talked about for hospitality management education would be to further investigate and analyze the pathway that potential students have gone through before they opt for professional development in the hospitality industry in order to see which particular personal driving powers they have. Furthermore an important responsibility would be put on schools' management, curriculum designers and educators to explicitly be aware of the responsibility they have to offer a realistic but also inspiring learning experience related to the profession. This would entail having students to learn about both the possibilities as well as the constraints of the professional hospitality world.

Another important conclusion on how the respondents' characteristics should influence hospitality management is about the ongoing need to emphasize the *'school's connection to the industry'*. Gaining practical and real-life experience thereby facilitating the learning opportunities provided in companies and eventually understanding the connection of professional life to the world around it. Very importantly the awareness issue was raised by the respondents where they talked about their concern for the growing sizes of the schools that they knew before as their vocational and professional *'home grounds'*. Although the increase in scale may be a necessary aspect of contemporary sustainable organizational formats in education, it would be good for schools to consider how they organize and present this to the professional world.

A necessity for better alignment between schools educating at the secondary vocational level and those at degree level could also be concluded from the respondents' answers. Finally the other issues that were brought up by the respondents reconfirmed the suggestions about education's responsibility to properly and realistically prepare students for the hospitality industry while acknowledging the role that companies can have in that process.

When looking at the concepts that were emerging from the interviews a first construction of theory can be undertaken. The way a management position in the hospitality industry i.e. in restaurant management is fulfilled and the degree of success in fulfilling it is correlated to a combination of factors. In a formula it is presented like this:

$$\mathbf{Eex + Edu + Wex + Cha = Pos}$$

Eex = Early experiences relating to generating a 'hospitality awareness'.

Edu = Education

Wex = Work experience

Cha = Characteristics of the particular professional (value systems and driving powers)

Pos = Position fulfilling and success

If in further research this theory can be validated, confirmed and detailed it will provide an important instrument for educational programmes and the field of human resource management. The theory could support the assessing of choices of future professionals (student: before-, throughout- and after their educational programme).

A recommendation from this first phase of the research would be for educational programmes to seek a closer relationship with the professional world i.e. the industries that they are primarily educating in order to feed in the actual nature, character, quality and challenges of that professional world. Another recommendation would be to further develop an ongoing basis in research into the industry as presented in

figure 1, thereby increasing the proper knowledge base connected to the hospitality industry and its influence on curriculum design.

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