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Applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to Explain Hotel Managers’ Intentions to Offer Internships in Jamaica: A Qualitative Inquiry.

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The purpose of the study was to apply the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to examine hotel managers’ intentions to offer internships in Jamaica. The specific objective of the study was to determine the salient beliefs that motivate hotel managers to offer internships to hospitality management college students in Jamaica. Qualitative data were collected using focus group discussions. Twenty-five managers participated in the focus group discussions. Data were analyzed and reported using content analysis. The results indicate that several belief factors influence managers’ intention to offer the internship experience.

KEYWORDS hotel managers; intentions; internships; theory of planned behavior; salient beliefs, Jamaica

Introduction and Background Information
During the last few decades, the educational environment has undergone several radical changes. The turbulent and increasingly competitive job markets have dictated the role of higher learning institutions in preparing their graduates. Post-secondary institutions have been compelled to provide what would be considered more relevant academic preparation in order to increase competency. Generally, institutions are striving to provide a more holistic experience-based education. This shift in emphasis is reflected in the introductory statements of a majority of college catalogs (Jernstedt, 1980).

Not only are the curricula and activities of institutions of higher education changing, the importance of the role of experiential learning is following suit (Cantor, 1995). Even though no single or universal definition for the term “Experiential Learning” exists, Hoover and Whitehead (1975), offer the following definition: "Experiential learning exists when a personally responsible participant cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally processes knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes in a learning situation characterized by a high level of active involvement” (p. 25). On the other hand, Inkster & Ross (1995, 11) defined an internship as a “structured and supervised professional experience within an approved agency” for which students can earn academic credit. The importance of experiential learning is perhaps reflected in The AACSB Memorandum (Carter et al. 1986) which quotes: “Tell me and I’ll
forget. Show me and I’ll remember. Involve me and I’ll understand.”

Experiential learning has been loosely used as an encompassing term associated with several other terms such as internship (Gault, Reddington, & Schlager, 2000; Moore, 2010), service learning (Moore, 2010; Cantor, 1995; Stanton, 1995), cooperative education (Gault et al., 2000; Moore, 2010), experiential education (Chapman, McPhee, & Proudman, 1995; Conrad & Hedin, 1981; Druiian, Owens, & Owen, 1980; Joplin, 1980), learning at work (Ellström, 2001), and community service learning (Parker et al., 2009), among others. The term internship however, has been used extensively and almost synonymously with ‘experiential learning’ (Moore, 2010; Parilla & Hesser, 1998; Gentry, 1990) and most visible (Stanton, 1995). For the purpose of this study, we shall utilize the term internship.

Defining Internship

Several authors have attempted to define the term internship in order to provide not only structure to the concept, but also develop approaches for the successful implementation of internship. Even though shy to provide a definition, these authors state that internship should reflect the following features: an extended period of practical work placement; ranging from several weeks to a year or more. Generally the practice involves three groups: the students/interns, the management of Host Company and the faculty. Therefore, internship should involve both the universities and companies in its implementation and supervision (DiLorenzo-Aiss & Mathisen, 1996; Narayanan, Olk, & Fukami, 2010).

Some authors point to other characteristics of internships. For instance, O’Neil stresses that “an internship should be “a deliberative form of learning” that involves “doing”, reflection, and “feedback for improvement” (O’Neill, 2010). Allen (2009, 23) utilizing the conclusions of Allen, Wachter, Blum and Gilchrist (2009), as well as Diambra, Cole-Zakrzewski and Booher (2004), suggested that “a successful business internship should (1) provide and conduct (2) provide feedback, (3) give challenging assignments, (4) provide opportunity for exposure to the larger organization, and (5) establish a clear understanding of what is to be accomplished.” This description reflects the Assure Model of Teaching or (conducting an internship), which requires the university and the internship supervisor to analyze participants strengths, state internship objectives, select specific tasks, provide for the utilization of current media and materials associated with the tasks, require extensive participation and evaluate as students participate and revise plans if needed (Mayo, 2014).

Although there is no universal definition for ‘internship,” it can be described as a process that is short-term, ranging from six to twelve weeks, and takes place at a site of employment. Students are expected to spend time at the location and be a part of the company: its employees, culture, and decision making processes. An internship involves learning through practical application, which is considered an extremely effective learning strategy as it engages the learner and provides the opportunity to relate theory to practice through observation, interaction, and reflection (Stanton, 1995; Lewis & Williams, 1994). Due to its almost
universal acceptability and the investment institutions, companies, and students place on this experience, there is a need to undertake inquiry.

Summarily, internships can be described as a “structured and career relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program” (Taylor, 1988, p. 393). The purpose of an internship is to enrich student learning by blending classroom learning with practical experience (Jiang & Tribe, 2010), in order for the student to develop a realistic preview of their potential career (Siu, Cheung, & Law, 2012), as well as develop some workplace-oriented common sense before graduation (Aggett & Busby, 2011). For this purpose, many if not all hospitality programs have made internship a required experience for undergraduates, while some have made this a prerequisite graduate curriculum (Fidgeon, 2010). Such kind of practice is not unexpected as internship programs provide considerable benefits for various stakeholders including students, employers, and academic institutions (Fong, Lee, Luk, & Law, 2014; Singh & Dutta, 2010).

While internships have attracted widespread attention from scholars in different disciplines (Hejmadi et al., 2011; Lam & Ching, 2007; Nancy, Marcia, & Robert, 2007; Zhao & Liden, 2011), a thorough check and search of literature reveals several gaps. Firstly, these studies produce inconsistent findings. Furthermore, these studies tend to be extremely skewed. Most of the published studies have tended to heavily examine the student perspective. Specifically, these studies have tended to focus on students’ expectations and perceptions of internship programs (Siu et al., 2012; Barron, 2008; Lam & Ching, 2007). Minimal studies have focused on the employing entity. As mentioned, an internship is an activity that not only involves the students, but also the organizations hosting these students. This paucity in the literature led Cook, Parker, & Pettijohn (2004) to propose the need for further research regarding internships; specifically this author emphasized that research should focus on managers’ attitudes towards internships. This study was therefore undertaken to fill this gap.

The purpose of this study was to examine the managers’ motivations to offer internships to hospitality college students in Jamaica. The study is designed to accomplish the following specific objectives:

1. Determine the salient beliefs that motivate hotel managers to offer internships to hospitality management college students in Jamaica.
2. Document managerial and theoretical implications of the findings.

The findings provide insights into understanding what specifically motivates hotel managers to offer internships to college students in Jamaica and therefore provide a framework for managing the concept of internship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Hotel/Hospitality Industry

Information from the Jamaica Tourist Board’s annual travel statistics 2010 indicates that the accommodation sector directly employs approximately fourteen percent of the workforce in Jamaica (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2010). The industry in general employs labor
from varying educational levels and backgrounds, selected mainly on prior experience and qualifications (Ruzki, 2002). Employees with work experiences are considered more professional, more productive and able to attain a sense of job satisfaction (Ruzki, 2002). This could explain one reason that institutions encourage internship.

The hospitality and tourism industry in Jamaica has experienced phenomenal growth since the early 1800’s when Jamaicans would travel aboard the banana ship to England and visitors from Europe, in particular England would travel to Jamaica on the ship’s return (Weiss, 2007). This growth was also spurred by the Jamaica International Exhibition in 1892 and the Jamaica Hotels Law that was passed in 1890 (Jamaica Tourist Board, 2013). Then, in the 1930’s and 1960’s, development and changes in the political landscape in the region and other areas of the world including the mode of travel and large all-inclusive tourist accommodations in Jamaica saw an increase in the number of tourists to the island.

The liberalization of the hospitality and tourism industry in Jamaica brought in more foreign investments (multinational all-inclusive hotels), as well as, created more job opportunities. Even though educational institutions in Jamaica provided the population with the formal education necessary to meet the growing demand of the industry’s labor needs, the practical on-the-job training component was usually missing. This is because students learn in lab-like settings in the schools which is totally different from the actual work-setting. Hence, they engaged in internships in the hospitality industry in order to fulfill this important aspect of their education. On the other hand, hospitality management education in institutions of higher learning originated from a vocational foundation that was intended to acquaint the learner with professional practice (Airey & Tribe, 2000). Therefore, to a large degree, experiential learning in the form of “on-the-job-training” has been crucial to hospitality management education development (Airey & Tribe, 2000). However, the factors that motivate managers for offering internship experiences have not been investigated.

Experiential learning in Jamaica dates back to colonial times when the British government introduced the apprenticeship bill to train the residents of the island as craftsmen. The purpose of the training was to provide young men and women, based on their abilities, the skills necessary either for further studies, or, those not capable of excelling academically, for employment (The Comptroller for Development, 1956). This aspect of learning has continued to be a vital part of the educational system.

The “hospitality industry” is an encompassing term that includes the hotel industry, which is the focus of this study. The hospitality industry is a knowledge-based industry (Pizam, 2007), that is labor intensive and requires a well-educated workforce (Charles, 1997). In addition, the hospitality industry is characterized by high employee turnover. Therefore, attracting and retaining employees is crucial. This turnover rate appears to occur even before the hospitality management graduates accept positions in the industry. This is corroborated by studies conducted in Australia that reveal over fifty percent
of the students enrolled in hospitality and tourism programs had the intention to find jobs in other industries (Richardson, 2008).

Findings from studies in Ireland show a high dropout rate from hospitality and tourism jobs (O’Leary & Deegan, 2005). In Hong Kong, a recent study shows that hospitality students were reluctant to join the industry after graduation (Chang & Tse, 2011). To curb this problem, several authors (Breakey, Robinson, & Beesley, 2009; Fidgeon, 2010) suggested that students should be exposed to internships so they understand the expectations of the industry. This is because, a positive internship experience encourages hospitality and tourism students to join the industry after graduation and it promotes job satisfaction and willingness to stay in the industry (Chathoth, Mak, Sim, Jauhari, & Manaktola, 2011; Chuang & Jenkins, 2010).

**Advantages and Dis-advantages of Internship**

Studies relating to internships have yielded inconsistent results. Nosow (1975), Woods (1986), Lang (1991), Gault et al. (2000), and Cook et al. (2004) indicate that internships result in superior learning. While, Little (1981) and Rothman (2003) indicate that educational institutions engage students in internship learning as one of the ways to enhance their knowledge and personal development. Yet, Etheridge (1987) cited in Gault et al. (2000) and Belanger and Tremblay (1983) reveal a small to no significant effect on learning through internship. Many educators perceived internships as significant, but not worthy of academic credit (Lipka, 2010; Dwyer, 2004). It is often viewed as a ‘low-value tool’ by the corporate world (Degravel, 2011).

Dev (1990) as well as Grantz and Thanos (1996) found that there existed negligible evidence that experiential learning provides better learning or enables students in higher education to critically examine arguments and analyze their own (Sims-Muhammad, 2012). However, institutions, schools, and the employing entity continue to emphasize the value of experiential learning. These institutions continually invest in this practice; therefore it becomes important to examine the factors that actually motivate their engagement in internship.

However, the success of an internship, as suggested by Tackett, Wolf, and Law (2001) depends on several components which create a balanced environment of consistent standards, systems, and structures. Students, faculty, and employing organization must all play their roles for internships to be successful. Students as recipients of knowledge are expected to learn and practice what they have learned. The faculty, whom Kolb (1984) describes as “the curators of social knowledge” (p. 161), prepares students through honing and developing their knowledge base, skills, and abilities. In return, the faculty expects the students to do well. Therefore, hotel managers play a significant role in the development of the student during the internship phase.

**Managers Role and Perception of Internships**

Students’ internship learning constitutes challenges that hotel managers have to address (Chi & Gursoy, 2009): for example, the way students learn, what they learn and how, and what they expect from the internship learning environment.
During the internship, the manager provides students the opportunity to work, learn, and contribute to the organization, in addition to the possibility for future employment (Ellington, 1993).

Based on Nebel, Ju-Soon, and Vidakovic (1995) observations, hotel managers believe that exposure to a position before becoming fully committed not only provide interns with most of the skills necessary but enables them to do their main jobs more effectively. Hence, managers see their roles in general as geared towards developing the work-related skills of the intern. For example, in areas such as: commitment, personal responsibility, collaboration, career development, problem solving, and decision making abilities. While the managers’ participation and input in internships are crucial to their development and effective functioning, the implications of managers’ intentions to offer internships have not been examined.

Most managers perceive that students’ performance during an internship is an important indicator of career preparedness (Basow & Byrne, 1993). This means that once the student enters the internship site, the manager is expecting a high level of know-how and productivity. No matter the work area, managers look for strong leadership, communication, problem solving, and employability skills in their prospective employees (Black & Gregersen, 2000; Lashley, 1999). Gault, Leach, and Duey (2010) identified other attributes important to managers, such as creative and analytical skills, computer literacy, and the ability to locate information.

Furthermore, managers look for individuals with the best and brightest minds, leadership qualities, and the ability to function within their immediate and global business environment (Black & Gregersen, 2000; Lashley, 1999). While theory lays the foundation for students future assignments, managers also anticipate the following as important: interest and passion for the job; the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the job; and high-quality performance (Daugherty, 2001). Even though the literature (Daugherty, 2001; Gault et al., 2010; Basow & Byrne, 1993) mentions students’ preparedness, competency, and performance abilities as some areas on which managers’ focus, the literature does not discuss or mention managers’ intentions to offer internships. Therefore, a formal study on managers’ intentions to offer internships in Jamaica needs to be conducted.

Theory

The framework selected to guide and provide the theoretical background for this study is the theory of planned behavior (TPB). As faculty, students and managers begin to strategize on appropriate approaches to the process of internship, theory should serve as the foundation for planning, implementation and evaluation. To achieve this, formative and theory-grounded qualitative data can provide information needed to understand cultural perspectives and develop specific operational strategies for internship.

The TPB can be used to explain almost every phase of behavior: its development, implementation and evaluation (Ajzen, 1991). However, despite its versatility, very few studies
related to internship have been known to incorporate the TPB in the understanding of planning, implementation and evaluation of internships. For example, a thorough search of literature on internship revealed that of the 14 studies on internship examined, only two (Hsu, 2012; Clarke, 2013) had utilized the TPB to assess behavior of the entities involved in the process of internship (students, managers and faculty). This is perhaps not surprising; Conner and Sparks (2005) pointed out that researchers rarely applied the TPB in formative qualitative studies. In fact a majority of the TPB studies have been quantitative in nature (Conner, Norman, and Bell, 2002). While these quantitative studies illustrate the usefulness of the TPB in predicting behaviors, qualitative studies provide a better understanding of the cultural beliefs associated with managerial behaviors (Hofstede, 2001).

We therefore theorize internships by relating it to the constructs of the theory of planned behavior. The TPB was designed to offer prediction and explanation of human behaviors in several specific contexts and situations. The TPB has been successfully used to examine a variety of human behavior in the workplace and learning environment. TPB can specifically be focused and applied to students’ internship. The process of offering an internship involves great planning and decision making; and therefore can be justified as a planned behavior.

The TPB was developed by Ajzen (1985) as a modification to the theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). The TPB proposes that individual behavior can be directly predicted by intention and perceived behavioral control (PBC) (Ajzen, 1985). Further, the TPB proposes that three independent variables predict intentions.

Figure 1. Diagram of the TPB directly predicted by Intention (I) and PBC

These variables are: Subjective norm (SN) of performing the behavior, attitude (ATT) toward performing the behavior and perceived control (PBC) over the behavior. The stronger the intention, the more likely the individual will engage in the behavior. The TPB is very cognitive in nature and its variables regarded as strong predictors of behavior (Casper, 2007; Franzoi, 2003; Conner & Armitage,
1998). One of the strengths of TPB is its broad applicability (Armitage & Christian, 2003). TPB has been proven to be robust, yet extensive literature research revealed no documented studies have been conducted applying this theory in the context of internship. 

Ajzen (1991) further proposed a set of what is referred to as “salient beliefs.” These salient beliefs are the antecedents to each of the three TPB concepts (see the diagram). Behavioral beliefs are beliefs about the perceived consequences of engaging in a behavior (e.g., offering internship to students will make the students better workers in the future). Thus, Behavioral beliefs are expected to influence attitudes toward the behavior. Normative beliefs are beliefs based on whether significant others think a person should or shouldn't engage in a behavior (e.g., my co-workers think I should avoid offering opportunities for internship to college students). These normative beliefs are expected to influence subjective norms. Control beliefs are factors that would facilitate or make it more difficult to engage in the target behavior (e.g., having access to necessary resources such as money to be able to offer internship). Hence control beliefs are expected to influence perceived behavioral control. Ajzen (1991) suggests that these beliefs are the informational foundation of behavior and that the determinants of behavior can be traced ultimately to these beliefs. Thus, at the most primary level of explanation, behavior is a function of salient beliefs that are relevant to the behavior.

One advantage of the TPB is that there is a clearly specified procedure for developing various constructs of the theory including salient beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). The "belief elicitation procedure" involves a step in which the beliefs that are salient for a particular population (e.g., managers) and context (e.g., hospitality companies in Jamaica) are elicited from a pilot sample. To establish a population's salient beliefs, Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) recommended that researchers need to select a sample of preliminary participants from the population of interest and conduct a beliefs elicitation procedure with open-ended questions. These authors recommended a qualitative procedure that applies one-on-one interviews, focus group interviews, a structured questionnaire or all the above mentioned procedures. Next, the investigator needs to perform a content analysis to rank order the beliefs, and determine the 3-10 most salient beliefs. Results of these analyses of the preliminary study are then used to facilitate the development of the final data collection instrument.

While the use of elicitation studies and the TPB is common in the education related fields such as teacher decision making (Lee, Cerreto, & Lee, 2010) and internship decision making (Hsu, 2012), no known studies have actually been cited applying the TPB in the area of internship in relation to management or employers decision and motivation. The present study provides an example of the use of the belief elicitation procedure in the study of hospitality managers with regard to intentions to offer internship.

**METHODOLOGY**

The procedures used for this study were adopted from the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991). An initial elicitation process that involved twenty-five managers was conducted in order to provide information on the salient beliefs
(behavioral outcome, normative, referent) of manager’s intentions. The process was carried out through the use of focus groups. During the discussions, the participants interacted and were encouraged to air any issue of concern for clarification. The study provided an insight into the salient beliefs that motivate managers to offer internships as well as interpret and explain concepts provided by the participants from a smaller and more focused sample. Items relating to the managers demographic profile were also added. Assessment methods include content analysis techniques and descriptive data such as frequencies and percentages.

The Research Instrument

These included questions about what is internship, advantages and disadvantages of offering internship (behavioral beliefs), individuals or groups that approve or disapprove of their offering internship (normative beliefs), and factors that make it easier and more difficult to offer internships (control beliefs).

The instrument designed and used in the data collection was developed from the constructs of the TPB. The questionnaire consisted of five parts. Each part of the questionnaire from part one to four contained a set of open-ended questions that elicited the managers’ salient beliefs. Part one consisted of three questions based on the managers thoughts and what internship meant to them. Part two involved three questions that were related to the managers’ attitude towards offering internships. Part three questions sought answers related to the managers’ subjective norms as it relates to their intentions. Part four of the questionnaire asked questions on the managers’ perceived behavioral control and their intentions to offer internships. The last section consisted of questions on the demographic characteristics of the managers. See table 1 below for questions asked in the focus group discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Belief Elicitation Procedure Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What does it mean to you and the other managers and employees to refer to an activity as an internship? What exactly does internship involve?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you think that you play a role in providing internship? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>When you think about your actions to offering internship what comes to your mind?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Please tell me some of the specific consequences that come to your mind if you are offering internship opportunities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Please tell me what are some of the specific consequences of you not offering internship opportunities you can think of?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Please tell me what you think are some other advantages or disadvantages of you offering internship opportunities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Please tell me all the individuals or groups of people that would approve of you offering internship opportunities to college students?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents and Data Collection

The population for the study was hotel managers in Jamaica who were involved with the selection and hiring of employees for the hotels. The participants for the focus groups were identified using a purposeful sampling technique (Patton, 1990). A comprehensive list of hotel operations in Jamaica was generated from the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) and the Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association (JHTA) which were used to identify the hotels. From this list, specific managers with a background and expertise in the area of selecting and hiring of students for internships were selected. These individuals were contacted through e-mail and informed about the study’s purpose and their participation in the study was requested. Based on the initial responses, access to the confirmed participants was followed-up on through additional e-mails, letters, and telephone communications in order to arrange and set-up appointment dates.

Some of the managers in the focus groups were also selected through expert referencing. Information about their expertise in the area of interest was provided by other hotel managers. These individuals were also contacted through e-mails, letters, and telephone communications. Following an indication of their interest in participating, arrangements were also made for the ensuing discussions.

Focus Groups

Five focus group discussions were conducted over a period of three days. Prior to the discussions, each participant was asked to read and sign a copy of the consent script to ensure understanding of the information and to confirm participation. They were also asked to use an assigned pseudonym to protect their identity. The participants selected for the focus groups were involved in the discussions for approximately 40 minutes. The responses were digitally recorded using an audio recorder and pencil and paper. The researcher moderated and controlled the discussions to prevent any unwanted circumstances and to give each participant equal opportunity to participate in the discussions.

Focus groups are group discussions that are moderated by a facilitator using scripted questions. The audience is homogenous and made up of individuals who are of interest to the researcher. Studies using focus groups tend to be qualitative in nature as they are used to
uncover individuals’ opinion on an idea or issue. Because the participants are selected using a non-random selection process and the sample size is small, the findings cannot be generalized to the wider population or be used to draw cause and effect relationships. However, focus groups are ideal to probe and discover important insights about topics of interest or a particular phenomenon. Participants in focus groups are able to respond to each other’s ideas, an important aspect that would be difficult to capture in seclusion.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using content analysis techniques and a priori coding followed by descriptive data such as frequencies and percentages for each open-ended item.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Twenty-five (25) hotel managers participated in the focus group discussions: seventeen women and eight men. All the participants identified themselves as black non-Hispanic. The participants each had major responsibilities such as departmental supervision, hiring of new employees, training, and duty manager, among other functions. The participants’ education ranged from high-school to PhD level. At the time of data collection, several of the participants were enrolled in a course in hospitality management at the bachelor’s degree level. All except three of the participants had obtained their current position by rising through the ranks. The respondents were familiar with the term “internship,” as some of them had previously been interns. Furthermore, their job positions allow them to provide internships and interact with interns on a regular basis. Table 2 below list the demographic characteristics of the focus groups and individual interviews with participants.

Table 2. Respondents Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents Demographic Management Levels</th>
<th>Respondents Description</th>
<th># of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; Beverage Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms Division Manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers Front office</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents Demographic Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Managers Understanding of Internships

To determine the salient beliefs, the discussions started with an icebreaker question intended to get a better understanding of what “internship” meant to these managers. Respondents were generally in agreement to what they think internship meant based on their experience and when asked: What does it mean to you and the other managers to refer to an activity as an internship? What exactly does an internship involve? (1) The participants’ responses indicated that “internship” implied a wide range of notions. The managers used words and phrases including: knowledge, students, practical or on-the-job experience and exposure, short time, training and education, free labor, collaboration, partnerships and relationships, resources, career opportunity, employee, and employment when responding to the question.

“When I think about internship, partnership is what comes to mind. I believe this is a partnership between the company and the student. The student receives the necessary training for career development and the opportunity for future employment within the company. In addition, the company benefits in various ways. For example, the student provides free labor and contributes new ideas to the company.”

To develop a list of specific behaviors that the managers engage in as it relates to internship, we also asked them: Do you think that you play a role in offering and providing opportunities for internship? How? The managers' responses highlighted a number of specific behaviors that have been observed such as recruitment, allocating resources, evaluating the interns, orientation of new interns, planning the work schedule with the interns, and training the interns etc.

“As managers, we play different roles in providing internship opportunities. For one, HR managers have to recruit and screen students before they become our interns. After that, both HR and department managers and supervisors orientate them at the operation and department level. Shifts and schedules are also designed to ensure they follow the company’s policies and procedures. Importantly, at the request of the schools, we also conduct evaluations on the interns which are returned to the schools and used as part of their final internship grade.”

Based on the question: When you think about your actions to offering internship what comes to your mind? The managers believe that their actions to offering internship is based on their ability to provide assistance through activities such as: mentorship, professional development, fulfilling social obligation, helping students to decide on a career path, and building relationships with future employees. The interviewer/data collector often asked follow-up questions in order to clarify the managers' answers.

“It is about mentoring the interns and exposing them to our company. It is also the opportunity to give back to the community in which we operate. Also, having the students in an environment where they can link theory to practice and then watch them grow and develop the requisite skills.”
Participants’ Behavioral Beliefs

To measure behavioral beliefs, the managers were asked about the consequences as well as the advantages and disadvantages of offering or not offering internships to college students. Please tell me what are some of the specific consequences that come to your mind of you offering internship opportunities? In general, participant were extremely positive when talking about offering internships opportunities. The managers used this opportunity to discuss the positives of offering internships. The most frequent mentioned positive consequence was that of job-mentoring and the recruitment of new employees. This was an opportunity to produce good quality experienced employees for the industry.

All focus group participants responded to the question. They noted that the intentions to offer internships are an appropriate way to recruit individuals who have the potential and are likely to become future employees. These concepts were not just mentioned during the response to this question, but throughout the entire discussions. According to the managers, internship is one form of an effective recruitment tool. A number of reasons were offered for offering internships. For example, to secure future employees, for succession planning, to prospect new employees, attract interns from various places, and to allow interns to learn job-related skills for employment in the hotel industry.

“Well, for many reasons, this is where we can find our potential employees; that is one of the reasons. Another reason is, we see our role as assisting and helping to prepare them, not necessarily to work for us in this hotel, but in whatever industry they see fit. So, we are preparing people for work.”

“We are looking at the future; we are making sure that we have people, so that, when they come out of school, they really know what they are getting into, when they choose the hospitality industry. We want to make sure they have a grasp, hopefully, so that they can come back and work for us.”

When the managers were asked about some of the specific consequences that they could think of as it relates to them not offering internship opportunities: The resounding response was that, not offering internships would limit the opportunity to establish relationships with the students, build a database of future employees, and provide a career path for the students. During the discussions, some of the managers mentioned that the feedback and satisfaction that they experienced from working with and training the interns were not worth missing.

“Training the interns is a serious job that requires a lot of dedication but it is always a good feeling when you get the feedback from the students. Although some of the comments may not be what you want to hear, but it helps us to realize that they can now be honest with themselves. For the most part, they are very grateful and thankful.”

“The students always call and say thanks or come back and say thank you. It doesn’t matter where they go, they always return and say thank you, you did good for me, you
helped me and you taught me, so now I am able to work based on what I learned from you.”

On the issue of the advantages and disadvantages of internships, the managers were asked: Please tell me what you think are some other advantages or disadvantages to you offering internship opportunities? The participants indicated that it is important to them to know that because of offering internships, there is a database from which prospective job applicants can be sourced. They mentioned that the interns not only grow and develop professionally and experientially during the internship process, but they add to the organization by suggesting new innovative ideas and just being excited with being a part of the establishment.

Across the focus groups, respondents reported that internships were more beneficial to the employer as the interns are sometimes seen as free labor. The participant indicated that the interns and the internship process should not be treated as such as the intern must be given the opportunity to learn while on the job and internship should be used as a learning process for the students.

“I think an internship is more beneficial to the employer. The employer gets students that they can use as free labor, or labor without pay. The students benefit as well, as they receive training that they do not have to pay for in the educational institutions.”

“I think that most companies like to offer internships because it is free labor, however, I believe that internships are also beneficial to the students as it helps to develop and prepare them for future employment.”

On the other hand, several of the managers believe that by offering internships, there could be an increase in operation expenditures in term of materials for the interns to work with, for example, if the intern makes mistakes and products will have to be replaced, thus increasing costs. Some managers felt that based on the positions the interns are allowed to work in, they may get tired and not be able to keep up with their academic work. One focus group member thought that the disadvantages were minimal but had concerns about interns taking idea/knowledge learned in one establishment to another entity.

“I don’t think there are many disadvantages to offering internships, nonetheless, there are concerns. A student may come to us for an internship and due to his/her exceptional capabilities s/he may excel and receive extra or additional training. The drawback to that is, if that student is not hired by that hotel or refuse their employment offer, the possibility exist that the student could take that information/knowledge learned in one establishment to another company. This results in your operation having to invest in training another person.”

Other disadvantages expressed by the managers include the belief that education institutions fail to adequately prepare students for the workplace. Additionally, training the interns is time consuming and expensive, hence internships are better conducted during slower periods. The managers felt that internship programs are not well-structured; interns may provide less
than acceptable service, and some well-deserving students may not get the opportunity to access internships. However, three respondents noted that there are no disadvantages to offering internships.

“I am not sure if there is really a disadvantage to offering internship. I think the participants stand to really gain from offering internships.”

“I think that there are greater advantages to offering internships, it is a win, win situation for both the intern and the organization. The managers invest in the intern by providing experience and other benefits, in return, they receive production output from the interns, hence a win, win situation.”

**Participants’ Normative Beliefs**

To develop a list of normative beliefs that influence the managers’ intentions, they were asked to identify and discuss the individuals or groups who approve or disapprove of their offering internship. The following normative beliefs question was addressed: Please tell me all the individuals or groups of people that would approve of you offering internship opportunities to college students? The managers frequently made reference to educators, management and colleagues, and the students/interns as people or groups who would approve of their behavior to offer internships. Educators and management and colleagues were mentioned most frequently by the managers.

“I am more inclined to say the education institutions. The educators are happy knowing that they can create a partnership in which students will benefit from exposure to hands-on experience at a resort, as well as, the students get to fulfill aspects of their coursework. They are very thankful that we are able to provide this opportunity for the students. I can recall receiving letters of appreciation from various principals and that really gave me the desire to continue to assist the students.”

“I would want to say, management and colleagues since internships provide valuable benefits such as immediate workers and future employees. In each department or area that the intern is going to be exposed to, there needs to be an agreement and commitment from that department to ensure that the intern gets the most out of the experience. The internship must be seen as a valuable learning experience for that intern and not just him/her coming here to spend some time or a few hours. Therefore, it is very important that everyone is committed to the internship process, embrace it, and see the ultimate benefits.”

“To a large extent, I think it is the interns who benefit a lot from the program, especially in the hospitality industry, it is about attitude. Therefore, the intern’s attitude and personality say a lot. While the intern is going through the process, it is a good opportunity to develop this individual’s attitude as it relates to the hospitality industry, more so when I see the potential in them.”

Some of the respondents discussed a number of other groups and individuals that would influence their intentions to offer internships. These include: government entities, friends, and interestingly small hotel
operators within the industry. While some focus group members previously voiced concern about valuable information going to other operations, two members suggested that large hotel operations train interns to help small hotel operators.

“There are some small hotel operations who do not want to take on the role of offering internships to students because they may not have the finances or employees to perform the training, even though they would have benefitted from the students internship experience. As a result, the larger hotels that offer internships could prepare these interns to help meet the needs of the small hotels. After going through the internship experience, some of these interns could access jobs within these hotels and help them to enhance their service and product offerings.”

Moderator: Are you saying that large operations such as your employer could train interns to supply small operations who cannot afford to offer internship experience to these students?

“Most definitely, most definitely, that is what we are suggesting.”

It was important to determine whether there were individual or groups who would disapprove of the managers’ intention, hence the following question was posed. Please tell me all the individuals or groups of people that would disapprove of you offering internship opportunities to college students? Interestingly, line employees/workers were mentioned by some managers with regards to disapproving of their offering internships. The employees/workers who would disapprove of the managers were described as those who think they do not have the time or patience for the interns. As a result, these workers are reluctant to train and share knowledge with the interns. Several managers mentioned the interns but were quick to clarify that the interns would not disapprove of participating in an internship but would disapprove working without a stipend or a salary. One member of the focus groups mentioned customers on the basis that, if the interns did not perform well when serving the customers, then they would become disgruntled.

“There are times when employees in some department will say, I can’t bother with the training and they will do so on the basis that they really do not have the time or patience to train and supervise an intern.”

“Overall, when I think about the whole thing, the only group of persons that comes to mind is perhaps our guest. If the interns are not adequately prepared to go out and serve, for example at the dining table, then you will find that the guest will become disgruntled.”

On the other hand, most of the focus groups thought that because the benefits to internships were so great, the idea of not offering internships would be dismissed.

“I do not see any group or individuals who would disapprove of us offering students internship. This is one way that students can become educated and the nation as a whole can see youth being develop for positions in the hospitality and tourism industry.”
Participants Control Beliefs

Control belief is the individual’s perception of control over the particular behavior and how easy or difficult the person perceives performing the given behavior will be (Ajzen, 1991). To measure control beliefs, managers were asked about the factors or things that make it easier or more difficult to offer internships. For example, the managers were asked: Please tell me some of the factors or things that would make it easier for you to offer internship opportunities to college students. Across the focus groups, the most frequently mentioned facilitating factors in terms of the things that would make it easier for managers to offer internship opportunities included, the availability of resources. Participants elaborated on resources and associated it with expressions such as money that is budgeted to assist the interns as well as supervising and supporting staff. Other things mentioned were the attitude of the interns, the institution the intern was coming from and how well prepared they were for the world of work. One respondent mentioned living accommodation for both local and international interns.

“I would definitely say resources in terms of finances would be a leading factor. This could end up being an issue as it would help to determine whether some operations offer students internship.”

Some of the focus group members felt that supervising and supporting staff were important to the success of the internship process.

“Having adequate individuals on hand to assist with training the interns would definitely help in making the internship process easier. Because we are investing in human capital, it would be ideal to have training managers involve in the training process.”

Some of the focus group members felt that the attitude of the interns was very crucial to their decision to offer internships.

“The personality of the intern is a factor. That student must display a positive work attitude which goes back to preparing them effectively for work. Although the process is called internship, it is work, and it must be seen as their first exposure to the job experience. Therefore, it’s important how this process is communicated to the students and how they are prepared for these internships.”

“It is important to note that many of these students come with the attitude of not wanting to learn or to excel. However, sometimes, it is not always the intern, but the issue of whether they were sufficiently briefed about what to expect when they get to the internship site. Hence, when they arrive, what they saw compare to what they thought it was is not matching up. So, it depends a lot on the institutions that they are coming from as well as the students themselves.”

Some of the focus group members felt that some of the education institution that request internships for their students were not doing enough to adequately prepare the students for the internship site.
“Educational institutions need to ensure that persons who are being sent out for internships are pretty much ready to come into a work system where practical training is done. They need to be aware of what is expected; those factors will help us, because it is difficult when interns arrive and expect to be treated as if they were in university. There is no sense of responsibility. Therefore, those factors would help in our decisions or help us better to foster the internships.”

“Also, the institution that the intern is coming from plays a role in determining whether to offer an internship. The background of the school, including the history and performance of prior interns and whether they are productive members of society. These factors are important and make it easier for those students to get accepted.”

In this vain, some focus group members also suggested that since the hotels were providing interns with the training for free, the government could provide funds to assist with salary, or a stipend to students who were on internships to help offset their travel expenses. The following example expressed such views:

“The only biggest challenge with internship, whether it is for locals or students abroad, is the right funding. It takes money to do a proper internship. I think the government could pay for their salary or pay their stipend.”

A positive comment was that:

“Interns are always diligent and hard-working; they always try to perform at whatever task is assigned to them. We should always reward someone who has worked hard because with true hard work comes success. A person always wants to know that s/he will be compensated at the end or be rewarded for the hard work being done.”

The use of accommodation as a factor in successful internship was discussed. This is because the hotel industry not only attracts domestic interns but international ones as well. In addition, the hotels were located in mostly rural areas and the majority of the universities and colleges were in the urban areas. As a result, a large number of students traveled long distances to some internship sites. Although some students would successfully earn an internship, accommodation would always turn out to be an issue that could discourage an employer from offering internships, as the hotels were unable to provide living accommodations. The participants’ views are expressed in the following statement:

“In some instances, and this is dependent on where they may be coming from; there is a need for accommodation. This we do not readily have available, and that does present a challenge. While we will extend a stipend to interns at all levels, in most instances, if one needs to find paid accommodation somewhere, it would not readily cover these costs. And that is maybe the biggest dysfunction that there is in the exercise.”

When the question was asked regarding the factors or things that would make it more difficult for the managers’ to offer internship opportunities to college
students, the key factors noted by managers that make internship difficult were very similar to the ones that facilitate, only that these factors differed by focus groups respondents. However, the resounding objection across all groups of managers was unlimited resources. Several focus group members strongly think that unruly behavior in terms of not following operations policies and procedures, theft, and the requirements of the education institution. Two managers mentioned that the entire internship process needs to be thought out and structured appropriately so that everyone understands their role and the benefits of internships that can be achieved.

“If the company were to experience limited resources (funds, training personnel), despite what one may believe, everything has a cost associated to it. Therefore, taking on additional persons would increase expenses. Even though we may be developing people and to a larger extent the company and our country, it also depends on the economic climate that we are operating in.”

“I think that if we have had very bad experience with the interns, for example, if they were to steal, become unruly in their behavior, not adhering to the operations policies and guidelines, that would affect our decision and make it difficult for us to extend the courtesy again, or would prevent us from doing it in the future.”

“It depends also on the requirements of the school or institutions that they are coming from. Religion also, as it is one of the most challenging issues in the hotel industry. Sometimes the work hours/shift may be a bit difficult or require that they work at nights or on specific days. However, if the individual is a Seventh Day Adventist, it poses a problem. In the service industry, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays are sometimes our busiest days. Due to their beliefs and practices, this can become a conflict of interest.”

“It is the whole internship process which needs to be carefully thought out. For instance, the length of the internship and focus areas. It would be great if there was some kind of relationship between the organizations and the schools where managers from the different hotels are invited to speak to students from time to time about internships. This type of initiative could develop partnerships and make it easier for everyone to understand the role of internships and the value to be gained from internships. It is for us the hotels and the schools to strike that common ground, create that relationship, and build on that commitment.”

DISCUSSIONS

Managers Understanding of Internships

The purpose of the study was to examine managers’ motivations to offer internships to college students in Jamaica. The findings discussed in this study highlight the complex and dynamic nature of the internship process in the Jamaica hotel industry. The questions discussed summarize a range of challenges, positive as well as negative reasons as to the managers’ intentions to offer internships. Based on the questions posed during the focus group discussions, reoccurring responses suggest
that the managers share similar thoughts, beliefs, and attitude towards internship.

The first focus group question was to determine what it meant to managers to refer to an activity as an internship and what exactly does internship involve. The managers share their thoughts and beliefs using different words and phrases which were not ranked as more important than the other. This was not surprising as throughout the literature, the term internship was not identified with a specific definition but was associated with various terms and phrases. For instance, internship foster partnerships (Westerberg & Wickesham, 2011), provide valuable opportunity through experience and exposure (Gault et al., 2000), and connect educational institutions and the workplace. The second question in this section was whether managers think they play a role in providing internship and how. The resounding and reoccurring response throughout the discussions was recruiting, which Butler (2004) pointed out was an activity that managers take an active role in, as well as, they hire former interns at a faster rate. The third discussion question asked managers what comes to their mind when they think about their actions to offering internship. Managers mentioned providing mentorship, personal and professional development, assist students with deciding on a career path among others. The responses is consistent with Ellington, (1993); Basow and Byrne (1993), and Hurst and Good (2010) findings.

Managers Attitude towards Internships

The second section research questions focused on the managers behavioral beliefs. The first question in this section was to determine the consequences that come to the managers’ mind of them offering internships. To this question, the managers all mentioned positive factors. All the respondents indicated recruiting. Securing and prospecting future employees, succession planning, attracting interns from various places and giving them the opportunity to acquire job-related skills were also valued by the managers. The managers’ responses were consistent with Dwyer (2004) and Daugherty (2002) who indicated that internship solve staffing needs. The need for trained and qualified human resources cannot be overemphasized as the lack of these skills can hinder employment or make it difficult for students to enter the job market.

The second question in this section explored consequences of the managers not offering internships. The manager’s biggest concern of not offering internships was that it would prevent them from building a database of future employees and provide student with a career path in the industry. This response seems to suggest that it is easier to place graduates who already have the experience and can hit the ground running once they become employed. This confirms Cannon and Arnold (1998) observation of undergraduate students who sees internship as a competitive employment strategy. The interns’ feedback and satisfaction based on the internship experience was also of importance to the managers.

Surprisingly, the managers did not mention any disadvantages to offering internships until they were asked whether they believed there were any advantages and disadvantages to internships. The managers
noted that internships can be used for the wrong reason, for example, free labor which can take away from the purpose of the internship. On the other hand, internship could increase the operations expenses, student could become burnt out and not be able to keep up with school work, as well as, important information could get transferred to another entity. These beliefs are in line with Cousins (1981) who revealed that internships can subject students to high stress levels.

Managers Perception of Others who would Influence their Intentions

In order to determine the managers’ perception of individuals who would influence their intentions to offer internships, they were asked two questions. Question 1 focused on: The individuals or groups of people that would approve of the managers offering internship opportunities to college students. According to the managers’ responses, education institutions, management and colleagues of the hotel operation, and the interns themselves would approve of their intentions. A major reason for this can be attributed to the institutions who are pressured to fulfill curriculum requirements, management ability to secure future employees, and interns getting the opportunity to stand out to potential employers as well as determine the right area to work in. The majority of college students find an internship a valuable learning experience (Hite & Bellizzi, 1986), which allows students to interact with their prospective managers without a lifetime commitment (Coco, 2000).

The second question asked managers to identify the individuals or groups of people that would disapprove of them offering internship opportunities to college students. The managers mentioned line employees based on the fact that they claim not to have the time or patience for the interns. In the Jamaica hotel industry, anecdotal evidence revealed that some managers/employers tend to retire line employees in favor of new hires such as interns who have graduated. Hence, line employees are worried about training interns to take over their jobs. Interestingly, guests and interns were mentioned by some managers. However, not on the basis that they despised internships, but the outcome as a result of what could happen during the internship process. For example, guest would disapprove of bad service from the intern who would disapprove of not being rewarded financially. This finding is consistent with Hite and Bellizzi (1986) who found that students agreed that internships should be paid and Basow and Byrne (1993) who confirmed that some students receive payment while on internship.

Managers’ Feelings about their Control over Resources

The fourth section which explored the managers control beliefs focused on questions which provided an understanding to some of the factors or things that would make it easier for the managers to offer internship opportunities to college students. Across the focus groups, the managers expect to have certain resources to be able to facilitate students on internships. However, the managers believe they were challenged in terms of money, adequate individuals to train
Within the context of this study, and based on the responses, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the managers' beliefs about a specific behavior determine their attitude towards the behavior. They perceive engaging in the act as desirable; hence, their positive attitude toward the behavior. However, since their intention was related to work life, their beliefs were more influenced by people within similar settings. They also believed that having the resources, support, and cooperation of colleagues could determine their intentions to offer internships.

CONCLUSION

The authors found that across all the focus group discussions, the most notable themes that emerged included prepping future employees with experience, job mentoring and recruitment, providing professional development, availability of resources including staff to supervise and support staff training, as well as the fact that educators would approve of their decision to offer internships. Collectively, these findings provide unique insight to better understand the regional beliefs associated with internships and associations between the companies/employers and institutions of higher learning.

In sum, the managers believe that the challenges they currently face can be resolve overtime if all the required elements are appropriated. More importantly, they expect to continue to make this internship experience available to college students in Jamaica as they believed that both the students and employers benefit. The managers also expect that college students,
who are the recipients of internships should ensure they are equipped with the basic skills and are prepared for the job site. Additionally, educators need to ensure students under their guidance are adequately equipped with the necessary knowledge to enter the internship site.

**IMPLICATIONS**

The above information not only increased our understanding with regards to the managers’ intentions to offer internships, it also revealed important findings that may have both managerial and theoretical implications.

The implications for the managers are as follows: Based on the preceding findings, the most apparent implication of the result seems to suggest that there should be closer relationships and collaboration between educational institutions and the hotel industry. The success of an internship, according to Tackett et al. (2001), depends on several components which create a balanced environment of consistent standards, systems, and structures. Students, faculty, and managers must all play their roles for internships to be successful. Firstly, managers and educators should consider using the findings to develop structured internship programs that contribute to the development of the hospitality education that the students receive in the educational settings. A structured process would ensure that more than one of the issues or matters of concern are taken care of. For instance: 1) a structured program would ensure that managers are getting the interns they need based on the positions available 2) interns would be aware of the specific positions available and the different areas associated with the position 3) educators would know specifically what activities the students are engaged in and be able to track their progress 4) A structured program would stipulate the time frame of the internship, stipend/salary if available, areas and activities to be covered as well as the departments involve. Additionally, managers would be better able to assist interns in their professional development, guide them on a career path and job mentor them. Secondly, if managers intend to continue attract interns, and since accommodation is an issue, managers may need to invest in appropriate low cost housing accommodations for these interns. Also, the managers mentioned lack of resources, especially money, employers could provide a salary/stipend that interns could use to offset some expenses. Thirdly, prior to students starting the internship, managers may want to visit the education institutions to discuss their operation structure, policies, and procedures. Furthermore, managers may gain from doing on-site screening of interns to ensure personnel of the highest quality. This can benefit the hotels, the educators, and the students as well.

The findings of this study also have importation implications for educators and students desiring a career in the hospitality industry. Colleges and universities have an important role to play in the training and developing of future hospitality and tourism employees/managers. Educators may use the findings to better prepare students for the internship process, including where to intern and what to expect when they arrive at the internship site. Communication-related courses, interpersonal and professional development, as well as, human relation
courses should be incorporated as core courses in the institutions hospitality and tourism curriculum. These changes could help to prepare the interns and provide the necessary skills for the hotel industry as well as other areas of the labor market. Educators should ensure that the students practice the learned behavior while in school so that it becomes a part of their personality. Educators should also focus on strengthening their relationship with the hotel operations.

Students may use the findings to prepare themselves for the work-world and to determine whether a career in the hotel industry suits their personality. Prior to becoming an intern, student should ensure that based on the desired position and the qualification associated with the position; they are prepared to work in that position. Since the internship process can be used to determine future employment, students may want to work hard, show interest, and project the right attitude while going through the internship process.

**LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

While this study uses a rigorous qualitative approach and fills a gap in the literature on understanding the underlying behavioral beliefs related to internships, there were several limitations. Therefore due to the focused region in which this study was conducted, it may not be reasonable to generalize the results to other geographical regions.

The study was conducted in Jamaica. This study was conceptualized to identify potential differences among managers in Jamaica. Data collection was limited to this geographic location and was focused on managers in the hotel industry. Although the exploratory study provided useful and insightful information based on the study’s location and the population’s culture, it may not produce similar results in other locations or studies. Data were self-reported and total analysis of the research was depended on information provided by the respondents in the focus group discussions. Despite these limitations, the information discussed can be used toward developing new dimensions and strategies that can be applied in the internship context.

It is recommended that future research focuses on the following areas: 1) Conduct an additional qualitative study to identify other belief—based factors that could motivate managers’ intentions to offer internships. This approach should provide a better perspective and more variations in terms of participants’ responses and the performance of the theory of planned behavior, 2) This process could be replicated in another geographic location to determine the difference in the population salient beliefs, 3) Repeat the entire process at a later time to examine the role of time in a dynamic industry, and 4) Focus on utilizing a larger and more diverse sample or apply a global approach to provide more results.

Although this study provides a groundwork for future efforts to understand internships from a managerial point of view, further research is needed to evaluate if a TPB-guided intervention can achieve sustained interest of managers in offering internship. It is important to note that even though businesses such as hotels are established for profitability, it was evident
that the motives for offering internships were not tied to profitability. Companies appear to engage in this exercise with a desire to continue a symbiotic relationship between industry and educational institutions.

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The Role of Human Resource Specialists in Motivation, Training and Engagement in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The collective knowledge and contributions that organizational members bring to the workforce serves as the driving factor for the bulk of business success. The ability of any business to transform its raw inputs into value-added outputs is directly attributable to its workforce (Awadzi Calloway, 2014). To that end, organizations employ a variety of strategies toward achieving their goals. Among these are efforts focused on finding and placing the employees that not only fit into the organization, but also contribute to its success (Awadzi Calloway, 2014). As organizations strive to meet their strategic goals, people will continue to play a critical role in their success and once selected and placed in the organization, they must be trained, motivated and engaged; they must be given all of the tools necessary to succeed. It is human resource specialists who undertake this task. Human resource specialties play a critical role in the recruitment, hiring, compensation, and motivation of this valuable organizational resource (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013). This role is even more critical in the hospitality industry in which personality and ability to interact and engage with customers is most crucial. This paper examines the role of human resource specialists in a selected educational institution. The paper discusses key areas in the employee selection process.

KEYWORDS: human resource specialist, recruitment, organizational change, development, motivation
Introduction

The role of human resource (HR) departments is evolving as the business environment becomes more competitive and globally focused. Yeung, Brockbank and Ulrich (1994) observed that “human resource departments are operating more like a business within the business, with a clear strategy and channels of distribution. HR professionals are being asked to help businesses compete, and to do so, HR professionals must not only observe, but also understand and adapt to these business trends” (p. 2). Furthermore, HR departments are now fueling organizational change, people-based competitive advantage, the success of corporate goals and organizational strategy (Yeung, Brockbank & Ulrich, 1994). In the hospitality industry these changes are promulgated by the increasing desire to enhance customer experiences and promote customer loyalty.

Organizational strategy focuses on identifying and utilizing the resources necessary to achieve organizational goals (Hill & Jones, 2012). Specific activities involved include actions to boost combined performance of businesses, ways to capture synergy among related businesses and establishing investment priorities and steering corporate resources into most attractive units (Acquaah, 2003). The most important resource to an organization’s success is often its human capital. Human resource specialties play a critical role in the recruitment, hiring, compensation, and motivation of this valuable organizational resource (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013). Determining the proper tools and techniques to foster the highest level of motivation, participation, and contribution relies on the organization’s overall strategy (Awadzi Calloway, 2014).

Literature Review

The strategic plan of our organization is multi-faceted with objectives that seek to improve employee engagement promote team building and communication; align objectives and collaboration towards the goal of improving brand value. The human resource (HR) team, HR strategies, activities and programs play a key role in the success of these objectives. Grossman (2007) observed, “the quality and strategic deployment of talent is what separates winners from the also-rans” (p.50). The HR strategies that are currently used center around a centralized HR team. In an effort to streamline costs and align HR functions, all previously co-located HR specialists have been redeployed back to the Home Office (Awadzi Calloway, 2014). The lack of co-location has created challenges in training, mentoring, conflict resolution, and retention. The focus on cost cutting and the use of webinars, conference calls, outsourced recruiting teams and offsite employee assistance programs do serve to cut costs, but they can and often do create mistrust, lack of connections, inability to promote change and a sense of hopelessness among employees dealing with difficult work situations. The role of the HR department in recruiting, hiring, motivating, training, and retaining key employees cannot be undervalued (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013).

The current HR strategy of centralization is linked to the organizational focus on cost cutting. Mello (2011) contended that “the move toward decentralized operations and the establishment of autonomous subsidiaries and work groups requires that line managers
increasingly have full responsibility for HR issues” (p. 307). Unlike decentralized HR staffs who live and work in the same community as the people they manage, centralized HR units do not have personal relationships with location dispersed employees outside of the workplace and this “out of sight, out of mind” mentality does not foster personal concern for the welfare of staff (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013). The advantage of a centralized HR unit is found in the efficiency and potential cost savings. The decreased costs associated with the centralization of the HR staff have resulted in an estimated saving of 10% in overhead and expenses (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013). While 10% may seem like a small percentage, it can result in significant cost savings for the organization as a whole. However, the increased pressure on line managers to supervise and manage employees without the aid of an HR unit, may negate these cost savings.

**Practical Applications to the Hospitality Industry**

Without question, cost cutting and business goals must be a focus, but managing the workforce must be a focus as well. Successful customer engagements begin with a solid and cohesive team. In the hospitality industry, strategies that enable collaboration trust building and employee engagement are important to the success of the organization. To address this, several recommendations are offered: expand the role of HR specialists, provide training, and focus on employee engagement.

Reincorporating HR specialists into the physical corporate location puts a face to the HR function and can create a sense of community, camaraderie, inclusion, and trust. By tying in the direct impact HR has on the quality, engagement and longevity of employees’ organizations are subsequently able to address the goals of engagement, team building: and training. Thus focus will include performance management plans that are linked to engagement outcomes; development of open door communication policies that assist in areas such as conflict resolution; frequent feedback; opportunities for engagement, off site teambuilding and shared accountability. Each of these strategies could assist an organization, particularly those engaged in the hospitality industry in building a more cohesive and successful team environment.

Ivancevich and Konopaske (2013) observed that “training and development are processes that attempt to provide an employee with information, skills and an understanding of the organization and its goals” (p 391). Understanding the organization is a two-prong activity comprised of learning job expectations and understanding organizational culture. The success of this indoctrination is evaluated by customer satisfaction. Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2009) recognized that training without a credible measure couldn’t be successful. Training must also align with organizational strategies and must be linked to overall performance management.
Likewise, performance management systems are directly linked to the success of employees within the organization. This linkage is based on the belief that the employee is the focal point of goal achievement within the organization and that his or her initial interaction with the customer sets the tone for their experience with the organization. Mello (2011) discussed the value of performance management systems. He noted that these systems promoted the discovery of performance deficiencies in a timely manner; helped channel employee behaviors toward the achievement of specific objectives and assisted with employee career development through appropriate and specific feedback.

Lastly in the area of employee engagement, Williams (2010) commented, “Employee engagement is to HR what customer loyalty is to marketing and sales. It is that often elusive frame of mind that goes beyond satisfaction and ensures the long-term and productive tenure of the faithful employee with the employer” (para 1). Employee engagement is an elusive term, but despite its definition at its core, is the notion of getting employees involved and committed to the organization. The purpose of employee engagement is to build camaraderie, a sense of community and teamwork. Dale Carnegie and Associates (2012) found that “research has shown, time and again, that employees who are engaged significantly outperform work groups that are not engaged. In the fight for competitive advantage, where employees are the differentiator, engaged employees are the ultimate goal” (p. 2). The need for active and engaged employees cannot be understated.

Conclusion
Managing a diverse workforce is a continual challenge. The changing societal demographics due to the globalization of the marketplace, boom in multinational organizations, worker longevity in the workforce and the diversity of culture, religion, race, gender and age have culminated in a highly charged workplace in which a plethora of issues related to discrimination, unfair treatment and inequality overshadow organizational goals (Awadzi Calloway, 2014). In the hospitality industry consumer needs and wants drive the organization. The ability of an organization to achieve its goals is directly linked to the strategic selection and placement of employees. This process is often fraught with challenges that can cause the selection of employees that are either a poor fit, lack the skills and training needed or are unable to adapt to the organization’s culture (Blanchard & Thacker, 2012). An employee’s ability to contribute to the bottom line results of the organization is maximized when there is a direct match between his or her skill set and the skills needed for the job (Blanchard & Thacker, 2012). The use of specific selection criteria enables organizations to minimize bias in the hiring process and select and hire employees who are a good overall fit with the organization (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013).
However, once in the organization, the employee must be trained, motivated and engaged as a contributing team member. All efforts must be made to ensure that the organization has in place the proper motivators and tools to support the employee’s success. Creating an atmosphere of trust, engagement, communication and teamwork are essential to that effort. The role of HR specialists reaches far beyond recruitment and selection. They must be actively engaged in the motivation and training of employees.

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Using Importance-Performance Analysis to Identify the Travel Characteristics of African Americans

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ABSTRACT

This research study examined African American traveler’s expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction with a popular U.S tourism destination as measured by the perceived Importance Performance Analysis (IPA) tool. As a result of better educational and employment opportunities, many African Americans have access to disposable income and the desire to travel for leisure. New Orleans provides an interesting context of assessing destination competitiveness in conditions of global environmental changes and the challenge of a tourism destination recovering from a major disaster. The results of this research provide valuable new insights and tools for travel organizations and stakeholders seeking to learn more about the African American traveler market segment.

KEYWORDS: African American Travelers, New Orleans Tourism, Urban tourism,

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing the economic strength of tourist segments and understanding their specific vacation behavior is vital to a destination’s competitiveness. Most successful businesses attempt to develop marketing strategies with the purpose of achieving a competitive advantage (Day
and Wensley, 1988; Varadarajan and Cunningham, 1995). Developed in the
discipline of Economics Theory, the
purpose of market segmentation is to
explain how a company selling a
homogeneous product in a diverse market
could maximize profits. Potential
consumers are segmented into meaningful
categories to better understand purchasing
behavior and select the most appropriate
marketing mix for each segment. The
marketing mix includes: the message, the
price, the availability of the product and
even the product levels and quality. In
essence, segmentation provides knowledge
for understanding the specific needs,
wants, behavior and limitations of a
smaller market that can be served better
(Kotler, Roberto and Lee, 2002).

According to Kotler, Bowen and
Makens (2014), several variables can be
used for segmentation but the most
common four include: geographic,
demographic, psychographic and
behavioral segmentation. The basic tenet
of market segmentation is achieving and
maintaining a competitive advantage in the
market that results in profits and superior
financial performance as a result of: (1)
identifying segments of demand, (2)
targeting specific segments, and (3)
developing specific marketing “mixes” for
each targeted market segment (Dibb,
Simkin, Pride, and Ferrell 1994; Hunt
2002b).

Several scholars have suggested
that ethnic marketing should be perceived
as a form of target marketing (Holland &
Gentry 1999), in which the segmenting
variable is ethnicity. These scholars have
defined ethnic marketing as a process of
developing marketing strategies and
actions that meet the needs of a subculture
that might behave differently from others
due to their common values, beliefs,
attitudes, and practices. As demographic
shifts continue to act as a catalyst for
social and cultural change in both the
private and commercial spheres, many
companies are discovering that previously
ignored ethnic groups are growing in
market power. Meeting their needs is an
opportunity for success.

Demographic trends among the
largest ethnic groups reveal that each
group will continue to increase in
significance as a potential target market.
African Americans represent an attractive
marketing segment. As a result of better
educational and employment
opportunities, African Americans have
significant buying power. With higher
income, African Americans have more
disposable income that has afforded them
the opportunity to travel for leisure. They
possess the financial means and are
interested in traveling to destinations that
cater to their specific interests. According
to Mandala Research firm, seventeen
percent of African-Americans take one or
more international trips a year and spend
approximately $48 billion on travel in the
United States alone (Chideya, 2014).

This study focuses on New Orleans
as an urban tourism destination and
explores the travel behavior of African
Americans. According to the United
States Travel Association, African
Americans are more likely to travel to
destinations throughout the Southern U.S.
than the general population (Hospitality
Net, 2004). This research explores the
importance of key destination attributes to
determine African American visitors’
preferences and level of satisfaction.
The IPA (Importance Performance Analysis) Theory

The IPA (Importance Performance Analysis) technique has gained widespread acceptance across many fields and is extensively used in the hospitality and tourism industry because of its simplicity and attractiveness in projecting results and in suggesting strategic action to improve competitiveness.

The IPA technique is a basic diagnostic decision tool (Matzler, Sauerwein, & Heischmidt, 2003) that facilitates the identification of improvement prioritization (Sampson & Showalter, 1999), the mobilization and deployment of scarce resources to where they are needed most (Levenburg & Magal, 2005), and the harmonization of strategic planning efforts to enhance relative competitiveness (Matzler, Bailomb, Hinterhuber, Renzl, & Pichler, 2004). Martilla and James (1977) introduced this concept after recognizing that analyzing expectations/importance and satisfaction/perceived performance by consumers were useful in addressing the position of attributes. However, the ability to analyze and relate these attributes to each other as the IPA does was even more valuable to decision making. Effectively identifying better competitiveness drivers as well as yielding greater marketing and management insights is crucial for decision making (Guadagnolo, 1985; Martilla & James, 1977). The IPA approach recognizes satisfaction as the function of two components: the importance of the attribute to the consumer and the performance of a business in providing that service or product (Martilla & James, 1977). IPA examines not only the performance of an item, but also the importance of that item as a determining factor in satisfaction to the respondent (Silva & Fernandes, 2010). The combined consumer ratings for the two components provide an overall view of satisfaction with clear managerial implications.

Bacon (2003) stated that in IPA studies, importance/performance can be evaluated through the use of direct ratings (e.g. 5 or 7-point scales anchored to “not at all important” and “extremely important”), while other studies estimate importance of services attributes through indirect measures such as standardized/unstandardized regression coefficients or simple correlation coefficients (Bacon, 2003). In this study, we applied the direct measures to infer importance and performance scores. Once the IPA map is developed, four quadrants are identified. The four quadrants in importance-performance analysis are characterized as (Martilla & James, 1977, p. 78):

(i) *Concentrate here* - high importance, low performance: requires immediate attention for improvement (major weaknesses).

(ii) *Keep up the good work* - high importance, high performance: indicates opportunities for achieving or maintaining competitive advantage (major strengths).

(iii) *Low priority* - low importance, low performance: does not require additional effort (minor weaknesses).

(iv) *Possible overkill* - low importance, high performance: indicates that business resources committed to these attributes would be overkill and should be deployed elsewhere.
The choice of the IPA paradigm to guide this inquiry is deemed relevant as it allows us to make a distinction between the overall satisfaction with the destination and the satisfaction with single components/attributes of the destination itself. Unlike other industries, the hospitality and tourism industry can be considered a “system”, with highly interdependent sub-sectors (Middleton and Clarke, 2001). The customer experience is made up of several services and activities, such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, transportation, and entertainment. Furthermore, besides the functional components, many contextual and environmental factors contribute to the self-evaluation of the tourist experience. Travelers therefore evaluate each element separately, and the overall satisfaction with their experience at a given destination is a function of satisfaction with the different elements/attributes of all products/services that make up the experience (Oliver, 1993). According to Oliver (1993), consumer satisfaction on every attribute has a direct effect on the overall satisfaction and it captures a significant amount of variation in overall satisfaction. A survey focused only on one of the components (for instance, the hotel) may lead to a lack of understanding because a consumer could be satisfied with that specific product/service but not satisfied with the other components and, consequently, not overall satisfied with the destination. The use of IPA addresses this shortcoming.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Contemporary Evolution of African American Travel**

Washburne (1978) was one of the first researchers to conceptualize the framework of the effects of race and ethnicity on leisure activities. The effects of historical discrimination, limited economic resources, and culture were factors used to explain the under-participation of African Americans in outdoor recreation. Washburne (1978) presented two theories, marginality and ethnicity, based on a sample of urban African American and White residents in California. The marginality perspective stated that poverty and the effects of socioeconomic discrimination accounted for African Americans’ under-participation in wild land recreation (Washburne, 1978). Although the marginality perspective provides a viewpoint on reasons for low participation in recreation among minority groups, Floyd (1999) later challenged the applicability of the marginality perspective since many factors were no longer relevant. First, historical discrimination was considered, but it was not suggested how contemporary discrimination (actual or perceived) impacted minorities’ visitation patterns. Second, marginality, Floyd (1999) argued, could not be applied to cases where income or other socioeconomic constraints were less
relevant. Thus, there was no explanation for affluent individuals who avoided recreational activities.

Contrary to the marginality theory, the ethnicity perspective stated that the African American leisure patterns reflected African Americans’ unique cultural style or ethnicity (Washburne, 1978). Cultural processes or ethnicity provided a better explanation for the differences in leisure participation patterns than socioeconomic factors (Floyd, McGuire, Shinew, & Noe, 1994). There have been mixed results in terms of studies of differences between ethnic groups pertaining to tourism related factors. Although Phillip (1993) initially reported no differences between African Americans and Whites in terms of destination preferences, he eventually found that differences did exist in the types of social interaction preferred between the two ethnic groups (Phillip, 1994). Klemm’s (2002) study of an Asian ethnic group in the United Kingdom concluded that there was no evidence to support the marginality perspective, but a case was made that there were differences related to ethnicity. These differences were mainly related to Asians’ preference for culturally relevant marketing and promotion of tourism products and services.

Goodrich (1985) was the first to study the leisure travel behaviors of African Americans (Willming, 2001). Goodrich found that African Americans preferred to travel to learn more about the culture and lifestyles of the people (89%), encounter new experiences (61%), experience the beauty of the country (40%), visit friends, relatives, and the land of ancestors (31%), and to conduct business (5%). Additionally, African Americans cited a lack of money and time to travel, fear of flying, fear of change and being alone, poor health conditions, contentment in their community, and fear for their safety in unknown places as barriers to selecting vacations destinations. Although the sample included only African Americans, Goodrich (1985) concluded that African Americans travel behaviors were similar to Whites travel behaviors.

The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) Travelscope Profile of U.S. Travelers to Louisiana (2003) also found that some similarities existed between African American travelers to Louisiana and overall visitors to Louisiana. The study concluded that African Americans exhibited similar traveler characteristics like traveling mostly for leisure, by car, enjoying shopping, attending social/family events, gambling, and participating in nightlife/dancing. Some differences in travel behavior included African Americans were more likely to travel for the purpose of visiting family and friends and attend social or family events, less likely to travel for business, less likely to travel by air, more likely to travel in summer months, more likely to take day trips, less likely to stay in a hotel, motel, or B&B, less likely to travel alone, and more likely to travel with children.

Williams and Chacko (2008) studied the differences between African American and White travelers to an urban destination. Their study assessed whether the differences in travel behaviors were due to historical economic discrimination (marginality) or related to differences in culture (ethnicity). A major finding was that both African Americans and Whites selected the same top five important urban destination attributes (friendly people, cleanliness, safety, adult destination, and...
affordable). The authors also concluded that the differences in travel behavior were more likely related to ethnicity than to marginality. Thus, the differences in African American and White traveler behaviors were more likely due to interest rather than income.

**New Orleans and African American Tourism**

New Orleans has been an attractive visitor destination for more than a century. The initial emergence of tourism can be attributed to the shipping and warehouse activities established at the foot of Canal Street during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which influenced the size, configuration, and atmosphere of the tourist-oriented landscape that emerged during the late twentieth century. The New Orleans shipping industry marked the beginning of the “hospitality industry” as the city became a major point of entry for the country. The transient population of seamen, immigrants, and tourists supplied a lucrative demand for restaurants, theatres, operas, bars, gambling houses, and red-light establishments.

It wasn’t until the 1970s that tourism officials were beginning to fulfill their dreams of making New Orleans a convention destination. In 1975, the Louisiana Superdome and the Hyatt Regency Hotel’s grand openings finally fueled the surge in tourism in the city of New Orleans, an occurrence that industry officials anticipated. One year later, the Hilton Riverside opened adding 1,250 rooms to the pool of 15,962 rooms.

Tourism’s growth was arguably spawned by the 1984 Louisiana World’s Fair which was held 100 years after the 1884 World’s Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition. Although the Fair resulted in $120 million in debt, it successfully paved the way for the tourism industry in New Orleans. The 1984 Fair resulted in the construction of The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (formerly the New Orleans Convention Center), a hotel building boom, the Riverwalk Mall, the Aquarium of the Americas, Entergy IMAX theater, the redevelopment of the city’s Warehouse District, and many other attractions. The convention center was a boost to the city’s economy when the oil industry, corporate mergers, and decline in blue-collar manufacturing all threatened the financial stability of the city. Overall, the World’s Fair exposed the city of New Orleans to the world and was the catalyst for the development and growth of tourism.

Today, tourism is one of the top industries in New Orleans. In 2004, New Orleans boasted record attendance and spending by visitors. According to the University of New Orleans Hospitality Research Center (2013), 10.1 million visitors spent $4.9 billion in the city which resulted in $57 million in local tax revenue and 80,000 jobs in the metropolitan area. In 2013, 9.28 million visitors spent $6.47 billion, a 4.5 percent increase over 2012 and the highest spending in the city's history (University of New Orleans Hospitality Research Center, 2013).

**The Lucrative African American Travel Market**

As a result of better educational and employment opportunities, African Americans have gained significant buying power. African Americans have more disposable income which has afforded them the opportunity to travel for leisure. African Americans currently represent more than $1.1 trillion in purchasing
power (Baker, 2013); purchasing $2.8 billion on entertainment and leisure and spending $6.4 billion on travel, transportation, and lodging (Target Market News, 2010).

Kilkenny (2009) interviewed professionals that cater to the minority travel industry and found that African Americans represent a lucrative market and historically are less impacted by economic downturns than the general public. African Americans spend approximately $600 billion annually on heritage travel alone, and destinations that target African Americans could generate profits (Kilkenny, 2009). The article concluded that as domestic and international travelers travel less, destinations begin searching for new or underserved niche markets to fill the gap. African Americans were found to be a flourishing market yet barely tapped by tourism destinations. African Americans account for seventy million person trips annually, spend ten percent of money on group travel with expenditures of approximately $1000 per person on travel excluding transportation (Kilkenny, 2009).

Jenkins (2010) found that 70 percent of African Americans between the ages of 25 and 44 with incomes of greater than $75,000 annually possess passports. One-third of African Americans indicated that they traveled internationally a minimum of three times per year, and ten percent said they traveled internationally at least every other month. African Americans were estimated to have spent 7 to 8 percent of the estimated $112.4 billion spent by travelers to international destinations in 2008. The most popular international destinations for African Americans included Paris, London; Madrid, Spain, the Caribbean, South American particularly Brazil (Jenkins, 2010).

According to the American Hotel and Lodging Association (2010), African American hotel and bed and breakfast users’ domestic travel is concentrated to the top four states of Georgia (11%), California (9%), Texas (8%), and Florida (6%). States in the South such as Louisiana and Mississippi as well as states in the Northeast region such as New York and Pennsylvania have some concentrations of hotel and bed and breakfast users. Other destinations, however, can target the untapped African American traveler to boost their visitation.

The purpose of this study was to examine African American traveler’s expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction with the destination (CNO) as measured by the perceived IPA tool. The results of this research can provide valuable new insights and tools for travel organizations and stakeholders for the African American traveler market segment. Additionally, results of this study could assist the city’s marketing organizations by providing an understanding of the buying power and travel behaviors of this untapped niche market; allowing the CNO to best match the destination’s appropriate attractions and experiences to African American travelers’ specific interests. This study addresses what Page (1995) identified as a demand for tourism by the African American population to New Orleans.

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the following research questions were developed:

(i) identify which attributes African American travelers perceive important when visiting New Orleans.
(ii) identify African American travelers perceived performance on these attributes by the city of New Orleans
(iii) present managerial implications of the findings and make recommendations for the city of New Orleans
(iv) discuss future research emanating from the findings

METHODOLOGY

Target Population and Sampling
The target population for this study was customers who visited the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, United States. A convenient sampling method was used for the survey.

Survey Instrument
The proprietary survey instrument was developed in 2012 from previous survey instruments utilized by the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation, and Tourism and New Orleans Convention and Visitor’s Bureau. The initial questionnaire was developed by tourism officials and university professors based on an extensive literature review including: Zhang and Chow (2008), perception of tour guides by tourists, Duke and Persia (1996) study of tourist pre-trip expectations, post-trip satisfactions and importance of each on an IPA grid to consider potential decisions for escorted tours design. In addition, the items of performance of hotels (Chu and Choi, 2000; Wilkins, 2010), tourism events (Smith and Costello, 2008) and the recent work of Söresson and von Friedrichs (2013) on tourism destinations with regard to social and environmental sustainability were considered. Finally, the input from tourism leaders was utilized. The survey was tested by professors and industry stakeholders to ensure reliability and validity.

A self-administered questionnaire with four sections was developed. Section I was designed to collect respondents’ travel behavior patterns, such as frequency of travel to New Orleans, number of people in the travel party, intent to revisit, previous trip characteristics, trip characteristics when planning any trip, reasons for not visiting, and concerns about visiting New Orleans.

Section II was designed to measure consumers’ perceptions and performance of the attributes of traveling to New Orleans. Twenty-two statements adapted from previous literature and the expert panel were used for the survey. In this section, consumers were asked to rate the 22 statements for their importance, as well as their performance on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Importance ratings were 1 (not important), 2 (somewhat important), 3 (fairly important), 4 (very important), and 5 (extremely important). Performance ratings were 1 (not satisfied), 2 (somewhat satisfied), 3 (fairly satisfied), 4 (very satisfied), and 5 (extremely satisfied).

Section III asked the respondents to rate their overall satisfaction with the visit, overall experience, and their intention to visit again. Respondents were asked to rate how satisfied overall they were with this visit experience on a scale of 1–5 (with 1 = not satisfied and 5 = extremely satisfied). Then, respondents were asked to rate how likely it is that they will return to New Orleans on a scale of 1–5 (with 1 = not likely to return and 5 = definitely will return).

Finally, Section IV was designed to collect New Orleans African American
travelers’ demographic information, such as gender, age, ethic group, etc.

Pilot Test
A pilot test with 50 respondents was conducted. The purpose was to test the internal consistency of the measurement scale. Pretesting was important since the scale was developed out of items adapted from previous studies, travelers and experts and modified for the purpose of this study. Cronbach’s alpha for the importance scale was 0.94, and Cronbach’s alpha for the performance scale was 0.92. Since a value of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable in social science (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Santos, 1999), the scale used for this study had high internal consistency. The scale was therefore considered appropriate and used for data collection.

Data Collection
Using a database containing over 17,000 names generated from Textures within the last two years, a link to the survey was sent to all users in the database. Textures is the official African American travel guide to Louisiana produced by the Louisiana Office of Tourism. Visitors can either call or request a free copy from the Louisiana Office of Tourism website. After removing the undeliverable emails and the request to unsubscribe emails, 14,759 emails remained in the database. A total of 990 surveys were completed, but only 787 useable surveys were utilized since Louisiana residents were excluded from the study. Of the 787 useable surveys, African American respondents completed 430 surveys. After cleaning the data, 271 surveys were available for analysis. The survey data were downloaded from the host site, SurveyMonkey.com. The data were edited for accuracy and logical consistency. SPSS 21.0 was used to analyze the visitor surveys.

Data Analysis
The reliability of the scale was first examined. The scale performed well on both importance and performance ratings. Cronbach’s alpha for the importance ratings was 0.89, and Cronbach’s alpha for the performance ratings was 0.86. These two values both dropped slightly compared with the values of the pilot test but would still be considered good considering the cut-off value of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Santos, 1999). The scale still displayed a high internal consistency, and a relatively stable performance across samples. Descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, and standard deviation) were performed first in order to gain the general profile of the travelers. A paired-sample t-test was performed to test if significant differences exist between the importance and performance of the city of New Orleans quality attributes. In addition, IPA was performed to categorize the attracting attributes and to identify the areas that require different level of focus and management strategy. The grand means of the importance scale and the performance scale were used as the center point of the IPA figure (Figure 2). Then, the mean scores of the importance and performance of the attributes were calculated and plotted into Figure 2.
RESULTS

Demographics

Of the 271 usable African American respondents’ surveys, 85.3% were female and 14.7% were male. Respondents reported that they were married (40.8%), single (32.6%), divorced (19.7%), living with a partner (4.0%), and widowed (2.9%). The respondent’s age was mostly 45-54 (35.3%) followed by 35-44 (31.1%), 55-64 (15.1%), and 25-34 (15.0%). Most African American respondents were employed (93%) and not students (80.4%). The largest household income range was $25,001-$50,000 (30.3%) followed by $50,001-$75,000 (28.3%). Together, 58.6% of African Americans reported income ranges from $25,001-$75,000 annually.

Perceived Importance-Performance of the City of New Orleans

The means and standard deviations (SD) of all the importance attributes and performance attributes were analyzed. The means of the perceived importance and performance of the attributes are shown in Table 2.

The following attributes: Value for Money, Nightlife, Restaurant/Culinary Experience, Fairs and Festivals, and Cultural Activities were perceived as the top five most important for the city of New Orleans. On the other hand, customers perceived that New Orleans performed the highest on the following attributes: Restaurant/Culinary Experience, Fairs and Festivals, Watching Sports, Nightlife, Family Reunion, and Visit Historic Sites. A paired-sample t-test was performed to analyze if a significant difference exists between customers’ perception toward importance and performance on each service quality attribute in Table 3. The following attributes were significantly different at .05 or lower: Restaurant/Culinary Experience, Fairs and Festivals, Watch Sports, Nightlife, Family Reunion, Hotel Experience, Safety/Security, Shopping, and Spa.

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<td>Retired/unemployed</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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2: Perceived Importance – Performance on the Attributes

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<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Importance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant/Culinary Experience</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairs and Festivals</td>
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<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
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<td>Watch Sports</td>
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<td>2.80</td>
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<td>Nightlife</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>3.78</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Reunion</td>
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<td>4.01</td>
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<td>Visit Historic Sites</td>
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<td>3.90</td>
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<td>Museums</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>3.12</td>
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<td>Hotel Experience</td>
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<td>3.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unique Attractions</td>
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<td>Zoos</td>
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<td>1.94</td>
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<td>Safety/Security</td>
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<td>Shopping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exciting Gaming</td>
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<td>Golf</td>
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<td>Spa</td>
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<td>1.08</td>
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</table>

Table 3: Differences between Performance/Importance of Attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>P-I</th>
<th>t-Value</th>
<th>Sig*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Restaurant/Culinary Experience</td>
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<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.74</td>
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<td>Fairs and Festivals</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.72</td>
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<td>Watch Sports</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.98</td>
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<td>Nightlife</td>
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<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>8.88</td>
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<td>Family Reunion</td>
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<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>0.000</td>
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<td>Visit Historic Sites</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>0.062</td>
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<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Experience</td>
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<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Activities</td>
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<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unique Attractions       | 3.94        | 3.22       | 0.72 | 1.34    | 0.200|
Zoos                     | 3.94        | 1.08       | 2.86 | 4.35    | 0.034|
Safety/Security          | 3.66        | 3.78       | 0.12 | -1.17   | 0.260|
Value for Money          | 3.44        | 4.28       | 0.84 | -1.71   | 0.105|
Family Attractions       | 3.44        | 4.01       | 0.57 | -1.59   | 0.131|
Shopping                 | 2.94        | 3.50       | 0.56 | -8.10   | 0.000|
Exciting Gaming          | 2.78        | 3.22       | 0.44 | -1.72   | 0.104|
Golf                     | 2.50        | 2.22       | 0.28 | -1.32   | 0.205|
Gambling                 | 2.25        | 3.23       | -0.98| -0.16   | 0.875|
Spa                      | 1.83        | 1.94       | -0.11| -3.83   | 0.001|

*Significant attributes are in bold.
The IPA Results

Based on the data analysis as well as the results of the paired-sample t-tests, the IPA was conducted. The results of IPA are presented in Figure 2. Attributes in the “Keep up the good work” quadrant are attributes that are perceived as important and performing well by customers, so managers need to keep up the good work. They included: Cultural Activities, Nightlife, Reunion, Restaurants, Experience, Fairs and Festivals, and Hotel Experience. Notably, the attribute, “Safety and Security” fell exactly on the line that separates “Keep up the good work” and the “Concentrate Here” quadrants.

Attributes in the “Concentrate Here” area are perceived as important by travelers but not well developed/performed by the city. Based on the results, the city is not fully meeting the needs and expectations of the respondents. These are considered areas with potential and if developed and nurtured, could provide the city with a future competitive advantage.

Figure 2: IPA Results

Tourism stakeholders and the city therefore need to pay further attention to these attributes and make efforts to improve the performance of the attributes falling into this area or develop strategies that justify this type of performance. Typically, there is a need for reallocation of resources, time, and attention into this area. These attributes include: Family Attractions, Gambling, Exciting Gaming, Shopping, and Value for Money. The spring 2014 opening of the Outlet Collection at Riverwalk, considered the nation's first upscale outlet center in the New Orleans downtown setting is exactly the type of retail infusion that
will support the “Concentrate Here” area for the city.

Several attributes fell into the “Low Priority” area. Customers perceive attributes that fall into this area as not so important for their destination experience. In addition, these attributes are perceived as not being well performed by the city. Therefore, they should not be the stakeholder’s immediate priority. These attributes for the city of New Orleans include: Spa and Golf.

Under the “Overkill” quadrant: Museums, Watch Sport, and Zoo are areas that the city is providing a positive experience for the African American traveler. African American travelers enjoy visiting museums and historic sites in New Orleans. New Orleans offers specific attractions that would appeal to the African American visitor. For example, the New Orleans African American Museum of Art, Culture, and History is located in Tremé, the oldest surviving black community in the United States. The museum is “dedicated to protecting, preserving, and promoting the history and art of African Americans both in New Orleans and throughout the African diaspora”.

Discussions and Conclusions

Destination managers face the challenge of 1) properly identifying tourism attributes that appeal to specific market segments and 2) making sure to provide the identified services and experiences in a high quality manner. In order to meet these challenges, it is necessary to conduct customer satisfaction surveys that consider tourists’ perceptions and preferences when developing new tourism products. This study, therefore, presented the results of a quantitative analysis of African American visitors’ perceptions toward the city of New Orleans as a tourist destination. The purpose of the analysis was to identify tourists’ perceptions regarding the importance and performance of tourism product attributes, services, and other destination attributes crucial for travelers. Another important goal of this study was to compare the mean tourists’ assessments regarding the importance and performance of the distinguished tourism product attributes. The implications of the research findings are discussed with regard to the destination management, tourist services providers and other entities involved in hospitality and tourism development.

Specifically, this study was designed to meet the following objectives and outcomes:

(i) identify which attributes African American travelers perceive important when visiting New Orleans
(ii) identify African American travelers perceived performance on these attributes by the city of New Orleans
(iii) present managerial implications of the findings and make recommendations for the city of New Orleans
(iv) discuss future research emanating from the findings

Regarding objectives (i) and (ii): “identify which attributes African American travelers perceive important when visiting New Orleans” and “identify African
American travelers perceived performance on these attributes by the city of New Orleans’, the following attributes were identified as important to the travelers: Value for money, family attractions, security, shopping, gambling, gaming, hotel experience, restaurant/cuisine experience, nightlife, fairs and festivals, unique attractions, historic sites. The following were identified as less important to the African American travelers: Golfing, spa, museums, watch sports and zoos. Of the identified attributes, the city of New Orleans was perceived to perform well on the following items that fell in the “keep the good work” quadrant; Hotel experience, restaurant/cuisine experience, nightlife, fairs and festivals, unique attractions, historic sites. These attributes represent the strength of the city. They are high priority attributes for the travelers and they are the attributes on which the city is perceived to perform well.

The results revealed that African American travelers enjoy attending fairs, festivals, concerts, plays, or performances when traveling. Capitalizing on this fact, a major music festival is held annually during the typically slow summer month of July. The Essence Music Festival, which is held during July 4th weekend, draws large numbers of African American tourists to New Orleans each year. In 2014, The Essence Festival brought over a half-million people to the city, generating about $200 million during a weekend that was at one time very slow for tourism (Waller, 2014). Other musical festivals such as the Jazz and Heritage Festival and Satchmo Festival are held annually in New Orleans, and these festivals may increase attendance by targeting African American travelers. Other destinations may consider marketing existing festivals and events or creating new festivals and events during the summer months, which may also attract African American visitors to their destination.

Even though New Orleans is home to one of the oldest outdoor shopping markets in the United States, the French Market, which has been operating for three centuries, it is possible that the travelers are looking for more than what is available. In addition, the city boasts some of the most famous Creole food restaurants in the world. New Orleans offers some limited gambling casinos and facilities such as Harrah’s and the New Orleans Fair Grounds Race Course and Slots. All of these areas can be harnessed by the city of New Orleans so they can match the interests of African American travelers.

Cultural activities were among the top activities of African Americans visiting New Orleans: visiting historic sites (52.3%) and attending museums or art galleries (40.5%). New Orleans has a large inventory of significant cultural attractions, monuments, museums, and galleries. For example, the New Orleans African American Museum (NOAAM) is located in Tremé, which is the oldest surviving African American community in the United States. NOAAM provides resources, exhibits, and tours of this historic neighborhood. The Backstreet Cultural Museum is another cultural treasure in the African American community promoting art and culture in the Tremé neighborhood since 1999. In attempting to attract more African American travelers to not just New Orleans, better communication of cultural resources could be an important strategy.

The “Concentrate Here” attributes, even though identified as important by the travelers were found to fall short of the
traveler expectations. Thus, they are perceived as not well performed by the city of New Orleans. This represents a potential threat to the city tourism. These attributes are those found in the “Concentrate Here” quadrant: Value for money, family attractions, security, shopping, gambling and gaming.

The attributes considered not important by the respondents yet the city appeared to perform very well on include: museums, watch sports and zoos. While golfing, biking/hiking and visiting a spa were not considered important and the city did not perform well on these. These represent a potential weakness of the city.

The following discussion will examine some of the attributes that should be addressed. The attributes that fall in the “Concentrate Here” quadrant represent the greatest challenge to New Orleans stakeholders. Security and safety appears to fall right on the borderline of “Concentrate Here” and “Keep up the Good Work” quadrants. The implication is that security sparks mixed feelings among respondents. It is an attribute perceived as important yet depending on who is evaluating the issue; security will either earn the favorable or unfavorable quadrant. It is important for the city to find a position for this attribute. Particularly, officials should strive to position the City as a safe place to visit. This is especially important for leisure travelers, who are likely to travel with families. Currently, security in New Orleans has been identified as a major concern for residents and tourism stakeholders. Initiatives are in place to address the perception of tourist safety. One new program that New Orleans has established includes a special crime prevention unit to protect tourists. Personnel must be specially trained in issues of interest to tourists and be able to work with local associations and bureaus. Funding for the 50 uniformed civilians that comprise the "NOLA Patrol," is from the hotel industry. A portion of the city's hotel tax, 0.25 percent, is devoted for services in the French Quarter. Estimates are up to $200,000 each month under agreement with the New Orleans Convention & Visitors Bureau and the City Council.

Value for money is another attribute of concern. Travelers rated value for money as the most important attribute (M= 4.28). This finding is not surprising. Generally, since the 1990s, travelers have appeared to be more practical, taking a cautious approach to discretionary spending by cutting back their travel budgets and looking for ways to pay less for more (Sellers, 1991). This importance of value is also corroborated the findings of Shalini, Tripathi and Siddiqui (2010). In their conjoint analysis study, they found that consumers place value as a high importance attribute. The analyses of the study findings reveal that there is a statistically significant gap between the importance and performance of this attribute. By implication, the travelers placed a high importance on price and value. They however, found that the City of New Orleans (CNO) was of a lower value than expected. Given that value can be captured in the tourism context value can be captured in two constructs: price and quality that travelers experience, value should therefore include the overall price worthiness of visiting a destination, the price worthiness of the accommodation, the price worthiness of food and restaurants as well as the price worthiness of the goods, products and services offered in the shops and other places at the destination (Narayan, Rajendran, Sai, and
Gopalan, 2009), the CNO should strive to develop strategies that justify the perceived lower value for the dollar. The CNO needs recognize that due to heightened competition for travelers among destinations, consumers have developed greater desire greater value for money (Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000). It is therefore recommended that the city adapts the optimal pricing strategy particularly if the city has a desire to capture travelers as part of a growth in arrivals numbers (Woodruff, 1997). However, like Kandampully and Suhartanto (2000) caution, the focus should not necessarily be on price and pricing strategies but rather on emphasizing unique benefits as a means of creating greater perceived value and customer satisfaction, thus, New Orleans could deflect the consumer focus toward the benefits versus the price as mere reduction in price does not yield value for money. Value is only felt when the benefits are perceived to outweigh costs. Therefore the city should pursue value-based pricing strategies.

Another important attribute on which the CNO did not perform well is shopping. The importance of shopping as a tourist attraction has remained underrepresented (Heung and Cheung, 2000; Lay and Au, 2000). As growth of urban tourism sprawls across the United States, more intense competition for the traveler has emerged. One way for these cities to achieve an edge over the competition is to embark on marketing strategies that depict the destination as unique as possible. Shopping facilities could be one of the attributes that would position a city in a unique point. Indeed, it is presented in the extant literature that, the desire for relaxation, escaping from the mundane and accepting a challenge associated with shopping could draw people to cross the border to a destination country (Law and Au, 2000). Many tourists in nature base their motivation for travel in pursuit of pleasurable experiences (Timothy and Butler, 1995) and shopping has been determined as one of the pleasurable activities. Therefore, shopping and tourism should be perceived as activities that occur concurrently and can fulfill the desire for products, lifestyle brands, and images from other cultures; a phenomenon that has become attractive and exciting to consumers (Cornwell and Drennan, 2004).

In the meantime, shopping malls play a significant role in fulfilling the tourists shopping desires. These shopping malls not only provide a place to shop, but also provide entertainment, food, drink and places to socialize. The timing has been very good for New Orleans in regard to new retail experiences. The spring 2014 opening of the Outlet Collection at Riverwalk – the nation's first upscale outlet center in the New Orleans downtown setting is exactly the type of retail infusion that will support the desire for shopping.

Conclusions and Future Research

Many scholars agree that market segmentation is not only desirable but should be a continued focus of study. These authors propose that heterogeneity of demand is not only existent but is a natural phenomenon (e.g., Alderson, 1965; Allenby, Arora, and Ginter 1998; McCarthy 1960; Smith 1956) that should be pursued by all businesses. According to Allenby, Arora, and Ginter (1998, p. 384) : “demand heterogeneity is a critical element of marketing” and that a “lack of homogeneity on the demand side may be based upon different customs, desire for
variety, or desire for exclusivity or may arise from basic differences in user needs.”

Smith’s (1956, p. 4). Smith (1956) suggested that segmentation and targeting can be attributed to consumers’ desires for more precise satisfaction of their varying wants. Heterogeneity has been emphasized by Sawhney’s (1998, p. 54) statement: “Customers are becoming very sophisticated and are demanding customized products and services to match individual preferences and tastes.” Similarly, Lancaster (1990) maintains that the existence of segmentation can be a result of consumers seeking variety in their own consumption and/or different consumers wanting different variants because tastes differ. From this perspective, companies and businesses are encouraged to pursue segmentation strategies.

African Americans present an attractive marketing segment. They possess the financial means and are interested in traveling to destinations, which cater to their specific interests. Results from this study indicated a variety of activities that African Americans chose to participate in while vacationing. The city of New Orleans could utilize this technique (IPA) to improve its marketing efforts; for example, make certain that cultural venues, are available and effectively promoted to this important part of the travel population.

This study presents some weaknesses that pave the way for future studies. Considering that a significant percentage of respondents ages were between 35-54 (66.4%), it would be important to follow up with future research on this population to determine if parents or a single parent travel with children under the age of 18 and what their perceptions of New Orleans are as a family destination. As cities are increasingly competing for tourists and niche travel markets, this could be an important benchmark to gauge African American leisure travelers. Other destinations that offer family friendly attractions may consider marketing to African Americans.

Results from the current study could be used as lessons learned for understanding travel preferences of African Americans traveling to a variety of destinations. Attending festivals, cultural events, and shopping are among the top preferred activities of African Americans visiting any destination. Because the wording of the survey question specifically focused on activities at any destination, these results could be applied to a variety of locations. DMOs and travel professionals could utilize this information to pull the African American leisure traveler to their specific locations.

References


SMART SWOT Strategic Planning Analysis: For Service Robot Utilization in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to understand the values of introducing service robots, and to develop a robotics strategy, potentially for the hospitality industry in Taiwan. Experts and semi-structured interviews with SMART SWOT survey were used to explore the perspectives of robotics experts and hotel practitioners. Five sets of the perspectives, along with 60 items as key issues, were identified. Findings showed that the media awareness was good for business in short-term strategic planning. The labor cost savings were a potential benefit for business in long-term strategic planning. Last, it suggested that educators should modify their training courses since robotics services will require skilled workers.

**Keywords:** Hospitality Industry, Hospitality Attitude, Service Robots, SMART SWOT Analysis, Strategic Planning
1. Introduction

1.1 The issue

Hospitality is a worldwide high value-added chimney-free industry, which can sustain the competitiveness of nations with growth economies (Scowsill, 2015). However, hospitality is a labor intensive industry with heavy workloads, minimum wages, and shift work. These work conditions lead to labor shortages and high turnover rates, which require constant attention from management. In addition, delivery of service quality may be also affected by the emotions of inexperienced or untrained part-time front line employees (Nickson et al., 2005). Therefore, this study explores the values of introducing service robots by using the SMART SWOT strategic method in the hospitality industry.

Service robots are loosely defined as interactive electronic devices performing traditional human functions, not necessarily electronic humanoids. However, the latest service delivery technology, with an interface offering video images, voice, and touch sensors, is able to interact, communicate, express and entertain, thereby making robots closer and friendlier to customers (Zalama et al., 2014). These developments have the potential to increase operational efficiency, while providing a unique feature and maintaining a high standard of service quality to underpin the business with competitive and economic advantages. Despite this potential, few studies have specifically addressed service robots for the hospitality industry using the SMART SWOT strategic planning analysis.

1.2 Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to understand what values shapes the introduction of service robots for the hospitality industry in Taiwan. The objectives of this study include (1) identify the benefits of introducing service robots in the hospitality industry in Taiwan; (2) understand the needs of the Taiwan hospitality industry use of robotics technology via the SMART SWOT strategic method; and (3) provide recommendation and guidelines for the hospitality industry as it considers introducing robotics service solutions.

2. Literature review

2.1 Service and hospitality Innovation

The concept of ‘innovation’ as introduced by Schumpeter in 1934 has evolved in association with the hospitality industry to embrace ‘outside-in’ and ‘inside-out’ openness to new technologies and processes (Chesbrough, 2011). ‘Outside-in’ refers to ideas from outside the company and ‘inside-out’ refers to ideas from inside the company (Chesbrough, 2011). This indicates that service innovation is not a simple linear process of changes to the traditional value chain. Rather, it is an iterative process that includes customer involvement and participation (Chesbrough, 2011). Incremental innovation and radical innovation are the two main types of service innovation (Frankel, 1990; Schumann, 1994). Incremental innovation involves new technology such as the use of smartphones in hotels for on-line check-ins, or the use of in-room entertainment amenities, which have improved self-service processes (Berezina and
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Cobanoglu, 2010; Victorini et al., 2005). The use of service robots for hotels, on the other hand, is a radical innovation. It involves a dramatic restructuring of the organizational and service processes. This portends possible improvement in labor utilization and creation of new markets through the exploitation of a new compelling technology (Lisboa et al., 2011).

Any service innovation involves six dimensions: (1) a new service concept; (2) new customer interactions; (3) new business partners; (4) a new revenue model; (5) a new delivery system, involving new personnel, organization and culture; and (6) a new delivery system, involving new technological options (den Hertzog et al., 2010). A new service solution can be created in association with one or several dimensions that sustain competitiveness for hotels. For instance, from a long-term financial performance perspective, an investment in service robots could be recouped in a certain period of time, reducing the costs of employment, personnel management, and training (Bilgihan et al. 2011; den Hertog et al., 2010).

A service innovation model has been developed and explained based on two theories: the resource-based view (Barney, 1991; Teece et al., 1997; Wernerfelt, 1984) and the dynamic capabilities view (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; Helfat and Peteraf, 2003; Teece et al., 1997). The resource-based view refers to the core value or competence the company possesses which can be identified, and which sustains its competitiveness in the market (Wernerfelt, 1984). The dynamic capability view refers to the capability of a company to create, extend, and modify its resource for a long term competitive advantage (Helfat and Peteraf, 2003). Both theories enable a business to develop competitive strategies based on the view that its resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable if they are to support its dynamic capabilities (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000; den Hertog et al., 2010). Such strategies are developed in a sequential process that the business must follow to identify difficult-to-imitate assets first and, based on this, integrate and reconfigure the business’s internal and external competencies to address its rapidly changing environment (Teece et al., 1997; den Hertog et al., 2010). This is the view of a strategy for successfully innovating and capturing sufficient value for hotels to deliver superior long-term financial performance (Teece, 2007).

2.2 The hardware

From the hardware perspective, the unit price of a service robot which can independently perform some simple tasks in a fixed environment in around USD22,000 (Pai, 2014). Such tasks include greeting customers, carrying luggage, showing surroundings, and providing service information using a touch screen. This type of the service robots looks like a bellboy, whose body design includes expressive head, camera and microphone, eyes, mouth, two arms, and a touch screen in front of the torso (Zalama et al., 2014). In addition, the return on the service robot investment could be expected within about 2.5 years based on a porter’s annual salary of USD8800. Van Dam et al. (2011) and Garmann-Johnsen et al. (2014) further stress that service robots can enhance
efficiency of operations by 12 per cent, with increased delivery stability and decreased delivery time. Although this improvement is achieved based on proper training and acceptance of staff, this is a significant outcome. This thus satisfies the contention that the profitability of a new service concept must be confirmed before it is implemented.

2.3 Global service robot development

Americas, Japanese and European alliances have invested in the development of industrial robot technology for many decades. Such robots were initially developed to perform dangerous, simple, and repetitive work. The focus of technology development for robots now has shifted from industrial application to service application. This is evident from the global summary below which highlights such products as the Spencer entertainment robot developed in America and the ASIM0 entertainment robot from Japan. South Korea has a fledgling robot museum that bears watching as innovation continues to unfold. Table 1 (Huang, 2010) shows the points out service robot development direction for America, Japan, Europe, and South Korea.

Table 1: Summary of country service robot development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Focus of development</th>
<th>Government policies and projects</th>
<th>Robot products</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America</td>
<td>1. National defense</td>
<td>1. Robotic cooperation association (Human-robot interaction)</td>
<td>1. Roomba vacuum cleaner robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Space-based development</td>
<td>2. Robotic industrial association (New market)</td>
<td>2. Spencer entertainment robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Innovation application</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. PELP entertainment robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>1. Humanoid robots</td>
<td>1. Next generation of robot practical plan</td>
<td>1. ASIMO entertainment robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Service application</td>
<td>2. New industry innovation strategy</td>
<td>2. Tour guide robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Research institutes of robotic policy</td>
<td>3. PAPERO healthcare robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. New economic growth strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Household robots</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>1. Broadband network connection</td>
<td>1. Program of ITR839 strategy</td>
<td>1. Genibo entertainment electronic pet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Household robots</td>
<td>2. Ten new growth engine industries</td>
<td>2. SR9630 cleaner robot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Entertainment robots</td>
<td>3. Robot museum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Medical robots</td>
<td>4. Ubiquitous Robotic Companion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and sampling

Initially experts in robotics study were gathered from the group of three scholars whose expertise is in the fields of robotics technology, mechanical and precision instruments, and hospitality. They made up the value of this study using the scenario that was this the right time to introducing service robots for hospitality to handle the issues of labor shortage and high turnover. The positive outcome enabled us to make the research question on the possibility of introducing service robots and probing possible beneficial factors. In order to triangulate the results, two hotel owners and three industrial robotics experts were invited for the five semi-structured interview conducted in May to June of 2013. The interview questions are given below.

1. What do you think of the possibility of introducing service robots to the hospitality industry of Taiwan?

2. What do you think of the possibility of introducing service robots to act as waiters to deliver dishes or meals at banquets or parties?

3. What do you think of the possibility of introducing service robots to act as guest welcoming staff at hotel front desks?

4. Do you think service robots can make (enhance profits for the hospitality industry?

The semi-structured interview and SMART SWOT survey were performed to collect the items that can help analyze the potential of service robots, particularly for the restaurant and front desk office.

Twenty individuals were invited to participate in the study, including hotel owners and managers, industrial robotics technology experts, and mechanical and precision instrument experts. The interview was conducted in the months of July to September 2013.

3.2 Instrument and ranking

A total of 60 items, 12 items on each of the five semi-structure interview questions were collected from the twenty respondents, and ranked in order of priority for the content analysis. The respondents were surveyed to locate the items on the dimensions of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats factors. Each item was ranked from 1 to 10, where 1 represents least important and 10 represents most important, were summed up for ranking the important items. The outcomes of these important rankings were the basis for recommendations to hotel practitioners.

The SMART SWOT process as applied here represents a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews. SWOT analysis is the most popular technique used to assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for strategic planning. SWOT also contains a matrix for a diversity of execution strategies (Glaister and Falshaw, 1999). The SMART technique addresses a major disadvantage of SWOT, the non-prioritization of analyzed factors (Hill and Westbrook, 1997). The SMART multi-attribute rating technique provides a straightforward approach for making comparisons and rating priorities,
particularly in exploratory research (Edwards, 1971).

4. Results and analysis

The results of the five interview questions were analyzed using the top three responses on the SMART SWOT outcome. Table 2 indicates that this is good for short-term operations. The strengths factors show that introduction of service robots will attract significant media and consumer attention. In response to the weaknesses factor, it appears that service robot introduction currently face many problems, including restricted interaction, immediate response delay, and impeded fluent movement. These need to be resolved for long-term strategic planning and implementation. In response to the opportunities factor, the indication is that service robots may produce profits by satisfying customers and reducing the number of humans employed. The response to the threats factor indicates that service robots may affect the mood and behavior of employees concerned with the loss of their jobs in the near future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Possibility of Service Robot Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Table 2: Summary of SMART SWOT Expert Interview Responses and Prioritization – Question 1.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question 1. What do you think of the possibility of introducing service robots to the hospitality industry of Taiwan?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can initially create novel, fun, and attractive topics in the public media which is a short term advantage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots is a high-end integration industry and Taiwan is capable of manufacturing robotic components and developing software systems with existing talent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can save labor cost and standardize operations all day long without having an impact on gender issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase of customers and service satisfaction may produce profit with less human labor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation of Taiwan’s industry has firmly supported the development of Robots.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robot is on the list of next important industries in Taiwan which has established product development alliances and funding support to assist manufacturers develop new products or manufacture components. This can thus lower risk of product development and increase competitiveness of manufacturers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 shows the results for the waiter robots. The strengths factor indicates that introduction of service robots can enhance profits by creating curiosity via unique presentation/performance, thereby attracting new customers. The responses to the new weaknesses factor show that the new service robots may not be friendly enough to offer warm interaction and immediate customer service in the banquet environment. In the opportunities factor, service robots can enhance the competitive advantages of restaurants by highlighting brand image and maintaining a quality of service standard as the IT industry in Taiwan has a strong reputation and can support the robotics industry. The response to the threats factor raises the alarm on issues of repair and maintenance requiring a human engineer on site for constant management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can create curiosity and topicality in the market, which can attract potential customers. McDonald’s restaurants could see suitable application as their food production/service process is clear and simple.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>The service robot is unable to respond to the immediate non-programed demands of customers, as well as is unable to offer a warm interaction, immediate response and immediate customer service.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can promote the image of the company by presenting a culinary preparation show or previewing menu items and process of preparation with sight, sound and action.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>The service robot is unable to respond to unexpected situations and is vulnerable to environmental limitation. Potential problems with operation and maintenance.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can be programed to fit into banquet/restaurant environments and automation via robots can cut down labor cost and enhance profit.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High manufacturing cost and high selling price are common disadvantages of service robots. In order to sustain the business, appearance of service robots must be fashionable and process of dishes delivery must be changed regularly.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Threat</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can ally with IT industry to enhance competitive advantages of company.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Limitation of the service robot itself is associated with repair and maintenance, barriers, operating environment, immediate response to customer issues, and unstoppable damage from humans.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots give us a good opportunity to market their brand image as there is no current robot service restaurant in Taiwan.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Negative image of company could be caused by a broken robot that cannot function well and needs engineer to fix it.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can ensure the quality of standards and increase opportunities for meal ordering.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Service robots must be ensured with stability and reliability or they could accidently happen to threaten the security and safety of the public.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 shows the results of service robots located at the hotel front desk. The strengths comments indicate that service robots can help hotels deal with labor supply issues as they are able to check customers in, check them out, and provide hotel related information to customers around the clock. The responses to the weaknesses factor indicate that service robots cannot conduct multiple tasks at the same time and are restricted to simple designed service work. The responses to the opportunities factor show that service robots can differentiate the brand image of hotels from their competitors, attracting and retaining customers. The responses on the threats factor highlight maintenance costs as a concern which could cause failed service delivery and increased overall operating costs.

### Possibility of Service Robots in Hotel Front Office Mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 3. What do you think of the possibility of introducing service robots to act as guest welcoming staff at hotel front desks?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can offer guided tours introducing facilities and services of the hotel, thus attracting customers to engage offerings. This is merchandising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service robots can provide customers immediate detailed information including hotel, nearby attraction, transportation and restaurant or ticket reservations. This can resolve some labor supply issues of the front desk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service robot offers 24 hours/ a day service, which partly decreases the labor supply burden.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing exposure rate, enhancing customer impression, and increasing customer loyalty rate are definite opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel service model with diversity, culture and facilitation can be established by combining different areas of leisure, media, culture, communication and marketing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service robot has been just introduced into the hospitality industry which is a good opportunity for business. Suggest evaluation of its performance within half year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the willingness of owners to introduce service robots, the results from the strengths factor show that introduction of service robots is perceived by owners as a new way to attract customers’ attention, thus potentially enhancing profits. The
responses to the weaknesses factor show that making a proper functional service robot requires a large investment, which may retard the hotel operator’s deployment of service robots. The opportunities factor responses show that introduction of service robots is perceived by the owners as a new way to sustain competitive advantages for hotels. They can attract customers, thus increasing revenues. The responses on the threats factor indicate that the high unit price for a proper functional service robot is a major concern for the owners.

In the last question explores the profit enhancement potential of service robot introduction. The results for the strengths factor indicate that service robots will create an attractive sensation in the market initially, but the profitability of hotels will be reliably enhanced when robots replace human labor in the long-term. The weaknesses factor responses show that service robots cannot execute multiple tasks simultaneously and cannot take final responsibility for the outcome of a performance. The opportunities factor responses highlight the observation that service robots can encourage customers to consume more as well as provide a great opportunity to increase revenues by selling peripheral merchandise. The threats factor conclusions indicate that a proper functional service robot requires a substantial financial investment which may deter investment.

5. Conclusions and implications

This study presents five sets of perspectives from the SMART SWOT strategic planning analysis that helps hotels understand the values of introducing service robots in Taiwan. They are: (1) General possibility of introducing service robots into the hospitality industry; (2) Possibility of introducing service robots as waiters delivering meals or banquet services; (3) Possibility of introducing service robots to act as guest welcoming staff at the front desk; (4) Willingness of owners to introduce service robots into the hospitality industry; and (5) Profit enhancement potential of service robots for the hospitality industry. These observations could be useful guidelines for hotels when they consider introducing service robot solutions, especially for the restaurant and front desk office.

In order to enhance the benefits of introducing service robots, short-term planning should emphasize increasing media awareness. This may enable hotels to create a fresh media topic, attracting potential customers. The labor cost savings should be the focus of long-term strategic planning. The new service delivered by robotics technology could enable hotels to offer 24 hour service in the lobby, which will reduce the labor supply burden. Last, robotics development is an important industry of Taiwan, which lowers the risk of product and service development expenses, thereby increasing the competitiveness of business operations.

The SWOT technique used in this study helps identify items that involve both internal and external business issues, followed by the SMART technique which helps rank these items. The combined SMART SWOT technique is a cost-effective approach to help hotels understand the situations in business competition. The outcomes of the top three responses from the strengths and opportunities appear to significantly outweigh the weaknesses and threats. Consequently, introduction of service
robots is clearly a competitive business solution that hotels should consider.

5.1 Implications

In regards to academic implication, this new service concept using robotics technology supports the view of the service innovation model that new technology use can sustain the operational efficiency of business (den Hertog et al., 2010; Melian-Gonzalez and Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016). Strategic use of service robots can enhance the relationships between employees’ tasks, technology characteristics and utilization, and performance impacts (Kim et al., 2010). The rising demand for talent in the fields of system integrations, robotics technology, mechanical and precision instruments, and electrical and electronic engineers is expected. This may result in a skills shortage in the market that educators should address (Chen and Tseng, 2014). Further, training and development of employees and new staff recruitment in robotics related fields may need greater strategic planning from hotels (Kim et al., 2010).

Hotel financial performance relies upon the integration and reconfiguration of their difficult-to-imitate resources. The beneficial values of fun and enjoyment as well as the opportunities to sell peripheral merchandise provided by service robots signal the important strategic possibilities of these dynamic capabilities (Kim et al., 2013; Kokkinou and Cranage, 2015). The outcomes for customer satisfaction depend on the results of proper and attractive robotics service delivery system (Kim et al., 2010; Melian-Gonzalez and Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016).

For practical implications, service robots can promote an IT innovative hotel image via performances and customer service. In addition, the culinary preparation show at restaurant can impress customers as well. However, unrest and instability in the human work force is likely to be a challenge in the initial introductory phase. For instance, service robots are not able to fully provide human service, but only menu promotion to customers at the present time. Challenges also include ongoing reliability plus potential on-site technical maintenance personnel expenses. Robotics failure during service interaction may result in hotel embarrassment or even customer injury, leading to a negative customer judgment.

5.2 Limitations

Several limitations are identified. Rigor could be enhanced if expert responses were restricted to a set number of comments per question and SWOT categories. This study was conducted in the Taiwan hospitality environment and uses Taiwanese industry practitioners and educators. The process and results are thought to have universal application with respect to the strategic decision making process in general, and this specific work product in particular.
References


Historically Black Colleges and Universities Consortium (HBCU Consortium)  
Hospitality Management  
By  
Cynthia R. Mayo and Ernest Boger

The HBCU-Hospitality Management Consortium (HBCU-HMC) was initially formed following an invitation in 1985 by the U.S. Department of Interiors Office of Black Colleges for HPBCU Program Directors to meet in Washington, D.C. The focus of that meeting was to discuss the various institutions’ participation in the National Parks summer employment program. What grew out of that meeting was a need for further dialogue concerning the issues and problems of developing hospitality management programs on historically Black College campuses.

The HBCU-HMC was subsequently organized simultaneously in 1986 as its own signature group and as a Special Interest Group (SIG) of the International Council for Restaurant and Institutional Education (ICHRIE). In this event was hosted at Bethune-Cookman College (now University), in Daytona Beach, Florida by Hospitality Program Director, Ron Cox. It was organized to provide a networking platform for program directors of hospitality programs offered by HBCU colleges and universities. Other leaders, present included Hubert Alexander-Williamsburg Foundation, Ernest Boger- Treasurer- ICHRIE, Carl Binns-Bethune-Cookman, and Renee DuJean of the Urban League-BEEP. The next three meetings were sponsored by the Walt Disney Company and hosted Mid-Winter each January in Orlando, Florida. As a SIG, a second meeting was held at CHRIE. During the CHRIE conference Program Directors networked to talk about programs, meet industry recruiters and to engage in dialogue designed to keep programs viable and assisting students in getting jobs.

Some of the charter directors included Ernest Boger, U. of South Carolina, Carl Binns-Bethune-Cookman, Hubert Alexander, Williamsburg Foundation, later Norfolk State University, Bob Ritz, Virginia State University, Maurice Williams Howard University, and Bill Williams, Cheyney University.

Programs started later and fostered by the HBCU-HMC include Morgan State U, Delaware State University, Tennessee State University and North Carolina Central University.

The Consortium elected presidents as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ron Cox</td>
<td>1985-1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Binns</td>
<td>1986-1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Boger</td>
<td>1990-1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubert Alexander</td>
<td>1994-1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Mayo</td>
<td>1996-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flora Galliard</td>
<td>1998-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris Marzett</td>
<td>2000-2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Dixon</td>
<td>2004-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deanne Williams</td>
<td>2006-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivan Turnipseed</td>
<td>2015-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Partners of the Consortium were recruited early during its initial organization. Marriott, Sheraton, Hyatt, Aramark, Walt Disney World and Red Lobster were among the first partners. Marriott was the sponsor of many of the Consortium’s leadership meetings. Other partners provided mini internships, scholarships and information about trends and issues impacting the industry.

Starting in 1993 on the 5th Anniversary of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH) the mid-Winter meeting was shifted to correspond with the NSMH National Conference since all Directors were already in attendance with their students.

The Consortium continued to meet every year during the ICHRIE Conference to discuss issues of importance related to programs, funding, faculty and recruitment of students. The meetings were held in the following cities:

1991-Houston, Texas
1992-Orlando, Florida
1993-Chicago, Illinois
1994-Palm Springs, California
1995-Nashville, Tennessee
1996-Washington, DC
1997-Providence, Rhode Island
1998-Miami, Florida
1999- Albuquerque, New Mexico
2000-New Orleans, LA
2001- Toronto
2002- Orlando, Florida
2003-Indian Wells, California
2004-Philadelphia, PA
2005- Las Vegas, Nevada
2006- Arlington, Virginia
2007- Dallas, Texas
2008- Atlanta, Georgia
2009- San Diego, California
2010- San Juan, Puerto Rico-The Consortium was hosted by Marriott Hotels
2011- Denver, Colorado-The Consortium was hosted by Hyatt Hotels
2012- Providence, Rhode Island
2013- St. Louis, Missouri-The Consortium was hosted by the Four Seasons Hotels
2014-San Diego, California
2015-Orlando Florida-The Consortium was hosted by the four Seasons Hotels-Jorge Luna was the facilitator and contact person
2016- Dallas Texas

In 1997, under President Cynthia Mayo, the Consortium Journal was started with Pender Noriega as its founding editor. The Journal was delivered during the ICHRIE Conference that was held in Rhode Island. The Journal has since achieved a Cabell’s rating and is published twice annually. A textbook, “Contemporary Issues in Hospitality” was published by the HMC and edited by members Mayo and Noriega.

In 1996, Hyatt Hotels sponsored a strategic planning forum where the members designed its plan to encourage its member schools to seek ACPHA accreditation for
programs, encourage collaborative research, identify and encourage graduates to obtain terminal degrees to be able to fill the jobs of retiring directors.

During 1996-2008, several programs had completed the accreditation process and included: Bethune–Cookman College and Virginia State University. Delaware State University, North Carolina Central University and Cheyney State University.

Hyatt Hotels also began an initiative where HBCU students were invited to attend the Hotel-Motel Show in New York each November. Students were initially selected by program directors and later were selected through a competitive interview. All costs were borne by Hyatt for one student from each program and the hotel room was provided for the program director. This initiative lasted from 1995 to 2010. In 2006, other minority programs were invited to compete to participate, thus reducing the number of HBCU students who could attend. The program was eliminated after Hyatt and the Consortium agreed that some other initiative would provide opportunities for all HBCU programs. In 2010, it was decided that Hyatt would assist in funding a Bridge Program and provide funds for students to attend the NSMH Annual Convention. The attendance would allow more students to be exposed to industry professionals, so that they could compete for internships and positions.

The 2011 initiation of the Hyatt-Consortium Bridge Program started with the initiation of a Request for Proposals (RFP). Each school desiring to conduct a Bridge Program submitted the proposal for funds to an independent company in Delaware. The schools initially funded included:

Delaware State University, DE
North Carolina Central University, NC
Tuskegee University, AL
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore, MD
Virginia State University, VA

Reports of the success of the programs were reported during the ICHRIE Conference held in Providence Rhode Island.

The following schools have conducted the Bridge Programs, beginning in 2011-2014.

Bethune-Cookman University
Delaware State University
Florida Gulf Coast University
North Carolina Central University
Tuskegee University
Virginia State University
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore

In 2015, the following schools were funded:

Bethune-Cookman College
Delaware State University
Florida Gulf Coast University
Cheyney University
Virginia State University
University of Maryland, Eastern Shore

In 2016, the Bridge Program was expanded to eight universities and include:

Bethune Cookman University
Cheyney University
Delaware State University
Florida Gulf Coast University
Monroe College
Morgan State University
Virginia State University
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Below is a summary of funding from Hyatt Hotels, spearheaded under Ronisha Goodwin:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hyatt Hotels Funding Summary</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Show, New York</td>
<td>1995-2010</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rooms, NSMH</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSMH</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSMH (St. Louis, Missouri)</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSMH (Pittsburgh, PA)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSMH (Arlington, VA)</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>42,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>31,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>$5,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the 2016 Hyatt Fundraiser, the following companies provided funds for the Bridge Programs and for students to attend the NSMH Conference:

| HBCU Donations, 2016          |
| Mazzetta Co,                  |
| Franklin Associates           |
| Halpens' Steak and Seafood    |
| 18888 Mills, LLC              |
| Taiping Carpets               |
| Pacific Link                  |
| Empirical Group               |
| The Eli's Cheesecake Company  |
| MGH Gourmet                   |
| TC Contract Furniture, Inc.   |
| The Sugarman of Vermont, Inc. |
| Bigby Havis and Associates    |
| Clipper Corporation           |
| Garnier Thiebaut, Inc.        |
| Amplify Snack Brands, Inc.    |
| Great Lakes Cheese Co, Inc.   |
| C. H. Guenther & Son          |
| Beltmann Integrated Logistics |

Other companies that have been instrumental in providing resources include: Darden, Sodexo, Four Seasons, Apple, and Sheraton.

During the 2015 school year, Darden Restaurants, under Mollie Moore provided face to face sessions with students about Social Media, Career Opportunities and Preparation for the Workforce. These were delivered via Skype.

Future HBCU-HMC initiatives include collaboration for on-line course delivery, coordinated multi-school travel/study abroad programs, and endowed long term funding.
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Once the paper is submitted, a waiver form will be emailed for signature of main author. The *Consortium Journal* looks forward to receiving research articles in response to the call, and will be happy to respond to inquiries from interested parties.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us. We appreciate your consideration of this invitation and hope to hear from you soon!

jeclarke@desu.edu or cmayo@desu.edu

Best wishes. Your participation in this effort to produce new papers will contribute to the written body of knowledge for hospitality educators.

**IMPORTANT DATES: Submission Months: May and November**