A COMPARITIVE STUDY OF HOSPITALITY GRADUATE PROGRAMS ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

By

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CRITERIA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An Overview

The decade of the 1990's has constant reminders for Americans that survival in a dynamic global economy is becoming even more dependent on an educated, highly skilled, well-trained work force. Companies are being forced to operate on a strict budget to make a decent profit and meet stockholder's expectations (Murphy, 1993, p. B15). As a result, these same companies have changed their hiring criteria and practices, and have started searching for those candidates whose qualifications exceed the baccalaureate degrees.

In the 1920's, the American Hotel Association, together with E. M. Statler established the hotel program at Cornell University. Goodman and Sprague (1991) endorse the impact that Cornell's program had on the future of hospitality education: "The program grew into an independent school, and other universities also sought to provide talent for a rapidly expanding industry. From that beginning, hospitality education has grown with the industry to include the many diverse aspects of travel and tourism" (p. 67).

In the 1970's, The Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (CHRIE) estimated there were approximately 40 institutions offering baccalaureate degrees in hospitality management. As of the latest edition of the CHRIE directory, "CHRIE estimates that there are now almost 170 hospitality programs granting baccalaureate degrees, certificates, or diplomas" (CHRIE, 1997, p. 7). "Due to the popularity and pervasive presence" (ibid) of the hospitality undergraduate programs, the hospitality programs wanted more – hence the development of hospitality graduate education.

With the 1970's and 1980's classified as the decades of growth and prosperity for undergraduate hospitality programs, the 1990's has been called the "decade of the hospitality graduate education" (Evans, 1990, p. 92). In 1989, Umbreit and Pederson were asked to conduct a survey for the CHRIE Graduate Programs Technical Committee to evaluate the current status and development of the graduate-level hospitality educational programs. They found 16 existing hospitality graduate programs, and 13 other universities planning to develop a masters program. At the close of this decade there are approximately 35 hospitality graduate programs in the United States (CHRIE, 1997).

In the opening of the 1990's, the number of graduate students enrolled in hospitality and tourism education programs in the United States exceeded one thousand (Yu, 1991). Today there are approximately 1500 graduate students enrolled in hospitality programs (CHRIE, personal communication, March 1, 1999). This phenomenal growth has allowed academia to create admission standards unique to and based upon their respective needs. Faculty and administrators must make every effort to adopt the most appropriate criteria that accurately predicts the selection of those students with a high likelihood of developing professional competencies, and who are likely to complete all degree requirements and be satisfied with the program (Hagedorn & Nora, 1996).

Problem Statement

With the increasing number of hospitality graduate programs and students, graduate education has become a competitive business.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the graduate admissions standards in hospitality educational programs, belonging to CHRIE as of September 1997. Each accepted student reflects the quality, reputation, and goals of the institution and department. Therefore, it has become the responsibility of each applicant and each department to be aware of the admission criteria currently being utilized by other hospitality programs.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify and compare the admission standards of the graduate (master's level) hospitality programs that are members of CHRIE.

2. To describe and compare the demographic information on the program's applicants.

3. To identify relationships between admission standards and specialty programs.

4. To identify graduate coordinator's perceptions regarding indicators of success during the application process.

Hypotheses

Based on the purpose and identified objectives, four research hypotheses were examined.

1. A significant relationship exists between the traditional admissions standards and the newer, broader criteria being implemented.

2. A significant relationship exists between the student's past industry experience and admissions criteria.

3. A significant relationship exists between hospitality specialty programs and required admissions criteria.

4. A significant relationship exists between the admissions criteria and student success.

As there have been no similar studies conducted in the past, it appears more conventional not to define any specific direction. Therefore, these research hypotheses need to be tested two directional (two-tail).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for the study:

1. An assumption was made that the graduate coordinators responding to this survey would respond candidly and truthfully when answering survey questions.

2. An assumption was made that the graduate coordinator would answer the survey his or herself.

Limitations

The following limitations were used for this study:

1. This study is limited to the Hospitality Graduate Programs that were members of CHRIE as of September 1997.

2. This study was limited by the number of graduate coordinators whom had access to an e-mail account.

3. This study was limited by the benevolence and ability of the graduate coordinators surveyed to respond and complete this survey in a timely manner.

4. This study was limited by a census of population.

Working Definitions of Terms

The following terms have been defined, for use in this study only, so that the researcher's intended use of this terminology is understood. For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will apply.

1. Admission Standards -- Requirements that enable a student to start a terminal degree program (OSU Catalog, 1997). Often includes standardized test scores, undergraduate transcripts, statement of goals and objectives.

2. Electronic Mail (e-mail) -- The sending of messages from one computer user to another (Miller, 1995).

3. Graduate Coordinator – One (usually tenure track professor) whom oversees and manages a terminal degree program (Gaiko, personal communication, March 10, 1999).

4. Graduate Student – A student who has applied to a master's level program. This student has completed a four-year degree program, holds a baccalaureate degree and has been admitted to graduate program (Oklahoma State University [OSU] Catalog, 1997). In this study, the degree level sought will be a Master's Degree.

5. Hospitality Industry -- A broad spectrum of businesses which not only incorporates hotels and restaurants, but also includes tourism. CHRIE divides the industry into five segments:

1. Food service
2. Lodging services
3. Recreation services
4. Travel-related services
5. Convention and Meeting services (CHRIE, p.3).

6. Hospitality School or Program -- Post secondary institution which offers continuing education in one or more of the five segments recognized by the hospitality industry (CHRIE, 1997).

7. International Student -- A student who is, or will be, in the United States on a non-immigrant student visa (OSU Catalog, 1997).

8. Land Grant Institution -- A grant of land made by the United States government especially for post secondary institutions that were established under the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862. These schools, the basis for today's public institutions, are historically agriculture and engineering focused (Anonymous, 1997).

9. Non-Traditional Student – A student who has had a two year break from a post secondary institution (Basler, personal communication, April 3, 1999).

10. Private Institutions – A post secondary institution funded by private sources, often with religious affiliations, in which campus life has influenced these institutions (Leong, personal communication, April 1, 1999).

11. Public Institutions – A post secondary institution funded by the local,

state, or national government (Anonymous, 1997).

12. Secured Web Site -- A site on the World Wide Web which communicates between server and user by encrypting data, so that it cannot be decoded by a third party (Cobanaglu, personal communication, March 29, 1999).

13. Specialty Programs -- Hospitality programs that provide a special offering to the marketplace of industry, students and faculty. Examples include: research, financial management, lodging, and food service practical training (Moreo, 1988).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The History of Hospitality Programs

While Cornell's program began in 1922, hospitality education has been a relative latecomer to the area of higher education. During the 1930's and 1940's there were numerous high school level programs created, as well as vocational/technical programs.

The organization known as The Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (CHRIE) was founded in 1946 as a non-profit organization for hospitality educators and industry professionals. CHRIE was born primarily to improve professional development, research, and networking opportunities in high schools and two-year schools (CHRIE, 1997). By the early 1950's, however, four-year schools dominated the organization, and have since become the focus of this organization (Bosselman, 1998).

The expansion years for hospitality education were from the mid-1960's to 1990, not unlike numerous other higher education fields. It does appear that hospitality education continues to grow, but more slowly than the previous 25 years. The area of hospitality education currently experiencing significant growth is graduate education, both masters and doctoral degrees (Bosselman, 1998).

Interestingly, Bosselman (1998) found the overwhelming majority of hospitality programs are located in public institutions (as opposed to private, proprietary or land grant institutions.) Land grant institutions are found in every state, and are properly classified as public institutions. The first four-year hospitality program in the United States was founded at Cornell University, the land grant institution of New York State.

The Programs Today

Type of Programs

There are several different types of hospitality programs. Even though CHRIE (1997) was developed to help high schools and two-year schools, as industry has grown, so has the organization. The association now recognizes a diverse variety of hospitality those choices, including, the two-year associate degree level, the vocational/technical level, the four-year degree level, the four-year and graduate degree level, two-year and four-year degree level, and finally, the two-year/four-year/graduate degree level.

Bosselman (1998) found the majority of hospitality programs offer associate level degrees. Four-year programs, including those that offer a graduate degree and /or associate degrees, represent approximately one-third of all programs. Bosselman pointed out, "that hospitality education remains a minor program relative to traditional higher education disciplines. Hospitality education as an academic discipline can be found in less than ten percent of all four-year institutions" (1998, p. 13).

Number of Programs

In 1989, The Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (CHRIE) estimated that "there were at least 160 undergraduate programs in existence" that offers the two and four year levels (Bosselman, 1998, p.7). In a 1998 study conducted for the National Restaurant Association, research indicated "the majority of hospitality programs are offering associate level degrees" (Bosselman, 1998, p. 12). In addition, Bosselman estimated there are "somewhere around 150 four-year hospitality programs, and close to 400 two-year programs. There are no current listings that show, with certainty, all higher education programs of hospitality education" (p. 12).

Undergraduate Programs

In the development of hospitality education, the 1970s and 1980s will be remembered as a period of significant "growth and maturity" (Evans, 1990). Bosselman (1998) found that 71.1% of all hospitality programs were started after 1970.

The programs established in the 1950's and 1960's flourished in the 70's and 80's with high enrollments. "Some programs grew rapidly during this period, and today stand out as pinnacle schools for hospitality education. Many other schools began during this time frame, and have settled into a more mature phase of development" (Bosselman, 1998, p. 14).

Evans (1990) stated that

> If we apply the life-cycle theory to undergraduate hospitality education it is fair to conclude that the rapid growth stage is over and hospitality education is now entering the mature stage. ...But it is also related to the fact that there are now enough hospitality programs in each state competing for the same scarce resource (p. 92).

Evens also expanded on the theory that it was "clear that the undergraduate issues of the 1990's will be general improvement of instructional efforts and the overall quality of faculty, facilities, and students, not on how to expand the curricula" (p. 92, 1990)

University of Wisconsin: An Example. The University of Wisconsin (U of W) corroborated Evans' idea of "general improvements" (p. 92). The university is the sixth largest university with one of the largest hospitality programs in the United States was among the first educational facilities to adapt the adage of total quality management (TQM) not only in their hospitality department, but, university wide (Shalala, 1993). Together with a partnership with Proctor & Gamble (a leader in the TQM process), the team's goal was to simply eliminate waste. The first area they addressed was the lack of "customer service. The University began paying attention to the needs of the undergraduate students" (Shalala, 1993, p. 6) by asking and then listening to what *their* needs were. The university found that "total quality offers a combination of theories, concepts, tools, and practices" which they have chosen to "explore...not ignore" (Shalala, p. 9).

Graduate Changes. The University of Wisconsin was so pleased with the outcome resulting within the undergraduate programs; they addressed other perceived problem areas in graduate study and research. The Graduate College at U of W is a leader in graduate education with a new and faster admissions process. An improvement team reviewed the admissions process, and discovered a significant amount of waste (of time and money) in the process. To eliminate some of this waste, the team asked the admissions office to redefine what the departments would consider a "complete student file". The admissions office acknowledged collecting of information that was unnecessary; for example, the collection of transcripts from every institution the prospective student attended. By doing this, in just the admissions office, U of W cut "the time from 26 to three days and saved more then $100,000 in overtime and clerical assistance in one semester. They also gave individual departments the power to accept or reject students within five days after the receipt of the application" (Shalala, p. 10). The

University is very pleased with these changes – which has resulted in increased graduate enrollments by providing a much better service to their prospective students.

The 1990s -- A Decade of Graduate Education

Many educators have discussed the philosophies, objectives and even questioned the effectiveness of hospitality graduate programs (Pizam, 1985, Megnin, 1986, Olsen and Kahn, 1989, Engel, 1989, Evans, 1990, Jones, 1991).

Most notably, Pizam indicated that any new graduate curricula would evolve from questions and debates about numerous issues, as well as diverse philosophies (1985). Pizam noted that most graduate programs were designed to train professionals in industry, public agencies, and academic institutions (Evans, 1990). He believes most "programs that concentrate their efforts on the master's degree emphasize on professional skills and knowledge, while offering the doctoral degree emphasize research and teaching skills" (p. 93).

Evans (1990) commented that "the growth and development of graduate hospitality education in the 1990s may be one of the most critical issues facing the educational community this decade" (p. 92). In 1988, Moreo predicted that hospitality schools would become more specialized:

> It may well turn out that each HRI (hotel, restaurant and institutional) program that survives a probable future shakeout of quality programs will provide its special offering to the marketplace of industry, students and faculty. One program may be highly oriented to research, another to financial management, another to community-college instructor education, another toward practical training, and another toward human-resource management. The key will be to make certain there is a good fit among expectations of the program, its market, and its host institution (p. 85).

This prediction rang true when Cornell's newest Dean suggested that his school, historically a pioneer in lodging, take a new direction (from their lodging specialty) to focus on research. Other schools to specialize include the University of Nevada, Las Vegas addresses gaming and casino operations, while Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University has become distinguished for the depth of its' research effort. Washington State retains its' focus on the quick-service segment of the food service industry (Goodman & Sprague, 1991).

Evans concurred and concluded by saying "master's programs generally develop professionals or managers, while doctoral programs develop researchers and college professors" (1991, p. 93). Evans elaborated on his educational philosophy:

> An educated person must think critically or have reasoned judgment. That is, he or she should have the ability to analyze a situation or problem, look at all the facts, and informed recommendations for action. The key result of a professional education is the ability to recognize patterns, techniques, and routines for thought and action that one has learned and that are applicable to a given situation. When solutions to problems do not work as expected, the educated person must be creative and use ingenuity to devise new, imaginative solutions to solve the problem. Hence, the key factor in graduate education is to provide students with experiences that will allow them to think critically and freely in the future (ibid).

Influential Factors for Applicants

Yu (1991) found several instrumental factors that influenced the prospective student's decision to continue their education and their choice of graduate schools. After making the decision to seek a terminal degree, American students indicated the most powerful factor in choosing a program was "the faculty of graduate program…followed by correspondence with school program, catalog/brochure, and campus visits" (p. 75). For the international students, "correspondence with school, was the most influential source, followed by program catalog/brochure, faculty of graduate program, and graduate directories" (ibid). Yu (1991) mentioned four underlying dimensions from the different sources of information, which may have swayed the students in the procedure of selecting a school. "The four dimensions are: print media specific to program, contacts with other students, contacts with faculty and staff, and personal sources" (p.76).

Interestingly, admission standards were not an instrumental factor in applying to the school of the student's choice.

Who is Applying for Admission?

Who are "they?" Who are the people that are enrolling in graduate programs? One of the positive challenges facing hospitality programs has been the increasing diversity among students (Lengnick-Hall & Sanders, 1997). Not only are there cultural differences, backgrounds and life experiences, there are also "variations in motivation, time management and learning styles, and maturity levels" (p. 1334).

Ethnicity. Evans (1993) concluded that "they may come from different parts of the world, including Europe, South America, the Middle East, and the Orient" (p. 93).

Khwaja, Bosselman, and Fernstein (1990) estimated that between 20 and 50 percent of all graduate hospitality students are international students.

Undergraduate Work. Graduate school applicants undergraduate degrees are as diverse as their cultures and have included the hard sciences, general business, and even the liberal arts (Evans, 1990). In a 1991 study, Yu found that among the American students, 26.3% received their undergraduate degrees from the hospitality management discipline, while 24.2% of the international students received the same degree. General business management degrees were the next highest with 24.6% American students receiving this degree, while only 18.9% of the international students conferred this degree. "Other" was the third highest rating with 16.1% of the American students and 13.7% of the international students choosing this option (p. 42).

Professional Experience. Yu (1991) also found that 66.1% of the American students polled worked full-time in the hospitality industry before enrollment into a graduate program, while 58.9% of the international students had experience. Hotels and /or resorts were the top career choice and largest employer for both the American and international students. The American graduate student's average length of employment was 69.98 months, almost doubling the international student's length of employment of 37.69 months.

Student Age. In his study, Yu also found the average age of the American hospitality graduate student was 29.03 years old, while average international student was 27.86 years old. The average age of graduate students has increased significantly over the past few years (Horn, 1998).

In 1997, Jacqueline King, of the American Council on Education, estimated that more then half of all graduate students, from all disciplines, are over 30 years of age. She describes a shift in the age of graduate students due to "they realize that there is something different or deeper they want to do and they need more education to accomplish their new goals" (Horn, 1998, p. 66).

Area of Concentration. When surveyed about which area of concentration in hospitality they were most interested in, Yu found the American and international student's opinions differed greatly. In the hospitality discipline, Yu (1991) discovered that the hotel / resort segment was the predominant choice for both the American (42.5%) and the international students (54.7%). "Food service was favored by 15.8% of the American and 9.5% of international students. 5.8% of American and 14.7% of international students favored travel and tourism. 17.5% of American and 10.5% of international students have other alternatives" (p. 44).

The American students showed a marked interest "in operations (30%), followed by marketing/sales (22.5%), human resources (16.7%), finance/accounting (9.2%), facility design (5.0%), training (5.0%), management information systems (3.3%), and other areas (8.3%)" (p. 45). The international students on the other hand, "were interested in marketing/sales (24.7%), followed by finance/accounting (17.9%), human resource management (15.8%), operations (12.6%), management information systems (11.6%), training (8.4%), and other areas (4.2%)" (Yu, 1991, p. 45).

The Curricula

While there has been much controversy of the curriculum in hospitality education, it has been agreed on that first and foremost the traditional programs "must continue to earn the loyalty of their stakeholders – students, faculty, and industry – by increasing the breadth and quality of their curricula" (Haywood, 1989, p. 69). In "A Radical Proposal for Hospitality and Tourism Education," Michael Haywood reasoned:

> Education must adapt itself and its role in order to retain its effectiveness. In other words, educators must explore the prospects for educational design that enables students to prepare for continuing learning and participation in the transformation of their personal lives, their careers, and their society. The specific knowledge and skills acquired through formal hospitality and tourism education are becoming less important than a willingness and ability to seek new knowledge and understanding. We need new strategies to help us understand the environment and the complex changes that are occurring, and we are unlikely to find them in the established maps of knowledge that now characterize our discipline (p. 68).

An expanded view on educational quality has raised several other opinions. In 1991, the Director of Management for the Wyndham Hotels, Paul H. Laesecke, stated:

> A university education should teach more than hospitality or business. It should permit the student to develop communications and interpersonal skills and learn how to work and direct others through such things as involvement with student government. It should provide a chance to work in our industry and understand its language, technology and state of the its art. The student should develop confidence, poise, and the ability to think (Goodman & Sprague, 1991, p. 69).

Waldrop (1992) suggested it was imperative to take attitudes, values, and subjective qualities into account when designing courses and programs. Senge, Roberts, Ross, Smith, & Kleiner (1994) argued that adopting a more diverse view would broaden the conventional boundaries of education and of educational activities. Teachers, Senge suggested, should "be producers of the environments that allow students to learn as much as possible (p. 489).

In short, Goodman and Sprague (1991) summed it up nicely when they asked, "What is the unique value added by our specialty programs that will be missing in a management team trained in general business management?" (p. 69).

Industry

For several years, hospitality programs have considered "Industry" the customer. Basically, students have been the raw product that education has shaped, sanded, and varnished and then sent out to "industry." If industry liked the results, they "bought" or hired more (Murphy, 1993). As post-baccalaureate education in hospitality is still new and coming of age, educators have conducted on-going research questioning industry about their expectations for competencies of graduates with advanced degrees in hospitality management (Seal, Spears, Vanden, & Hoyt, 1983).

Yu (1991) examined another avenue and questioned the philosophy of industry as customers of higher education – What about the students? What are their needs, expectations?

Wayne P. Jones, president of Marcus Restaurants, pointed out another aspect to graduate education (1991). Jones challenged Evans and the graduate programs to prepare for their students for success by remembering "the hospitality industry is a collection of businesses" (p. 72). Therefore, if the quality of "graduate hospitality education is to be relevant, it must be designed to inculcate students with business knowledge and skills, *in addition* to hospitality-specific knowledge" (p.72).

Admissions Requirements for American and International Students

The following topics were identified in the CHRIE manual as requirements applicants may be required to submit as part of the admissions process into hospitality programs. While specific criteria and the weight of each criteria varies by institution and department, historically, faculty place the most weight on undergraduate overall grade point averages (Council of Graduate Schools, 1992) and standardized test scores when making decisions. This list is not inclusive to each program.

The Traditional Admissions Criteria

Historically, graduate schools require applicants to submit undergraduate transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended, recent (within the past five years) scores from a standardized achievement test, an original essay (addressing future goals), and letters of recommendation (Council of Graduate Schools, 1992).

Standardized Achievement Tests

Standardized testing has been utilized in industry and in education for over a century. This form of testing has provided many functions in many different areas. For example, testing can be used to sort people into groups, classify and rank employees, or admit students into educational programs. Tests can be designed to measure aptitude, personality, achievement, or even competency (Council of Graduate Schools, 1992). Tests that are commonly used for indicators for success in graduate programs are the Graduate Record Exam, the Graduate Management Admissions Test, the Miller's Analogy Test and specifically for international students, the Test of English as Foreign Language.

Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Provides tests, publications, and services that assist graduate schools and departments in graduate admissions activities, guidance and placement, program evaluation, and selection of fellowship recipients.

Because there currently is no method to assess learning at the college

level, the GRE, by default, is the best measure of general learned abilities of college graduates. However, there are limitations of average GRE scores in which graduate coordinators should be aware of, including (1) the proportion of college graduates taking the exam changes over time; (2) an increasing proportion of International students are taking the exam; and (3) the average scores include some students who take the exam more than once. Admissions tests are available to take either by paper or computer. These tests include the GRE General Test, which measures verbal, quantitative, and analytical reasoning skills (Educational Testing Service [ETS], 1997.)

The verbal section tests an individuals "ability to analyze and evaluate written material and synthesize information obtained from it, analyze relationships among components, parts of sentences, and recognize relationships between words" (ETS, 1997, p. 2).

The quantitative section tests an "individuals basic mathematical skills, and understanding of elementary concepts, as well as the individuals ability to reason quantitatively and solve problems in a quantitative setting" (p. 2).

Finally, the analytical section tests "the individuals ability to understand structures sets of relationships, deduce new information from those sets, analyze and evaluate arguments, identify the central issues and hypothesis, draw sound inferences and identify plausible, casual explanations" (p. 2).

ETS administers GRE programs on behalf of the Graduate Record Examinations Board, an independent board affiliated with the Association of Graduate Schools and the Council of Graduate Schools, which establishes all policies for the GRE Program.

Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT). The Educational Testing Service in conjunction with the Graduate Management Admission Council first administered the Graduate Management Admission Test in 1954. The GMAT was designed help graduate schools of business to assess the qualifications of applicants for advanced study in business and management. As the GMAT was designed especially for business schools, the topic sections are similar to those on the GRE, except the questions are designed with a business and management focus. The GMAT measures general verbal, quantitative, and analytical writing skills (ETS, 1998).

The verbal section "measures the ability to understand and evaluate what is read and to recognize basic conventions of standard written English" (ETS, 1998, p.17).

The quantitative section "measures basic mathematical skills and understanding of elementary concepts, and the ability to reason quantitatively, solve quantitative problems, and interpret graphic data" (p.17).

The analytical writing section "measures the ability to think critically and communicate complex ideas through writing" (p.17).

The GMAT score report will contain four scores: verbal, quantitative, total, and analytical writing. Verbal and quantitative scores are reported on scales ranging from 0 to 60. The total score is reported on a scale ranging from 200 to 800. Extreme scores (below 250 or above 700) are uncommon. The analytical writing score is reported as a separate score. This section is rated on a scale from 0 to 6, and is the average of four ratings of responses to the two topics in the analytical writing. The assessment range for this section is from 200 to 800 points, with a mean of 500 and a standard deviation of 100.

As of 1997, the GMAT testing is administered as a computer adaptive test (CAT). Even though the computerized test will remain a multiple choice type examination, it has also become "adaptive" (i.e. the test questions are adjusted to become more or less difficult during the test, depending on how well the test taker is doing) (ETS, 1997). Both GMAT directions and questions are only written and presented in English.

Miller's Analogy Test (MAT). While the Miller's Analogy Test is the least used of the three, however, some schools do accept the Miller's Analogies Test (MAT).

The MAT is administered through a network of Controlled Testing Centers licensed by The Psychological Corporation. The MAT is a high-level mental ability test requiring the solution of problems stated as analogies. It consists of 100 partial analogies that are to be completed in 50 minutes. The MAT is only available in English, and does not permit the use of a dictionary or any other reference aid.

The MAT tests for fluency in the English language, a broad knowledge of literature, philosophy, history, science, mathematics, and fine arts, and the ability to reason out relationships. The test is evaluated with a raw score, and then grouped into major percentiles (http://fhsu.edu/ages/services/kc/mat.htm).

In a Pepperdine study, Murphy (1993) found a significant relationship between MAT scores and graduate grade point average (GPA), but the correlation was not as strong as that found between GMAT scores and graduate GPAs, particularly when these scores were combined with undergraduate GPAs.

Test for English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL Examination.). TOEFL evaluates the English proficiency of individuals whose native language is not English. This test was designed and is also administered by ETS to evaluate the English skills of

International students planning to study in the United States. TOEFL tests skills relating to listening, language structure and written skills, and reading skills (ETS, 1998).

The listening section measures the "ability to understand English as it is spoken in the North America. This section tests comprehension of main ideas, supporting ideas, details, and inferences. The test taker is able to both see and hear the questions before the answer choices appear" (ETS, 1998, p. 3).

Structure "measures the ability to recognize language that is appropriate for standard written English" (p. 3). The language tested is formal, rather than conversational. When topics have a national context, they refer to United States or Canadian history, culture, art, or literature. It is not necessary, however, to have knowledge of these contexts in order to answer the questions.

The reading section measures "the ability to understand short passages similar in topic and style to academic texts used in North American colleges and universities" (p. 3).

The final topic, writing, "measures the ability to write, in English, on an assigned topic" (p. 3). The test taker may prepare for this essay by becoming familiar with topics found in the TOEFL Information Bulletin.

Every graduate school applicant, who for purpose of admission has been classified as an "International student" (in the United States), must take the TOEFL and score at least 550 (OSU Catalog, 1997, p. 13). This score is never waived or lowered. Applications must remain incomplete until a score of at least 550 has been submitted.

Additionally, after arrival at most universities, and before classes begin, each international student is required take the Test of English Language Proficiency (TELP) despite of their score on the TOEFL. The TELP assesses if a student needs to supplement their language ability with an additional English course.

Undergraduate Grade Point Average / Copies of Transcripts

Commonly used a predictor of subsequent graduate school success (defined as academic achievement) (Hagedorn & Nora, 1996). Indicators of what students have learned in school are perhaps the most important measures of the outcomes of education. Although performance on examinations is one measure of what students have learned in school, examinations do not measure the wide array of skills and experiences that formal education provides.

Educational attainment (e.g., finishing undergraduate work) is not only an indirect measure of how much subject matter students may have learned but also of how much knowledge students potentially have gained in learning civic responsibilities, social skills, work ethics, and life skills. Furthermore, information about courses taken in fields of study in college is an additional indirect indicator of the content of students' knowledge (ETS, 1997).

Faculty who focus only on selecting students with a high undergraduate GPAs "may exclude more mature students whose undergraduate records may not reflect their contemporary level of determination and promise" (Hartle, Baratz, and Clark, 1983, p. 35). Because a significant number of mature students enroll in graduate programs after having prior work experience, many of these students have a better sense of their goals and educational commitments, which indicates only a small relationship to undergraduate GPAs (Hagedorn & Nora, 1996).

In conclusion, traditionally, faculty have used undergraduate grade point averages

(GPAs) and standardized test scores to predict student achievement in graduate school. In 1993, Arrow found the use of these two criteria troubling due to the inability to consistently and validly predict academic achievement beyond the student's first year. In an analysis of thirty published studies, Morrison and Morrison (1995) examined the validity of the GRE to predict first year graduate GPA. Finding statistically non-significant correlation coefficients between first year GPA and GRE-verbal and GRE-quantitative scores, the authors have concluded that the quantitative and verbal components of the GRE provide only minimal predictive validity. Additionally, other studies indicate that first-year grades are neither related to later graduate school grades nor to career performance (Arrow, 1993) nor to persistence to degree completion (Girves and Wemmerus, 1988).

Additional Admission Requirements

A recent report by ETS emphasizes the need for research on "variables other than test scores, and undergraduate grade point average that would serve as better predictors of graduate degree completion for graduate school applicants" (Hagedorn & Nora, 1996, p. 35). While these two criteria are an indispensable measure of success in graduate education, other indicators of success -- degree attainment, integration into the academic life of a department, professional involvement in the chosen field of study, and career-related skills deserve strong consideration for admissions at the graduate level.

Competencies. In 1986, Stark and her colleagues identified different and broader indicators of predictable graduate student success. Stark divided the indicators into separate categories – "professional and attitudinal competencies, which identify broad educational goals that extend beyond traditional academic achievement" (Stark, 1986, p.16). Professional competencies refer to those "skills, abilities, and proclivities that produce sound professional judgement, and include conceptual, technical, contextual, interpersonal, integrative, and adaptive skills" (p.18). In addition to the professional competencies, Stark found the outcomes pertaining to professional attitudes equally important. These include "career marketability, professional identity, ethical standards, scholarly concern for improvement, and motivation for continued learning" (p.25).

While the development of professional and attitudinal competencies may be the ultimate goal of graduate education, Stark questioned: How are these competencies manifested? More importantly, how can they be predicted and integrated into the admissions process?

Professional Experience. Hagedorn & Nora (1996) found the most important is participation in activities, events, and work that is directly related to the chosen discipline. By requiring prospective students to have past work experience (either as a paid position or as a volunteer) in the field in which they are applying, programs may determine the student's "ability to identify problems, deal with guests, plan investigations, write proposals, papers (or reports), participate and appropriately interact in professional networks, and critique the ideas, proposals, and the work of others -- examples of activities that may foreshadow eventual graduate success" (p. 37.) To follow up on these competencies, faculty might invite the prospective student for a personal interview with a screening committee might (Stelzer, 1989) or to submit "a portfolio," which might include a resume, letters of reference, a statement of goals and career objectives, and an example of writing or problem solving skills (Hagedorn & Nora, 1996).

Personal Statements. After surveying 29 of the leading graduate schools in America, Stelzer (1989) found that the opinions towards personal goal and career objectives have changed over the past 20 years. Today, personal statements are used in a variety of ways: "to gain some insight into the applicant's overall personality and background, as well as commitment and motivation; as a personal profile; and to gauge the ability of the individual to discuss thoughts cohesively and in an intelligent manner" (Anderson, 1989, p. 76). Some evaluate not only the use of English structure and expression, but organization and punctuation, as well.

Statement of Objectives. Margaret Tyler, (1989) Director of Master's Admissions at the Sloan School of Management (MIT), insists on several key items when reading a statement of objectives. The first component being a statement that is "well written, while effectively communicating the reasons for wanting to do graduate work" (p. 53); the second, evidence of a sense of commitment. Other points the MIT admission's director looks for when evaluating an application include: "clarity of purpose is important: what do you want to get out of the program, what skills do you hope to develop in the process, and how do you envision using your education in the future?" (p. 53)

Additional Admissions Criteria for International Students

International students are required to submit additional documents before admittance into a university in the United States. First and foremost, the prospective student must be able to *legally* enter the United States. Of course, "the responsibility for obtaining and maintaining the appropriate visa classification rests entirely with the student" (OSU Catalog, 1997, p. 13).

Furthermore, when submitting past academic records and confirmation of degrees earned, "the applicant must also submit a certified English translation of each record not in English. Both the original and a certified copy of these records must be signed by an authorized school and show the seal of the school" (ibid).

Finally, the United States' Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) (and the university) requires international applicants (except permanent residents of the United States) to provide proof of adequate financial support for the duration of their program. A letter of sponsorship, stating the dollar amount that will be given to the student per year and the number of years this support will be given, is necessary. In addition, a current bank statement corroborating the sponsor's ability to provide such financing must accompany the letter (ibid).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Several studies have been conducted regarding the feasibility of graduate level education in hospitality administration, but little research has documented and identified what different programs require for admission. Graduate education has experienced phenomenal growth in the 1990's. Due to this fact, programs, interests, and demographics have changed and started adapting to meet the needs of not only our programs, but our students needs and desires, as well. One trend that has made a significant impact on graduate education is a change in admission's criteria.

The information found in this study would benefit educators, students, and prospective students by informing them of current policies, standards, and trends in hospitality graduate program's admission standards. In this study, graduate coordinators were asked to identify what specific criteria their programs required. The coordinators were then asked to rank the requirements in order of greatest indicators for graduate student success. This chapter includes the details concerning research design; the population; data collection; development of the instrumentation; and data analysis.

Research Design

The planning and development for this study began in the summer of 1998 and continued through March 1999. During that time period, a review of literature was conducted, data collection procedures were determined, a survey instrument was formulated, and data analysis techniques were selected. The purpose of this study was to compare the graduate admissions standards in hospitality educational programs, belonging to CHRIE as of September 1997. The research design employed in this study was a survey sent via electronic mail.

Data Collection

Planning and Development

The questionnaire was developed through a review of literature and evaluation of other questionnaires (Ryan, 1980 and Sumner, 1998) utilized in earlier research regarding the comparison of university departments.

Following the development of the questionnaire, hospitality educators pre-tested the survey for content, clarity, and the average time to complete the survey. The instrument was modified based on input received. The instrument and data collection procedures were reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Oklahoma State University (Appendix C.)

Population

A census of the population was used in this study. The sample was comprised of the coordinators for domestic and international hospitality graduate programs who were members of The Council of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (CHRIE). The coordinator's names and e-mail addresses were retrieved from the 1997 CHRIE directory. The e-mail addresses were then verified for accuracy by a short e-mail to the coordinators verifying the coordinator's address and title.

The Instrument

Dillman (1978) suggests a cover letter be sent with a questionnaire and contain the study title, needed directions, the name and address of the study sponsor. He also recommends the first questions in the survey instrument be interesting, fairly easy, and applicable to the entire population. The advent of computer-based technology has led to a consideration of change in research methods that employ the advantages of computer-mediated communications. In 1998, Schafer and Dillman predicted e-mail and the Internet would provide a promising means for conducting future surveys, especially as the proportion of people accessible through e-mail (or the Internet) continues to rise.

The questionnaire used in this study was designed to obtain information from the graduate coordinators in three areas: their program's specific admissions requirements, the coordinator's opinions about which requirements were the best indicator's for student success, and demographics. The first section of the survey listed ten different admissions criteria and asked the respondents to specifically identify their program's criteria / requirements. The second section listed the same ten requirements and asked the coordinators to rank the requirements from one (most successful) to ten (least successful) as to which requirement the coordinator felt was the greatest indicator for graduate student success.

The demographics section of the survey dealt with the size, time of the admissions process, and specialization of the program. In addition, the respondents were asked to identify the educational background and work experience, age, gender, and nationality of it's students. Furthermore, the age, gender, the educational background and work experience of the graduate coordinator were examined.

A pre-notice signed by the principle researcher was sent via e-mail to the graduate coordinators explaining the purpose of the research and asking them to participate in the survey. Two days later, another e-mail was sent to the coordinators, again explaining the research and asking them to click on a link that would allow them to complete the survey on a secure web site.

Surveys via Electronic Mail (e-mail)

As of the summer of 1995, few had utilized using electronic mail as the medium for collecting new information (Opperman, 1995). Results of those surveys varied, reason being "limited access to the Internet by the general population, which restricted surveys to specific population segments. Once exclusively used by governments and universities, the Internet is on its way to becoming an integral part of daily interactions for millions of people" (p. 28).

In survey research, e-mail has definitely shown promise as a data collection tool (Mavis & Brocato, 1998). Computer-mediated communications combine the possibility for "dialogue, a traditional feature of postal communications, with instantaneous mass communication akin to television and radio" (p. 395). In many businesses, government, academic, and health care organizations, the growth of computer-mediated communications, mostly in the form of e-mail, has transformed the patterns and styles of interpersonal communications (Sands, Safran, Slack, & Bleich, 1993; Singarella, Baxter, Sandefur, & Emery, 1993).

Sproull (1986) identified four characteristics of e-mail to explain its ease of use for communications: speed, asynchrony, lack of intermediaries, and the ephemeral nature of the message.

> E-mail messages are transmitted in seconds and, because they can be read at the convenience of the recipient, are not constrained by the need for synchrony between the sender and recipient. Typically, senders and recipients process their own e-mail without the involvement of intermediaries such as secretaries, operators, or assistants. Finally, the virtual nature of e-mail messages means that no hard copies exist unless the message is specifically directed to a printer (p. 396).

According to Thach (1995), these same features make e-mail an effective means of communication also make it an ideal medium for conducting survey research. She concluded that despite demographic limitations, lack of anonymity, presentation issues, and hardware/software problems, e-mail surveys have many advantages over paper surveys and interviews in data collection.

The advantages of e-mail for surveying are alluring (Schafer & Dillman, 1998). The greatest advantage attributed to e-mail surveys is a higher response rate than typically achieved with paper surveys. However, in reviewing 11 published studies, response rates for e-mail surveys ranged from 28% to 83% with a median of 67% (Mavis & Brocato, 1998). Babbie (1990) has labeled a good response rate for self-administered questionnaires of at least 60%. Roughly half of these studies achieved that goal. These findings suggest that e-mail surveys may be comparable to paper surveys for data collection.

There are several enticing advantages to utilizing electronic mail. The possibility of very rapid surveying has been well documented by past research (Bachmann, Elfrink, and Vazzana 1996; Kittleson 1995; Mehta and Sivadas 1995; Sproull 1986). Electronic mail surveys can be done faster than telephone surveys, especially for large samples, where the number of telephones and trained interviewers limit the number of completions per day. The e-mail method is also relatively inexpensive, since it eliminates postage, printing, and/or interviewer costs (Schafer & Dillman, 1998).

Opperman (1995) warned researchers to "beware of the pitfalls" (p.28) of electronic mail. One specific problem Opperman pointed out was the incompatibility between different computer systems and the low sophistication level of some systems. Schafer and Dillman (1998) also pointed out that to actually realize such benefits, it is important that a methodology be developed that ensured acceptable levels of response quantity and quality. In addition, it was also pointed out that protocol for achieving high response rates and data quality to e-mail surveys needed to be developed and tested (as has been done for mail surveys.)

<u>The Protocol</u>

In 1998, Schafer & Dillman conducted a study to develop and design a standard protocol when utilizing e-mail methodology. The specific criteria studied and developed to encourage a high rate of response included multiple respondent contacts, personalization, a mixed mode survey strategy, and the ability to send and receive quality data.

<u>Multiple Contacts.</u> Research in mail, telephone, and face-to-face interviewing has universally found that the most powerful determinant of response rates is the number of attempts made to contact a sample unit (Dillman et al. 1978; Goyder 1985, 1987; Heberlein and Baumgartner 1978). The more attempts made to reach people, the greater the chances of them responding. Thus, for an e-mail survey to be successful, it seems important that multiple contacts be made. Indeed, evidence exists that multiple contacts

increase response rates in e-mail surveys as well. Studies by Mehta and Sivadas (1995) and Smith (1997) compared a single contact e-mail survey with multiple contacts.

> Smith achieved a 5.3 percent higher response rate with e-mail using multiple contacts. Mehta and Sivadas gained 20 percent with multiple contacts combined with personalization, the exact nature of which was not reported. Of surveys reported in the literature, the average response rate for e-mail surveys with a single contact is 28.5 percent, compared with 41 percent for two contacts, and 57 percent for three or more contacts . While this is a crude comparison, it does not contradict the assertion that multiple contacts are effective in increasing response rates to e-mail surveys (p. 381).

Schaefer and Dillman (1998) also suggested four different points of contact – a pre-notice, the questionnaire, a thank you / reminder, and/or a replacement questionnaire. The authors also suggested sending out a replacement questionnaire with each subsequent contact, as opposed to the traditional thank you/ reminder. Furthermore, they suggested that the questionnaire could follow the pre-notice by two - three days; reminders could be sent a couple days later; and replacements could be sent a week after the reminder. This is possible because the time delay in the transmission of E-mail messages is virtually nonexistent and researchers know immediately when someone has responded. However, the potential drawback identified to compressing the time frame was respondents who were away from their E-mail for a couple of weeks would not be contacted within the shorter time span of the survey, whereas with a seven-week survey they would be reached.

Personalization. Dillman (1978, 1991) reported that personalization has also been an important element in increasing the response rate in mail surveys. "A personalized letter addressed to a specific individual shows the respondent that he or she is important. This technique can also be applied to e-mail" (p. 382). However, e-mail has evolved, and it is not uncommon for an individual to receive some e-mail that is personal and more that is not (e.g., listservs and mailings to multiple addresses). This information is immediately visible when one opens an e-mail message, similarly in a way that recipients of a mail survey can immediately discern a "To Whom it May Concern" or "Dear Citizen" greeting versus their name as a greeting on a personal letter. "In order to let individuals know that they are individually important, and not just an item on a list, it seems important that e-mail messages be sent directly to individual respondents, not part of a mailing list" (p. 383). An added benefit to personalized e-mail messages is that individuals are prevented from responding to the other recipients of the survey, thus helping to ensure the recipient's confidentiality (Schafer & Dillman, 1998).

Mixed Mode. In addition to decreasing costs and providing more timely data, a mixed-mode survey strategy can reduce coverage error (Dillman and Tarnai 1988). This is critical with an emerging form, such as e-mail, has yet to be adopted by the majority of the population. The cost and speed advantages of e-mail make it ideal for a first mode of contact in surveys. Researchers can begin with an e-mail approach and use progressively more expensive methods for non-respondents until an acceptable response level is reached. In addition, with e-mail, researchers know immediately whether members of the sample have valid addresses. Thus, alternative methods can be implemented much sooner than with traditional mail. Finally, it has been argued that individuals may have a mode preference and that offering an alternative response format may improve response rates (Goyder 1987; Groves and Kahn 1979).

Data Quality. For an e-mail methodology to become feasible, it is necessary to demonstrate that the quality of data is equivalent to that of other survey methods. It is not yet known whether people tend to comprehend and respond to questions differently by e-mail compared to mail methods. Mail and e-mail surveys are both self-administered questionnaires (SAQs) and, as such, rely on an individual's comprehension of written text. Consequently, response order effects, such as primacy and recency, should not be noteworthy between modes. It also seems feasible that item non-response to e-mail surveys could be lower if the answer format is convenient. Finally, because entering answers on a keyboard may be easier for some people than writing by hand, it seems plausible that response to open-ended questions may be more complete (Dillman, 1991).

Previous studies report varied results when comparing the data quality of e-mail to mail surveys. In experimental studies comparing e-mail and mail surveys, Sproull (1986) and Bachmann, Elfrink, and Vazzana (1996) report a higher non-response for e-mail items. However, Mehta and Sivadas (1995) report no difference in data quality between the two modes. Finally, Bachmann, Elfrink, and Vazzana (1996) also found the length of answers to open-ended questions was higher with the e-mail version. These mixed reports demonstrate the need to develop a method that can be relied on to provide consistent results.

A second concern, especially when sensitive issues are involved, is the virtual lack of anonymity that characterizes e-mail. It is difficult for e-mail respondents to remove all identifying information from their returned surveys. Thus, e-mail surveys must rely on researchers' assurances of confidentiality. Further, organizations that provide e-mail have the potential to monitor their employees' messages, which limits confidentiality guarantees. Nevertheless, research by Couper, Blair, and Triplett (1997) indicates that this may not be as much of a problem as it seems. The 1998 study conducted by Schaefer and Dillman did not deal with a particularly sensitive issue; thus, assurances of confidentiality were more than adequate.

Survey Procedures

The data was collected by using an e-mail survey. Research has indicated the greatest advantage attributed to e-mail surveys is a higher response rate than typically achieved with paper surveys suggested (Schafer & Dillman, 1998). The instrument was posted on a password protected web site. The respondents were e-mailed information and directions on how to access the secured site via the provided hyper-link. The survey also included directions on how to return the information. Thirty-seven pre-notices were sent on March 30, 1999. The actual surveys were sent April 1, 1999 and respondents were asked to return them by April 7, 1999. On April 8, 1999 a follow up e-mail was sent to the coordinators thanking them for their participation in this study and asking them to respond if they had not previously.

Data Analysis

The descriptive research involved the collection of data by self-reported surveys to test hypotheses comparing the admissions standards in hospitality graduate education. Cohen, Sherrod, and Clark (1988) tested the power of a statistical test of a null hypothesis, which is the probability that will lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis. "The power of a statistical test depends on three parameters: the significance criterion, the reliability of the sample results, and the degree to which the phenomenon or differences exist" (p. 968).

The data collected on from each instrument were coded, entered and tabulated on May 10, 1999 using an Excel spreadsheet. Statistical analysis was performed using the SPSS program on May 12, 1999 to generate frequencies and cross tabulations. Results and discussion of these results follow in chapters four and five.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to compare graduate admissions standards in hospitality educational graduate programs who were members of the Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Educator's (CHRIE) as of September, 1997. The specific objective was to determine which admissions criteria was the best indictor for graduate student success. Other objectives were to identify and compare the admission standards of the graduate (master's level) hospitality programs that are members of CHRIE, to describe and compare the demographic information on the program's applicants, and to identify relationships between admission standards and specialty programs. Data was obtained from the questionnaire described in Chapter III. The questionnaire was sent via electronic mail to the graduate coordinators who were members of CHRIE. Of the 35 questionnaires distributed, 15 were returned for a total response rate of 42.9%. Two of the 35 returned questionnaires could not be utilized for lack of complete information. One additional survey was returned due to an inaccurate e-mail account, while another was returned due to the hospitality graduate program transferring to another college within the university.

Descriptive Statistics

Section one of the survey asked the respondents to identify which specific criteria their graduate program required of applicants. The respondents were also asked to rank the criteria in the order they felt was the greatest indicator of graduate student success.

Table I was constructed to give the researcher a better understanding of the admissions requirements currently required by hospitality graduate programs. The responses indicated that the programs have very similar requirements.

TABLE I

Required Admissions Criteria for Hospitality Graduate Programs

Admissions Criteria	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Mode
GRE Total (n=8)	1121.87	500	1600	1000
Verbal	535	375	800	500
Quantitative	620	500	1000	500
Analytical	500	500	500	500
GMAT Total (n=4)	522.5	450	590	None
Verbal				
Quantitative				
Analytical				
TOEFL Total (n=13)	550	450	600	550
MAT (n=0)	None reported			
GPA (n=13)				
Undergraduate	3.0154	2.5	3.5	3.00
Graduate	3.1188	3.00	3.5	
Industry Experience in years (n=10)	1.975 years	1.00 years	4.00 years	1.00 year
Number of References (n=13)	2.92	2.00	4.00	3.00
Personal History (n=10)	Yes – 60%			
Statement of Goals & Objectives (n=14)	Yes – 93.3%			
OTHERS				
Resume (n=2)				
Personal Interview (n=2)				
Writing Samples (n=1)				

N=15

Specific Requirements

The research indicted the programs have similar requirements. Table II describes in detail the frequency and percentages for the standardized test scores. As reported by the respondents, the GRE continues to be the most used standardized test score, with 53.3% of the programs utilizing this exam. Sixty two percent of these programs require the GRE score to be broken out by subject (verbal and quantitative) while 50% require the analytical section to be reported. Only 25% of the programs will accept the more business-oriented test – the GMAT score. The TOEFL exam was required of International students by 86.6% of the reporting programs. None of the coordinator's indicated that their program accepted or used the Miller's Analogy Test.

TABLE II

Responses of Standardized Test Scores

Criteria/ Responses	Frequency	Percent	Standard Deviation
Total GRE Score			
(n=8)			354.9239
500	1	12.5	
1000	4	50.0	
1375	1	12.5	
1500	1	12.5	
1600	1	12.5	
Total	8	100.0	
GRE Verbal Score			
(n=5)			157.7181
375	1	20.0	
500	3	40.0	
800	1	20.0	
Total	5	100.0	
GRE Quantitative (n=5)			216.7948
500	3	60.0	
600	1	20.0	
1000	1	20.0	
Total	5	100.0	
GRE Analytical			
(n=4)			
500	4	100.0	
Total	4	100.0	
GMAT Score			
(n=4)			60.7591
450	1	25.0	
500	1	25.0	
550	1	25.0	
590	1	25.0	
Total	4	100.0	
TOEFL Minimum			
(n=13)			33.1662
450	1	7.7	
550	7	53.8	
560	3	23.1	
570	1	7.7	
600	1	7.7	
Total	13	100.0	
MAT (n=0)	None Reported		

N=15

The standardized test scores showed the largest deviations from the mean. TABLE III breaks down category (if applicable) of each test and describes in detail the standard deviations for the standardized exams. The GRE total score supports the largest mean and standard deviation of 354.92. As reported, both the GMAT and TOEFL show relatively low standard deviations, indicating these criteria are similar throughout hospitality graduate programs. Again, the Miller's Analogy Test was reported as not being used as admission's criteria for hospitality graduate programs.

TABLE III

Standard Deviations for Standardized Tests

Criteria	Mean	Standard Deviation
GRE Total	1121.8750	354.9239
Verbal	535.00	157.7181
Quantitative	620.00	216.7948
Analytical	500.00	none reported
GMAT Total	522.50	60.7591
TOEFL Total	550.00	33.1662
MAT	9.33	none reported

TABLE IV details the frequency and percentages for grade point averages, industry experience, and references. Eighty-six percent of the respondents indicated the use of grade point averages when determining acceptance into a program. Sixty-one percent reported that they require a 3.0 undergraduate grade point average. The same 86% reported they also require applicants to supply letters of reference, while 61% indicated a minimum three references were necessary. Industry experience was required by 66.6% of the programs, with an average tenure of 1.975 year's experience. Thirteen percent of the programs required four years experience.

TABLE IV

Responses for Grade Point Averages, Industry Experience, References

Criteria /Responses	Frequency	Percent
GPA / Undergraduate (n=13)		
2.5	2	15.4
3.0	8	61.5
3.20	1	7.7
3.50	2	15.4
Total	13	100.0
GPA / Graduate (n=8)		
3.00	5	62.5
3.20	1	12.5
3.25	1	12.5
3.50	1	12.5
Total	8	100.0
Industry Experience in Years (n=10)		
1.00	4	40.0
1.75	1	10.0
2.00	3	30.0
4.00	2	20.0
Total	10	100.0
Number of References (n=13)		
2.00	3	23.1
3.00	8	61.5
4.00	2	15.4
Total	13	100.0

N=15

Graduate Coordinator's Ranking of Criteria as an Indicator of Student Success

Of the nine criteria provided for the respondents, 80% (n=15) of the graduate coordinator's indicated undergraduate grade point average, industry experience, and letters of reference were the most important criteria for admission to the program. GRE scores and a statement of goals and objectives were imperative for admission to 73% of hospitality graduate coordinators. Sixty six percent felt a TOEFL score was necessary for International students, while 53% felt a personal history was vital to the admission's process. A GMAT score was indicated by 33.3% of the coordinator's as an indicator of success, while the Miller's Analogy Test was ranked the least important indicator of success. Two of the respondents supplemented the questionnaire by adding "other" criteria. Those criteria include a personal interview and a writing sample. The coordinators' ranking of the criteria is described in order of the mean in TABLE V.

TABLE V

Graduate Coordinator's Ranking of Criteria as an Indicator of Student Success

Rank	Criteria	Ranking by Mean
1	Industry Experience (n=12)	3.083
2	Grade Point Average (n=12)	3.333
3	References (n=12)	3.750
4	TOEFL Score (n=10)	4.500
5	GRE Score (n=11)	4.363
6	Statement of Goals & Objectives (n=11)	5.090
7	Personal History (n=8)	5.375
8	GMAT Scores (n=5)	5.600
9	Miller's Analogy (n=3)	9.333
10	OTHER: Personal Interview (n=2) Writing Sample (n=1)	

N=15

Program Demographics

Section two of this survey asked the respondents several questions about their individual programs. When asked about program specialization, the following areas were identified: lodging (26.7%), tourism (13.3%), research (13.3%), restaurant (20.0%), institutional food service (13.3%), convention and meeting panning (6.7%), and other (6.7%). There does not appear to be any kind of relationship between specialty programs and graduate student admission's criteria as the specialty programs did not indicate any special criteria needed. Table VI was constructed to identify how the coordinators' interpret their program's specialty.

TABLE VI

Coordinators' Opinions of Program Specialty

Program Specialization	Frequency	Percent
Hotel	4	26.7
Tourism	2	13.3
Research	2	13.3
Restaurant	3	20.0
Institutional Service	2	13.3
Other	1	6.7
Total (N=15)	14	93.3

Other included: Business (6.7%).

The research showed an average of 34.4 students currently enrolled in respective hospitality graduate programs across the nation, with an average of 17.2 new students entering masters programs each academic year. TABLE VII was created to help understand each program's enrollment.

TABLE VII

Number of Student Currently Enrolled in Hospitality Programs

Number of Students	Frequency	Percent
5	1	6.7
8	1	6.7
11	1	6.7
15	2	13.3
16	1	6.7
18	1	6.7
20	2	13.3
25	2	13.3
27	1	6.7
42	1	6.7
120	1	6.7
150	1	6.7
Total	15	100.2

It was reported that 72.3% of the programs have changed admissions criteria within the last five years. The average length of the application process is 39.6 days from the time the application is received at the university until the student is notified of acceptance (or declined admission). Sixty seven percent of the respondents indicated their program did not use any type of formula in which to base an acceptance policy. In addition, 33.3% of the respondents indicated an appeals process was available if an applicant was denied admission to the program. The appeals process ranged from petitioning the Director of Admissions or the dean to reconsider, to admitting the student under a "professional development" program, in which they have 12 credit hours to "prove" their ability.

The research also indicated the programs are offering several "capstone projects" in which a student may choose to complete their degree. Those options include thesis (66.7%), creative component (33.3%), and report (46.7%). These percentages do not equal 100%, as some the programs offer several choices. The coordinators reported an average of 12.29 students graduating each academic year with a master's degree.

Student Demographics

The average age of the students enrolled in a hospitality graduate program was 28.0 years old. Females account for 57.5% of the graduate student population. Of the same population, 49.28% of the students were International. The research indicated most students had some sort of hospitality work experience (53.3%), others indicated a business background (20.0%), while others reported a non-hospitality, non-business background (20.0%). The average length of the applicant's hospitality experience (before graduate school) was 3.23 years.

Coordinator Demographics

Each program coordinator was asked to describe their personal demographics. The average age of the program coordinator was 49.76 years old. Over one half of the respondents were women (56.4%). All but one (93.6%) hold a doctoral degree, with 26.7% having a food and nutrition focus. Other focuses included business, education, and agriculture. The coordinators' academic backgrounds varied, as did the industry experience. The coordinator's demographics are described in detail in TABLE VIII.

TABLE VIII

Graduate Program Coordinator's Academic and Industry Backgrounds

Academic Background	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's Degree		
Business	3	20.0
Food & Nutrition	4	26.7
Lodging	1	6.70
Academia	3	20.0
Other	4	26.7
Total	15	100.1
Master's Degree		
Business	3	20.0
Food & Nutrition	2	13.3
Lodging	3	20.0
Academia	3	20.0
Other	4	26.7
Total	15	100.0
Doctorate		
Business	2	13.3
Food & Nutrition	4	26.7
Lodging	2	13.3
Academia	5	33.3
Other	2	13.3
Total	15	99.9
Industry Experience		
Business	1	6.70
Food	6	40.0
Lodging	2	13.3
Gaming	1	6.70
Academia	3	20.0
Other	2	13.3
Total	15	100.0

Review of Hypothesis

Due to the small number of respondents, the researcher was unable to statistically test any of the research hypotheses.

Summary

Historically, standardized tests were used as the number one indicator of graduate student success (ETS, 1997). While 73.3% of the reporting graduate programs still utilize this test, this research has shown it is not the one number choice of graduate coordinators. Research has shown that standardized tests, have been replaced by industry experience. In addition, not only are the demographics of the programs changing, the students are changing as well.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The decade of the 1990's has constant reminders for Americans that survival in a dynamic global economy is becoming even more dependent on an educated, highly skilled, well-trained work force. Hospitality companies are being forced to operate on a strict budget to make a decent profit and meet stockholder's expectations (Murphy, 1993, p. B15). As a result, these same companies have changed their hiring criteria and practices, and have started searching for those candidates whose qualifications exceed the baccalaureate degrees.

While hospitality is one of the world's oldest industries, hospitality education has been a relative latecomer to the area of higher education. The first four-year hospitality program in the United States was founded in 1922 at Cornell University, a land grant institution in New York State. With the 1970s and 1980s classified as the decades of growth and prosperity for undergraduate hospitality programs, the 1990s has been called the "decade of the hospitality graduate education" (Evans, 1990, p. 92).

Many educators have discussed the philosophies, objectives and even questioned the effectiveness of hospitality graduate programs (Pizam, 1985, Megnin, 1986, Olsen and Kahn, 1989, Engel, 1989, Evans, 1990, Jones, 1991). Pizam (1985) noted that most graduate programs were designed to train professionals in industry, public agencies, and academic institutions. He believed most "programs that concentrate their efforts on the master's degree emphasize on professional skills and knowledge, while offering the doctoral degree emphasize research and teaching skills" (Evans, 1990, p. 93).

Evans (1990) commented that "the growth and development of graduate hospitality education in the 1990s may be one of the most critical issues facing the educational community this decade" (p. 92). One of the most critical issues has become the changing demographics of the applicants; and therefore, the changing of the criteria which sets the standards for admission into the programs. With this in mind, each hospitality graduate program must remember that every student accepted into the program reflects the quality, reputation, and goals of the institution and department. Therefore, faculty and administrators must make every effort to adopt the most appropriate criteria that accurately predicts the selection of those students with a high likelihood of developing professional competencies, who are likely to complete all degree requirements and be satisfied with the program.

The Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the admissions standards of graduate hospitality programs, which were members of the Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Educators as of September 1997. The specific objective was to determine which admissions criteria was the best indicator for graduate student success. Other objectives were to identify and compare the admission standards of the graduate (master's level) hospitality programs that are members of CHRIE, to describe and compare the demographic information on the program's applicants, and to identify relationships between admission standards and specialty programs.

The population of this study included the graduate program coordinator's (N=35) and was based on CHRIE'S 1997 membership list. The list was published in the 1997 CHRIE: A Guide to College Programs in Hospitality & Tourism. Each school was contacted to verify the name and e-mail address of the graduate coordinator.

The objectives for this study were accomplished by using a survey, which was sent via electronic mail (N=35). The instrument contained three parts: program, student, and coordinator demographics, each program's specific requirements, and the coordinator's ranking of the most important indicator of graduate student success. Responses from 15 coordinators were returned. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, the SPSS program was used to generate frequencies and cross tabulations.

Limitations

The primary limitation encountered was that the study was restricted to schools who were members of CHRIE. An institution may offer a hospitality program and chose not to become a member of CHRIE for any number of reasons, such as the membership fee. Conducting a survey by electronic mail has its disadvantages -- with the constant updating of university computer services and personnel, it is difficult to insure accurate e-mail addresses. Another limitation was insuring that the program coordinator actually completed the survey himself, and did not just forward it on to a staff person or graduate assistant.

Summary of Findings

The respondents (72.3%) revealed that over the past five years their program's admission's criteria have changed. Not only has the criteria changed, but the admissions process has changed as well. The average length of the admission's process has changed from 67 days to 39.63 days. Thirty three percent of the reporting schools indicated an appeals process an applicant may pursue if denied admission to a program.

Programs across the country were found to have very similar admissions requirements. For example, historically, standardized test scores were considered the greatest indicator of student success (ETS, 1997), and programs focused on these scores. However, today, these scores are no longer the focus of the admissions process.

Even thought the research showed the criteria being similar; yet, the *requirements* may be different. For example, one program may require a great deal of industry experience, while another might require very little experience. The study showed that hospitality graduate programs are accepting a GRE total with a mean of 1121.87, a total GMAT score with a mean of 522.5, and a TOEFL score with a mean of 550. The MAT test was not used by any of the programs participating in the study. Ninety three percent of the programs require a statement of goals and objectives. Eighty-six percent of the programs indicated that a GPA was important, with a mean of 3.02 for undergraduate work, and 3.12 for graduate work. Also, 86% of the programs indicated that references (average 2.92) were extremely important for the admissions process. Other admissions criteria included a resume, personal interview, and writing samples. Previous industry experience has become a major (probably the most important) requirement in admission's criteria.

After tabulating the graduate coordinator's ranking of criteria as an indicator of student success by the mean, previous industry experience was the coordinator's first choice. The other criteria was ranked as follows: grade point average, references, TOEFL score, GRE score, statement of goals and objectives, personal history, GMAT score, and MAT score. "Other" criteria included: personal interview, writing sample.

Student Demographics

The average age of the students enrolled in a hospitality graduate program was 28 years old. Females account for 57.5% of the graduate student population. Of the same population, 49.28% of the students were International. The research indicated most students had some sort of hospitality background (53.3%), others indicated a business background (20.0%), while others reported a non-hospitality, non-business background (20.0%). The average length of the applicant's hospitality experience (before graduate school) was 3.23 years.

Coordinator Demographics

Each program coordinator was asked to describe their personal demographics. The average age of the program coordinator was 49.76 years old. Most of the respondents were women (56.4%). All but one (93.6%) hold a doctoral degree, with 26.7% having a food and nutrition focus. The coordinators' academic backgrounds varied, as did the industry experience.

Review of the Research Hypotheses

Due to the small number of respondents, the researcher was unable to statistically test any of the research hypotheses.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Hospitality graduate programs are growing. Industry professionals are interested in furthering their knowledge and skills. The research showed an average of 34.4 students currently enrolled in respective hospitality graduate programs across the nation, with an average of 17.2 new students entering programs each academic year. The coordinators reported an average of 12.29 students graduating each academic year with a master's degree. Furthermore, previous industry experience is now among the leaders in admissions criteria.

2. The programs that consider themselves "specialty programs" did not demand any different or special admission's requirements. When asked about their program's specialization, the coordinator's identified: lodging (26.7%), tourism (13.3%), research (13.3%), restaurant (20.0%), institutional food service (13.3%), convention and meeting panning (6.7%), and other [business] (6.7%) as their area of specialization.

3. Traditional admissions standards are being replaced by newer, broader criteria. To illustrate, the programs are changing admissions criteria to attract applicants whose demographics have also changed – students are older, and have industry experience. Another case in point: while most of the programs still require some sort of standardized test on file; programs have become more focused on past industry experience and a statement of goals and objectives.

4. While the importance of industry experience speaks for itself, the goal and objective statement actually has two purposes. One purpose is to insure the applicant and the department are a "good fit" (i.e.: similar purpose and objectives) and two, it provides faculty with a sample of the applicant's writing skills.

5. Another positive change in hospitality graduate programs is the capstone

project. A classical project has been, of course, the thesis. Now programs are allowing students to chose between the thesis option, a creative component, or a more business-oriented type of report/project.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are several opportunities to continue research relating to hospitality graduate education.

1. This study was limited to programs that were members of CHRIE. Changing the population to include all hospitality graduate programs could broaden and strengthen this study.

2. A longitudinal study could be conducted to monitor the changes in the backgrounds and career choices of hospitality graduate students.

3. Further research could be conducted analyzing the expectations of faculty and industry professionals concerning different curriculums and competencies graduate students should possess.

4. Additional studies could be conducted to determine if any relationships exists between the attitudes and satisfaction of hospitality graduate students towards their education.

5. Additional research could be conducted studying the feasibility and success of e-mail surveys in the hospitality industry.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Dear «Title» «LastName»,

As you know, there has been phenomenal growth in graduate education in the 1990's. Due to this fact, our programs, interests, and demographics have changed and are adapting to meet the needs of not only our programs, but our students as well. One trend that has made a significant impact on graduate education is a change in admission's criteria. Unfortunately, little has been done to document and identify what different hospitality programs require for admission.

In a day or two, you will be sent another e-mail with a short questionnaire asking you to describe your program's admission standards. This questionnaire can be completed on your computer and e-mailed back to us in a matter of minutes.

You are assured of complete confidentiality, as you will be responding back to a web site.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please feel free to respond via e-mail (sgaiko@okstate.edu) or call at (405) 744-8481.

Thank you,

Sylvia Gaiko, Ph.D.	Michelle Slovak
Graduate Coordinator	Graduate Teaching Assistant
Oklahoma State University	Oklahoma State University

APPENDIX B

Dear «Title» «LastName»,

Several days ago, you received an e-mail asking to you to participate in a survey to identify and document admissions criteria for your hospitality graduate program. As hospitality graduate education is growing and changing, the objective of this study is to identify the changing trends in admissions criteria.

Kindly click on the following link to complete this related questionnaire. I realize your time is extremely valuable – this survey should take less then ten minutes.

http://osu-ns04.cis.okstate.edu/ches/hrad/reseach.nsf/survey?OpenForm

If you are interested in receiving the results of this research, please respond to Michelle Slovak at slovak@okstate.edu .

Again, my thanks, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at sgaiko@okstate.edu or by telephone at (405) 744-8481. Or, if you have any questions about OSU's Institutional Review Board, you may contact Sharon Bacher, the IRB Executive Secretary at 203 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078. Her phone number is (405) 744-7050.

Sylvia Gaiko, Ph.D.
Graduate Coordinator
School of Hotel & Restaurant Administration
Oklahoma State University

Michelle Slovak
Graduate Teaching Assistant
School of Hotel & Restaurant Administration
Oklahoma State University

APPENDIX C

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Date:	March 30, 1999	IRB #:	HE-99-090
Proposal Title:	"A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF HOSPITALITY GRADUATE PROGRAMS ADMISSIONS CRITERIA"		
Principal Investigator(s):	Dr. Sylvia Gaiko Pamela Slovak		
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt		

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: Carol Olson

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

March 30, 1999
Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modification to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

VITA

Pamela Michelle Slovak

Candidate for the degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A COMPARITIVE STUDY OF HOSPITALITY GRADUATE PROGRAMS ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Major Field: Hospitality Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Las Cruces, New Mexico, on March 16, 1963, the daughter of Edwin and Sandra Slovak.

Education: Graduated from Stillwater High School, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May 1981; received Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel and Restaurant Administration from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 1987. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Hospitality Administration at Oklahoma State University in July 1999.

Experience: Internship, McDonald's Corporation, summer, 1987; Training Manager, PepsiCo, 1988-1992; Food & Beverage Manager, CA One Services, 1992-1995; General Manager, Accor Corporation, 1995-1996; Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant, 1996-present.

Professional Organizations: Charter member Hospitality Administration Graduate Student Association, Club Managers Association, Graduate Student Council, Omicron Kappa Nu, Eta Sigma Delta