

CURRICULUM EVALUATION: EFFECTIVENESS OF
A REAL TIME LABORATORY COURSE

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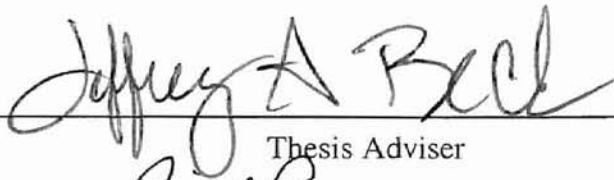
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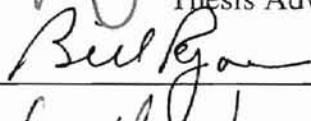
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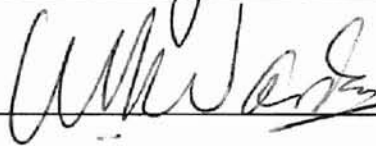
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry has been one of the fastest growing industries. In the United States, the hospitality and tourism industry was ranked third behind auto sales and food retail sales. It employed 1.1 million people full- and part-time and ranked second in terms of employment behind health service in 1996.

The rapid growth of the hospitality industry requires the identification and education of people who possess the talent, attitude, and motivation to work with the complex, service-oriented system critical to the industry (Hadgis, 1982). The industry's needs are not fully met by general business management programs (Goodman & Sprague, 1991). Michael Haywood (1989) suggested the following:

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 enable 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 (Haywood, 1989, p. 259).

Statement of the Problem

The hospitality industry depends highly on people with service skills, problem-solving and customer relation abilities. Those capacities not only come from books and lectures, but also from “live” experience. Niew’s study in 1993 found that 49.4 percent of the 123 surveyed hospitality administration programs in the United States had laboratory courses on food production and dining room service, and 10.4 percent at least had plans to develop laboratory course (Niew, 1993). Compared to food service, there is a lack of hotel room operation laboratory facilities in hospitality administration programs.

In order to give students more opportunities to practice what they study from books and lectures, Oklahoma State University’s School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration (HRAD) provided a reformatted laboratory course HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System in the spring 1998 semester. This course was designed to provide students with hands-on experience outside the classroom. Furthermore, it was designed to increase the students’ risk-taking, problem-solving and critical thinking abilities while gaining exposure to real-time operation at OSU’s Student Union hotel.

The experiential teaching strategy is said to be beneficial to students, universities and industry (Niew, 1993). In general, there is a lack of research on measuring the value of experiential teaching and learning. Although some research has been conducted to measure the effectiveness of food service and marketing laboratory courses in hotel and restaurant administration programs, little has been done in the field of rooms operations. The lack of information assessing students’ perceptions of the hospitality curricula become an obstacle to continued curriculum refinement at OSU’s School of Hotel and

Restaurant Administration. This study was undertaken to see what effect the laboratory course had on its participants and addressed the question “ Does the laboratory teaching approach enhance student’s perceived importance of managerial skills in lodging operations?”

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the course HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System at OSU’s School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration by assessing the participants’ perceptions on importance of managerial skills related to room and front office operation changed as a result of taking this course.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1) Investigate whether the participants have the different perceptions of the importance of managerial skills related to room operation before and after taking the course.
- 2) Determine if perceived difference exist in specific variables including gender, academic status and work-experience in lodging and food service.
- 3) Evaluate the effectiveness of this laboratory room operation course HRAD 3363.
- 4) Determine if how the instructors deliver the curriculum is appropriate for what they deliver.

Hypotheses

The study investigated 45 hypotheses in 5 groups. These hypotheses were stated as below:

- H1 A. There will be no significant difference in perceived importance of general management skills after the treatment.
- B. There will be no significant difference in perceived importance of financial management skills after the treatment.
- C. There will be no significant difference in perceived importance of marketing management skills after the treatment.
- D. There will be no significant difference in perceived importance of facility management skills after the treatment.
- E. There will be no significant difference in perceived importance of human resource management skills after the treatment.
- H2. A. There will be no difference in perceived importance of general management skills across gender in the pretest.
- B. There will be no difference in perceived importance of financial management skills across gender in the pretest.
- C. There will be no difference in perceived importance of marketing management skills across gender in the pretest.
- D. There will be no difference in perceived importance of facility management skills across gender in the pretest.
- E. There will be no difference in perceived importance of human resource management skills across gender in the pretest
- A'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of general management skills across gender in the posttest.
- B'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of financial

- management skills across gender in the posttest.
- C'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of marketing management skills across gender in the posttest.
 - D'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of facility management skills across gender in the posttest.
 - E'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of human resource management skills across gender in the posttest.
- H3
- A. There will be no difference in perceived importance of general management skills across academic status in the pretest.
 - B. There will be no difference in perceived importance of financial management skills across academic status in the pretest.
 - C. There will be no difference in perceived importance of marketing management skills across academic status in the pretest.
 - D. There will be no difference in perceived importance of facility management skills across academic status in the pretest.
 - E. There will be no difference in perceived importance of human resources management skills across academic status in the pretest.
 - A'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of general management skills across academic status in the posttest.
 - B'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of financial management skills across academic status in the posttest.
 - C'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of marketing management skills across academic status in the posttest.

- D'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of facility management skills across academic status in the posttest.
- E'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of human resource management skills across academic status in the posttest.
- H4 A. There will be no difference in perceived importance of general management skills across lodging work experience in the pretest.
- B. There will be no difference in perceived importance of financial management skills across lodging work experience in the pretest.
- C. There will be no difference in perceived importance of marketing management skills across lodging work experience in the pretest.
- D. There will be no difference in perceived importance of facility management skills across lodging work experience in the pretest.
- E. There will be no difference in perceived importance of human resources management skills across lodging work experience in the pretest.
- A'. There will be no difference in perceived importance of general management skills across lodging work experience in the posttest.
- B'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on financial management skills across lodging work experience in the posttest.
- C'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on marketing management skills across lodging work experience in the posttest.
- D'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on facility management skills across lodging work experience in the posttest.

- E. There will be no difference in perceived importance on human resource management skills across lodging work experience in the posttest.
- H5.
- A. There will be no difference in perceived importance on general management skills across work experience in food service in the pretest.
 - B. There will be no difference in perceived importance on financial management skills across work experience in food service in the pretest.
 - C. There will be no difference in perceived importance on marketing management skills across work experience in food service in the pretest.
 - D. There will be no difference in perceived importance on facility management skills across work experience in food service in the pretest.
 - E. There will be no difference in perceived importance on human resource management skills across work experience in food service in the pretest.
- A'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on general management skills across work experience in food service in the posttest.
 - B'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on financial management skills across work experience in food service in the posttest.
 - C'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on marketing management skills across work experience in food service in the

posttest.

- D'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on facility management skills across work experience in food service in the posttest.
- E'. There will be no difference in perceived importance on human resource management skills across work experience in food service in the posttest.

Significance of the Study

It was hoped that the information gained from this study would benefit future hotel room operation courses at OSU. Worthen and Sanders (1973) defined evaluation as “the determination of the worth of a thing. It includes obtaining information for use in judging the worth of a program, product, procedure, or objective, or the potential utility of alternative approaches designed to attain specified objectives”(page. 5). Harris (1963) stated that in-service education is a major function of supervision to promote the growth of instructional staff members to make them more effective and more efficient. Hopefully, this study would enable the instructors in the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration OSU to become more aware of the professional needs of the participants and more effective teachers might be produced in the realm of hotel room operation education.

Assumptions of the Study

For the purpose of the study, the following assumptions were accepted by the researcher: (1) that the participants who completed the questionnaire in this study did so voluntarily, (2) that the participants provided honest and complete answers to the questions.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study were limited to the following: (1) only the students who took the course HRAD 3363 in the spring semester of 1998 were selected to participate in this study, (2) no control group was used in this study, (3) the population of this study was small.

Definitions of Terms

Active Learning: in contrast to the worst of traditional teaching in which teachers actively present information and students passively receive it. It consists of three factors: basic elements, learning strategies, and teaching resource (Meyers & Jones, 1993).

Curriculum: all experiences that the institution provides to assist the student in acquiring competencies needed to obtain the goals and objectives of the educational institution and the subject matter (Robertson, 1970).

Curriculum Development: the group of activities, plans, projects, and reports which deal with the on-going nature of the education procedure development. It specifically involves changing existing content or methods in courses by changing the objectives of a single course offering in a curriculum or of an entire degree program (Lundberg, 1979).

Curriculum Evaluation: the collection and use of information as a basis for decisions about an educational program (Cronbach, 1964).

Evaluation: the process of determining to what extent the educational objectives are actually being realized (Tyler, 1950).

Experiential Learning: participants are involved in experience that can be used to teach concepts, ideas, or behavior insights (Warrick, Hunsacker, Cook & Altman, 1979).

Hotel and Restaurant Administration: an area of work and study which applies principles and information from a number of disciplines to the problems of selling food, beverage, and lodging persons away from home. It includes a number of practices and techniques, which have been developed, mostly from experience, for accomplishing this purpose (Lundberg, 1979).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the experiential laboratory course HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System. The review of literature is organized into four sections. First, a brief review of the aspects of evaluation that includes a definition of evaluation, a description of formative and summative evaluation, and the purpose and objective of evaluation. Second, experiential learning and teaching strategy is discussed. The third section discusses the quasi-experimental methodology as used in social science. The fourth section of this review focuses on the related studies that have been done on curriculum development and experiential learning in hospitality education.

Aspects of Evaluation

This section of the review of literature will concern itself with areas of evaluation. The first section will be on evaluation itself; the second section will discuss formative and summative evaluation; the third section is on the purpose and objective of evaluation.

Definition of Evaluation

Many definitions of evaluation can be found in the literature. Tyler (1950) perceived evaluation as the process of determining to what extent the educational

objectives are actually being realized. Cronbach (1963) defined evaluation as "that of providing information for decision making."

Cooley and Lohens (1976) summarized evaluation as the following:

An evaluation is a process by which relevant data are collected and transformed into information for decision making. Evaluation is defined as a process rather than a product. Educational procedures are never completely, finally evaluated. Evaluation transcends research and extends into decision making. Evaluation is successful insofar as the information it generates becomes part of the decision-making processes in education (p. 3).

Other definitions of evaluation point to the judgment character of evaluation.

Evaluation is the determination of the worth or merit of a thing or object. It includes obtaining information for use in judging the worth of a program, product, procedure, or objective, or the potential utility of alternative approaches designed to attain specific objectives (Worthen & Sanders, 1973). The decision-centered definition is more preferred by the evaluatees and clients, but the value-centered definition accepted the fact of judgment as its major and inevitable feature (Nevo, 1983).

Regardless of the type of evaluation and the different purpose of them, the structure of evaluation design keep the same. Stufflebeam (1985) proposed the following structure for designs of evaluations.

1. Focusing the Evaluation-who the evaluation is targeted at (teacher, students) and at what level (local, state).
2. Collection of Information-specify the methods for obtaining data.
3. Organization of Information-classify information for coding, organization and storing.
4. Analysis of Information-providing a description of data to be reported to the decision-makers.
5. Reporting of Information-the audience for the evaluation must be made.
6. Administration of the Evaluation-define the overall program evaluation and specify a schedule for updating the evaluation design (p. 23).

Formative Evaluation and Summative Evaluation

Formative evaluation refers to the curriculum and to the improvement of that curriculum that was a continuous process and not just a product oriented. Summative evaluation refers to evaluation that had taken place at the conclusion of a program, school term, or presentation. Summative evaluations are conducted to see if a program is effective and should be continued (Patton, 1987; Mason & Bramble, 1989).

Scriven clarified the distinction between formative and summative evaluation. "Formative evaluation is the feedback of product information into the development process for the purpose of improving the product. Summative evaluation involves the collection of data concerning an already-operating program for the purpose of making judgment about the program... The distinction was that certain steps must be taken to ensure that objective judgment was possible in the summative case whereas in the formative case, payoff might well come from persons involved in product-information" (Scriven, 1972, p. 30).

Nonetheless, thinking about curriculum in terms of formative and summative period is useful in determining appropriateness and timing of evaluation questions and activities and in determining whether the project itself and /or outsiders should be doing the research (Grobman, 1968).

Purpose and Objective of Evaluation

Tyler and his group (Smith & Tyler, 1941) devised and identified five purposes of evaluation. The first was to make a period check on the effectiveness of an educational program and to indicate to the educators where changes should be made. The second was to validate the hypotheses upon which a school operates. A third purpose was to provide

information basic to the disposition and guidance of individual students. A fourth purpose was to provide what might be termed a level of psychological security to parents, students and school staff, by supplying evidence as to whether or not the school was attaining the goals it had set for itself. Finally, evaluation was seen as providing a sound basis for public relations by indicating the value of the school program.

A set of guidelines for establishing evaluation programmes establish and consisted of seven steps necessary for effective education evaluation.

1. Formulating objectives.
2. Classifying objectives.
3. Defining objectives in terms of behaviors
4. Suggesting situations in which achievement of objectives will be shown.
5. Selecting and trying promising evaluation methods.
6. Developing and improving appraisal techniques.
7. Interpreting results (Smith & Tyler, p. 127).

The purpose of the evaluation should be made at the planning stage of curriculum development. Green and Stone (1977) maintained that usually evaluation efforts only had meaning for the investigators, provided arrangement had been made to utilize the findings for future curriculum making.

Some critical issues on purposes of evaluation include:

- Is the value of the evaluation intrinsic? Where does the value exist? Is it evaluation for evaluation's sake?
- Is the value measured only to the extent that the findings were used?
- Is the value lost if the decisions are made before the findings of the project have been made public?
- Is it enough simply to realize that just going through the process of evaluation may serve a purpose, if nothing else so that the faculty members become aware of their teaching? (Green & Stone, 1977, p. 341)

Cronbach (1977) also suggested the following purposes:

- Course improvement: deciding what is sufficient and what would need to be changed.

- Decisions about individuals: identifying needs of the pupil, judging the pupil for purpose of selection and grouping, acquainting the pupil with his/her own progress and deficiencies.
- Administrative regulations: judging how good the school is, how well the student met objectives, and how effective the teachers were in presenting the material (p. 320).

The purpose of this research was to evaluate the laboratory course HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System at Oklahoma State University's School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration as students' perceived importance on managerial skills and changed after their taking the course.

Experiential Learning

The biggest change in learning strategies has been an increasing emphasis on practice based learning (Talbot, 1993). The experiential learning is responded to this requirement.

Definition of Experiential Learning

Experience is defined as opportunities for learners to apply content in an experiential environment by Keys and Wolfe (1988). Experiential learning is termed as a wide spectrum of educational encounters, from learning through trial and error to a specific theory of instruction (Williams, 1991, p.92). Experiential learning requires observation and reflection on experience in order to generalize from those experience (Keys, 1977; Kolb, 1971).

Four assumptions inherent in all experiential learning situations are addressed by Hutchings and Wutzdriff (1988). The first assumption was concreteness. Learning must be established in the students' own experience which is done through laboratories, simulations and role-playing. This was called "meaningful" by Bigge (1971). He stated that meaningfulness consisted between relations and fact-generalizations, rules, and

principles for which students can see some use. The second assumption was involvement. Students can learn more and learn in more details when they were involved in subjects that they cared about. The third assumption was dissonance. It threw learners temporarily out of balance to move them to deeper understanding. The fourth assumption was reflection. That was the ability for the student to step back and ponder one's own experiences. Students tended to learn better when they stepped back and thought about what just transpired.

Characteristics of Experiential Learning

Kolb (1984) described the learning cycle as a process that started out from active experimentation, went through concrete experience and reflective observation, but clearly cut out or marginalized, abstract conceptualization. Six characteristics of experiential learning were given by Kolb (1984).

The first characteristic was that learning was best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes to be achieved. Ideas were not fixed as in the behavioral context, but were formed and reformed through experience. Second, learning was not a lock-step notion but is a continuous process grounded in experience. Third, the process of learning required the resolution of conflicts between directly opposed modes of adaptation to the world. Most experiential proponents adhered to the notion that learning was a tension-and conflict-filled process.

Kolb went on to state that if learners were to be effective in concentration they need four different kinds of abilities: (1) concrete experience abilities, (2) reflective observation abilities, (3) abstract conceptualization abilities, and (4) active experimentation abilities.

Fourth, learning was a holistic process of adaptation to the world. Learning was a whole concept describing the process of human adaptation to the social and physical environment. When learning was conceived as a holistic adaptive process, it was a continuous process that spanned across life. Experiential learning attempted to promote lifelong self-learning by providing learners an understanding of the way they operated in new situation and to thus utilize their abilities for continued self development. Fifth, learning involved transactions between the learner and the environment. Experience shaped the formation of attitudes of desire and purpose. Given this experience, each real experience had a positive side to it that changed the reality under which the experience was had. The last characteristic of experiential learning was that learning was the process of creating knowledge. Knowledge was created by the interaction of personal knowledge framework for categorizing differing approaches to management development.

Kurt Lewin's theory on experiential learning which was called Lewinian Model of Action Research and Laboratory Training concentrated on learning changes, and growth facilitated by an integrated process that began with the here and now experience. This experience was followed by a collection of data and observation about that experience. The data were then analyzed and fed back to the actors in the experience for their use in modifying their behavior and choosing new experiences.

According to Kolb, two aspects made this model unique. First, it focused on the here and now to validate and test abstract concepts. Second, the action research and laboratory training were based on a feedback process. This information feedback provided the basis for a continuous process of goal-directed action and evaluation of the consequences of that action (Kolb, 1984).

Methods of Experiential Learning

Some more frequently used categories of experiential learning environment are cases, business games and simulations, and planned on-the-job learning experience. The review of this section focuses on the summary of the advantages and disadvantages attributed to those methods.

Case:

A case “typically is a record of a business issue which actually has been faced by business executives, together with surrounding facts, opinions and prejudices upon which executive decisions had to depend” (Gragg, 1951). It is a scaled-down replication of a real experience or series of events, with ample problems or issues to generate a good discussion. When using case studies, the instructor provides the students with ample background information and data about a hypothetical situation so they can attacked a problem and applied basic concepts and principles (Johnson, 1990). The advantages of case study was that it emphasized the scenario of the manager’s world, improved communications skills, offered the rewards of solving a mystery, possessed the quality of illustration, and established concrete reference points for connecting theory with practice. The major disadvantage of case method existed in that it can not test the solution (Gragg, 1951). Cases reduced the teaching role of instructor, focused on the past, caused group thinking, and compromised interaction quality for interaction quantity (Osigweh, 1986). Andrew and Noel (1986) argued that cases prohibited the development of skills in collecting and distilling data and provided none of the feeling of immediacy that was indigenous to the world of real decision-maker.

Business Games and Simulations:

Business games and simulations are useful when lesson objectives included recognition of and appreciation for the values and attitudes of other groups and cultures. This method is widely employed with the use of computer in business education. The instructor provides ample information about the group or culture to be studied and students played the roles of people from that group or culture. According to Johnson (1990), the important advantages to simulation strategies were:

- They can help students gain insights into their real feelings about situations, events, people, and culture.
- They can be fun; students were positive in their feelings about simulation strategies.
- They can motivate students to pursue information that might otherwise be of little interest to them.
- They can unleash creativity.
- They encouraged spontaneity.
- They generally captured information, attitudes, and feelings in such a way that they were moved to long-term memory, a much stronger outcome than through passive learning strategies.
- They provided opportunities for students to try behaviors different from those they normally displayed.
- Students can better appreciate the attitudes of others: they can observe the behaviors of other students, listen to their suggestions, and build a respect for the viewpoints expressed by others (p. 44).

Generally, it was found simulation and games were more effective teaching methods than cases (Keys & Bell, 1977; Wolfe & Guth, 1975). The students can see the consequences of their decisions immediately (Zappia, 1986). Although it reportedly created a great deal of excitement, enjoyment of the group experience appeared to depend upon the degree of success achieved (Dill & Doppelt, 1963; Estes, 1979; Faria, 1986; Remus & Jenner, 1981).

Planned on-the-job experience:

Previous on-the-job experiences are undirected and tend to reinforce past behaviors and attitudes rather than promote new ones that may be necessary for long-term flexibility and survival of the organization. The new one is "Action Learning". It calls for group meeting of line managers with a focus on basic questions that must be asked in order to alter the operating system being reviewed (Revans, 1982). The entire process is designed to facilitate open-ended learning and to create the capacity for intelligent action rather than contributions to formal knowledge (Morgan & Ramirez, 1983). It values questioning skills, the ability to challenge and develop new practice in active relationship with concrete experience and reflective observation and specifically renounces codified knowledge (Talbot, 1993).

Laboratory Method:

Laboratory method is widely used in scientific settings. It is appropriate for objectives, which deal with research methods, applications, and observation skills.

Laboratory instruction is one of the more practical alternatives to the lectures. It takes students away from the theoretical setting of the text book and lecture, to confront them with problems to solve, experimentation to conduct, demonstration to observe, exercises to complete, short-term and long-term projects to pursue, or data to collect so they can interpret and draw conclusions (Johnson, 1990). The focus is on having students instruct themselves and teach their peers.

Brown and Akins (1988) identified the following as worthwhile goals for laboratory teaching:

- Instructing students in manual and observational skills germane to the content of the lesson.

- Developing knowledge of the scientific method.
- Providing an opportunity to apply the scientific method to solving problems.
- Creating a mentorship setting that might nurture professional attitudes. (p. 91).

It is important that the instructor develops good communication and organization skills when using the laboratory method and students understand the goals and purpose of the laboratory lessons.

Research Methodology

Experimentation was regarded as a version of controlled observation which was designed to assess the impact of trials (Caporaso, 1973). Quasi experimentation, since “quasi” means “resembling”, was a form of correlational research that resembled an experiment (Bordens & Abbott, 1991).

In quasi experiment, the researcher may observe changes in a dependent variable as a function of changes in an independent variable. The advantage of quasi-experimental design was that it allowed researcher to evaluate the impact of the independent variables under a naturally occurring conditions. By manipulating the independent variables, researcher may be able to establish clear causal relationships among variables.

However, quasi-experimental research had drawbacks that affected both internal and external validity. Because there were no control over the variables influencing behavior, another variable that changed along with the variable of interest actually may have caused the observed effect. Confounding variables would cloud any causal inference drawn from the data collected (Caporaso, 1973).

Caporaso also pointed that quasi-experimental method still provided answers to causal questions as well as to factual ones. A quasi-experimental analysis helped researcher build up a body of low-level empirical generation. The most important, quasi-experimental analysis was to test relationships. The loose hypotheses can be checked out by using it, especially when the number of variables was few.

Pretest-posttest design is one of the most frequently used quasi-experimental methods, which includes a pretest of subjects on the depend measure before the treatment conditions, followed by a posttest after the treatment conditions had been introduced. Campbell and Stanley (1963) suggested that a control group was necessary to reduce the history, maturation, testing, and instruction invalidity.

Related Researches in Hospitality Education

Donald E. Lundberg (1979) described the managerial profession in the hotel and restaurant industry:

Hotel and restaurant management is an eclectic discipline drawing upon numerous other disciplines. For a person to be successful in any business require that he/she has highly developed skills in time management, social management, money management, and strategic planning. These are transferable skills, useful in a bureaucracy as well as in a business enterprise. The hotel and restaurant field requires some numerical skills such as those in accounting, statistics, and data processing, business law, insurance and real estate, and marketing principles are invaluable, and most programs in hotel and restaurant management require that those majoring in the field take those subjects in the school of business. But hotel and restaurant management requires specific technical skills as well: professional background knowledge, some understanding of nutrition, a great deal of skill in food preparation and service, particular skills in food and beverage cost control, knowledge of wines and spirits, specialized information about hotel, restaurant, travel, and property management. The management must also take marketing principles and adapt them to the specialized hotel and restaurant field (p. 37).

The complexity and diversity of the hotel and restaurant management require the dynamic, flexible and effective curriculum. Highly requirement on the integration of

general business management skills with technical work skills differentiates the hospitality education from other business education. Experiential learning has always been an important feature of hospitality education (Welch, 1984). According to Zabel's survey, there were 95 percent of the undergraduate programs in hospitality education including a work experience requirement by 1992. Some form of work experience or internship is deemed necessary because the practicum had tremendous educational value for a hotel and restaurant administration curriculum. Kirk-Knway (1985) indicated that the internship was the only way for students to obtain work experience in their jobs in a real world operation.

Some hospitality educators began to investigate the objectives and importance of experiential learning and measure the effectiveness of this teaching strategy.

The objectives of experiential learning in hospitality education included three aspects. First, it integrated practical work experience with classroom study (Welch, 1984). Second, it helps students master the technical skills. Third, it improves the management skills. Fitzgerald and Cullen's study in 1991 indicated that the executives believed that those objectives of experiential learning were important and the management skills were rated more important than technical skills. Experiential learning was also an integral part of curricula designed to development future managers in the hospitality industry (Sim & Sands, 1990).

Case study, games and simulations, internship or other type of practicum are used frequently in hospitality education. Sivan, et al., studied on the effectiveness of various instructional techniques used in hospitality management and found that the use of student-centered and student-oriented learning were valuable to the students' learning

process and to their course work. Kreck (1992) addressed the problem coming with the “book” case and the way of using “live” case to overcome those problems. The problem with “case” was to inhibit new thinking, lessen motivation to participate to avoid embarrassment (Papaloizos & Stiefel, 1986). It was said difficult to transfer to reality and not enough contribution to job performance.

LeBruto and Murray (1994) attempted to assess the perceived importance of having specific management competencies taught in captive hotels as compared to an internship in non-captive facilities. The result showed that the presence of a captive facility was not perceived to be essential to an effective hotel-management practicum, but the result was not conclusive because of the lack of external validity.

Richard Wisch (1988) found students pursued or expected practical experience. John Knight also indicated that hospitality program should expand the use of on-the-job training experience. Casado (1991) insisted those suitable physical facilities for a practicum as the indicator of program quality.

Corsun, et al., (1995) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of the real-time simulation model of restaurant operation teaching method. The result showed the students’ perception enhanced with regard to overall management skills, technical food and beverage skills and human resources management skills after taking laboratory food operation course, but no treatment effort found for guest relations skills.

Those studies were conducted mostly in the field of restaurant operation and marketing management. Few researches to investigate the effectiveness of experiential teaching strategy were conducted on hotel room and front office operation.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used to accomplish the purpose of the study.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the laboratory course HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System by assessing the participants' perceived importance on overall management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills, and human resources management skills and ways in which these perception changed as a result of taking the course.

The Course—HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System

HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System is a laboratory course that covers various jobs in the lodging front office and the procedures involved in registering, accounting for, and checking-out guest. It discusses the organization, duties and administration of the front office.

The course is divided into two parts: a class portion, that discusses the front desk and housekeeping operations of lodging facilities, and a laboratory portion which provides students with hands-on experience in the rooms operation of OSU's Student Union hotel.

According to the syllabus of Spring 1998 (OSU): upon completion of the course, the students should be able to:

- define the term hotel, and describe ways hotels are classified
- outline the duties of the front office and housekeeping department
- summarize the process of lodging reservations
- identify main types of service requests by guests for the front office and housekeeping operations
- summarize the process of the night audit
- describe the concept of Yield Management

Type of Research and Instrument

This study was conducted to investigate the relationships among the dependent variables, the perceived importance of general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills, after the change of the independent variables including gender, academic status and work experience in lodging industry and food service by taking the course.

A quasi-experimental method was used in this study. In this design, the class was pre-tested. Then, a treatment was given. After the treatment, a post-test was given to see if there were any changes.

This design is diagrammed as below.

O1	X	O2
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It can be seen that pretest observations (O1) are recorded on a single group of persons, who later receive a treatment (X), after which posttest observations (O2) are made (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

The independent variables for this design were: gender, academic status and work experience in lodging and food service. The dependent variables for this design were: perceived importance of financial management skills, general management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills.

Questionnaire Construction

A questionnaire was developed to measure the participants' perceived importance of management skills related to hotel room operation.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section included nine questions concerning participants' attitudes and perceptions toward laboratory courses itself.

The second part of the questionnaire was developed for this study based on prior research which to identify and compare on management skills required for single and multi-unit management in independent operated college and university food service by Ryan (1992). The second section was comprised of 49 questions about the participants' perceived importance of managerial skills. Those managerial skills were grouped into five categories. Eleven items were designed to determine students' perceived importance of financial management skills. Nine items were constructed to measure the perceived importance of general management skills. The general management skills here referred to

the abilities of developing operational plans, solving operational problems and issues, enforcing and implementing organizational policies and procedures. Next, eight items were designed to determine the perceived importance of marketing management skills. These items covered supervising marketing plans, developing and implementing advertisement programs, assessing competitors' operations, gathering customers' information and assisting in community relations programs to supervising new product introduction. Seven items were designed to uncover the perceived importance of facility management skills including approving low-cost and more costly improvement to facilities, supervising maintenance programs and monitoring security and safety procedures and issues. Finally, fourteen items were constructed to determine the perceived importance of human resource management skills. These items summarized the major responsibilities of human resource management including training, employee performance evaluation and other personnel management.

The respondents were asked to respond to a one to five Likert scale for the first and second sections of the questionnaire.

The third section of the questionnaire included questions which were used to gather participants' demographic information (see Appendix A).

Collection of Data

Data was collected by means of questionnaires sent to each of the 16 students who took the course HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System at the Spring of 1998. The pre-test was conducted at the third week of the beginning of the class. These students signed a research consent letter prior to the experiment attached with the questionnaire. The form

and research procedures were in compliance with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) policies that deal with human subjects (see Appendix B). The consent letter explained the purpose of the research and gave the instructions for completing the questionnaire. No code was printed to identify the respondents.

Sixteen questionnaires were handed out at the pretest in the class. One student did not return the questionnaire to the researcher. Two of the students did not complete the instrument.

An identical post-test questionnaire was administered in the class prior to the end of the spring semester. The same perceptual and demographic questions were asked. Sixteen questionnaires were sent to the students in the end of the class. All of them received but one of the respondents did not complete the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

The data collected for each subject was entered into the computer using PC-File (ButtonWare, 1985) for statistical analysis. Appropriate programs were selected to analyze the data using the Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS, 1996). Standard statistical procedures, such as frequency, t test, correlated reliability and analysis of variables (ANOVA) were used to analyze the data. The results were reported in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the course HRAD3363 Lodging Front Office System at OSU's School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration by assessing the participants' perception on importance of managerial skills related to room and front office operation. Data was obtained using the research instrument described in Chapter III. This chapter was developed to present the findings of the research. The areas addressed in this chapter include: response rate, respondent demographics, instrument reliability, the perceived importance of managerial skills ratings in the categories of general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills, comparison of the difference of the ratings of the importance of those skills in pretest and post-test, the perceived importance of financial management skill, general management skill, marketing management skill, facility management skill, and human resource management skill across gender, academic status, and work experience in lodging industry and in food service in the pretest and the posttest.

Response Rate

The pretest was conducted at the beginning of Spring semester 1998. Questionnaires were sent and answered by the students (N=16) who took the course HRAD 3363 during the class. Fifteen students returned the questionnaires. The response

rate was 93.75 percent. Two of the returned questionnaires were incomplete. Thirteen pretest questionnaires were usable for statistical analysis.

The post-test was conducted at the end of spring semester 1998 using the same questionnaire. The same process was utilized for data collection. Sixteen students returned the questionnaires that resulted in the response rate of 100 percent. One of the questionnaires was not usable for statistical analysis.

Respondent Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were described for the pretest and posttest in detail in Table I. In the pretest and posttest, there were more male than female respondents. The pretest respondents were comprised of eight females (61.5%) and five males (38.5%). The posttest respondents were comprised of ten females (66.7%) and five males (33.3%).

In the pretest, there was one sophomore (7.7%), six juniors (46.1%) and six seniors (46.1%). Nine of the respondents' age ranged from 20 to 25 years old, two respondents were in the age of from 26 to 30 years old, one of them was in the age of above 30 years old, and one respondent's age was unknown because of a missing to answer this question. In the posttest, among the fifteen respondents, thirteen of them were in the age from 20 to 25 years old, one of them was in the age from 26 to 30, and one of them was above 30 years old. According the academic status, one respondent was sophomore (6.7%), eight respondents (53.3%) were juniors and six respondents (40%) were seniors.

In the pretest, there were ten in-state students (76.9%), two out-of-state students (15.4%), and one international student (7.8%). In the posttest, there was eleven in-state

students (73.3%), two out-of-state students (13.3%), and two international students (13.3%).

In the pretest, two students reported to have some work experience in lodging industry (15.4%), the average work experience was 3.5 years. Ten students (76.9%) reported to have some work experience in food service, and the average work experience was 3.4 years. Seven students had some experience in other fields (53.8%), the average work experience was 4.57 years.

There was four students (26.7%) who had lodging work experience in the posttest, the average work experience time for them was 2.25 years. Ten students (66.7%) reported having work experience in food service, and the average time was 3.45 years. Six students (40%) reported having other work experience and the average work experience in other fields was 4.16 years.

Table I : DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS IN THE PRETEST AND POSTTEST

Characteristics	Pretest		Posttest	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	6	46.2%	5	33.3%
Female	7	53.8%	10	67.7%
<u>Academic Status</u>				
Freshman	0	0	0	0
Sophomore	1	7.7%		6.7%
Junior	6	46.1%	8	53.3%
Senior	6	46.1%	6	40.0%
Graduate	0	0	0	0
<u>Age</u>				
Below 20	0	0	0	0
20-25	9	69.2%	13	86.7%
26-30	2	15.4%	1	6.7%
Above 30	1	7.8%	1	6.7%
<u>Residence Status</u>				
In-State	10	76.9%	11	73.3%
Out-Of-State	2	15.4%	2	13.3%
International	1	7.7%	2	13.3%
<u>Work Experience</u>				
Lodging	2	15.4%	4	26.7%
Food Service	10	76.9%	10	66.7%
Others	7	53.8%	6	40.0%
	N=13		N=15	

Instrument Reliability

Internal consistency reliability can be defined as an index of the precision of the measurement instrument (Lauer & Asher, 1988). All possible correlations of among all the pairs of instrument items were made in order to describe how well the items measure

the variable of interest. Cronbach's Alpha is the standard assessment of internal consistency reliability. Reliability analysis was conducted on the students' perception toward the room and front office operation job and the students' perceived satisfaction on the laboratory assignment. Reliability analysis also was run on the students' perception toward the course, perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills for the pretest and the posttest utilizing the Oklahoma State University mainframe computer and the SPSS statistical analysis package (SPSS, 1998).

Table II and Table III show the results of the reliability coefficient analysis in the pretest and posttest separately.

Table II

RELIABILITY OF PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE IN
THE CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL
MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY
MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN
THE PRETEST

Variable	Number of items	Scale	Alpha
Perception toward job	3	3-15	.79
Perception toward the lab assignments	6	6-30	.98
General Management Skill	9	9-45	.94
Financial Management Skill	11	11-55	.95
Marketing Management Skill	8	8-40	.95
Facility Management Skill	7	7-35	.78
Human Resource Management Skill	14	14-70	.90

N=13

Table III

RELIABILITY OF PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE IN THE CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS IN THE POSTTEST

Variable	Number of items	Scale	Alpha
Perception toward job	3	3-15	.5053
Perception toward lab assignments	6	6-30	.9358
General Management Skill	9	9-45	.9124
Financial Management Skill	11	11-55	.9665
Marketing Management Skill	8	8-40	.9521
Facility Management Skill	7	7-35	.8015
Human Resource Management Skill	14	14-70	.9300

N=15

Students' Perception toward the Course HRAD 3363

The two group t-test was conducted to determine whether there existed significant difference on the students' perception toward the course HRAD 3363. Nine questions were asked by utilizing the Likert Scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, and 5=strongly). Table IV shows the t-test results of each question.

TABLE IV

T TEST RESULTS OF STUDENTS' AGREEMENT TOWARD COURSE HRAD 3363

	Pretest			Posttest		
	Mean	t	p	Mean	t	p
1. Some room operations jobs seem reasonable to me.	4.08	1.38	.18	4.33	1.38	.18
2. I have clear ideas about possible room operations jobs for myself.	3.54	1.50	.15	4.00	1.51	.14
3. I will not learn anything about room operations jobs through the lab assignments.	1.54	1.60	.12*	2.13	1.69	.11*
4. I have some clear ideas about unsuitable room operations jobs for myself.	3.38	3.06	.01	4.13	3.06	.01
5. I will learn something about myself through the lab assignments.	4.15	-.52	.61	4.00	-.53	.60
6. The lab assignments will be a good experience for me.	4.46	-.67	.51	4.33	-.67	.51
7. I would recommend the class and its lab assignments to a friend.	4.23	-.35	.73	4.13	-.35	.73
8. The lab assignments will encourage me to find out more information about room operation jobs.	4.23	-1.21	.24**	3.79	-1.24	.23**
9. The lab assignments will be unsatisfactory in learning more about room operations jobs.	1.77	.96	.35	2.13	.99	.33
* Prob>F=.0043 ** Prob>F=.0236			N=13	N=15		

The t value for question #3 ($F'=5.77$, $df(14,12)$, $p=.00$) indicated that the level of agreement (" I will not learn anything about room operations jobs through the laboratory assignments.") significantly increased after taking the course. The t value for question #8 ($F'=3.93$, $df(13,12)$, $p=.02$) indicated that the level of agreement ("The laboratory assignments will encourage me to find out more information about room operations jobs.") significantly decreased after taking the course.

No other statistically significant differences were found in the levels of agreement toward the other statements between the pretest and posttest.

Hypotheses Testing: Findings

Hypotheses 1-A, 1-B, 1-C, 1-D and 1-E:

The correlated t test assumed null hypotheses that there were no significant differences on perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills, and human resource management skills between pretest and posttest. The results were presented in Table V , Table VI and Table VII.

TABLE V

T-TEST ON PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE BY THE CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR THE PRETEST.

Skills Category	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	t	p
General Management	38.31	5.12	.60	.56
Financial Management	45.46	6.09	-.32	.75
Marketing Management	30.92	5.16	-.52	.60
Facility Management	27.85	3.46	-.84	.41
Human Resource Management	61.85	5.41	-.24	.81

N=13

Table VI

T-TEST ON PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE BY THE CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR THE POSTTEST

Skills Category	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	t	p
General Management	39.47	5.14	.60	.56
Financial Management	44.67	7.08	-.32	.75
Marketing Management	29.80	6.04	-.53	.60
Facility Management	26.53	4.63	-.86	.40
Human Resource Management	62.20	8.13	-.25	.80

N=15

Table VII

T-TEST ON PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE BY THE CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS BETWEEN PRETEST AND POSTTEST

Skill Category	DF	F'	Prob>F'
General Management	14,12	1.01	1.00
Financial Management	14,12	1.35	.61
Marketing Management	14,12	1.37	.59
Facility Management	14,12	1.79	.32
Human Resource Management	14,12	2.26	.16

Table VI shows general management skill t-value ($F'=2.69$, $df=(14,12)$, $p=1.00$) was not significant indicating there was no difference on its perceived importance after treatment. The t-values for financial management skill ($F'=1.35$, $df=(14,12)$, $p=.61$), marketing management skill ($F'=1.37$, $df=(14,12)$, $p=.5895$), facility management skill ($F'=1.79$, $df=(14,12)$, $p=.32$) and human resource management skill ($F'=2.26$, $df=(14,12)$, $p=.16$) indicated that there were no significant differences on the perceived importance between the pretest and the posttest.

Hypotheses: 2-A, 2-B, 2-C, 2-D, 2-E, 2-A', 2-B', 2-C', 2-D', 2-E'

The t-test assumed the null hypotheses that there were no significant differences on perceived importance of general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills, and human resource management skills across gender in the pretest and posttest.

Table VIII presented the t-test results for the pretest; Table IX presented the t-test results for the posttest.

Table VIII

T-TEST ON PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE FOR THE CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS GENDER IN THE PRETEST

Skill Category	Gender	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	T	P
General Management	M	37.2	3.63	-.67	.51
	F	39.0	6.00	-.60	.56
Financial Management	M	44.6	4.67	-.43	.68
	F	46.0	7.09	-.39	.71
Marketing Management	M	30.2	2.05	-.47	.65*
	F	31.4	6.52	-.39	.71*
Facility Management	M	27.0	1.41	-.83	.43**
	F	28.4	4.31	-.68	.51**
Human Resource Management	M	58.4	3.29	-2.30	.04
	F	64.0	5.50	-2.04	.07

* Prob>F'=.0410 **Prob>F'=.0481

N=5 for male

N=8 for female

In the pretest, the t-values for general management skill ($F'=2.73$, $df(7,4)$, $p=.35$), financial management skill ($F'=2.31$, $df(7,4)$, $p=.44$), and human resource management skill ($F'=2.80$, $df(7,4)$, $p=.34$) indicated that there were no significant differences on the perceived importance across gender in the pretest.

The t-values for marketing management skill ($F'=10.13$, $df(7,4)$, $p=.04$) and facility management skill ($F'=9.28$, $df(7,4)$, $p=.05$) indicated that there were significant differences in the perceived importance on marketing management skill and facility management skill across gender in the pretest.

Table IX

T-TEST ON PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE FOR THE CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS GENDER IN THE POSTTEST

Skill Category	Gender	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	t	p
General Management	M	38.2	6.98	-.56	.60
	F	40.1	4.25	-.66	.52
Financial Management	M	42.6	8.91	-.70	.51
	F	45.7	6.25	-.79	.44
Marketing Management	M	30.4	6.23	.26	.80
	F	29.5	6.26	.26	.80
Facility Management	M	26.0	5.83	-.27	.79
	F	26.8	4.24	-.30	.77
Human Resource Management	M	59.6	11.01	-.45	.67
	F	62.0	6.85	-.52	.61

N=5 for male

N=10 for female

In the posttest, the t-values for general management skill ($F'=2.69$, $df(4,9)$, $p=.20$), financial management skill ($F'=2.03$, $df(4,9)$, $p=.35$), marketing management skill ($F'=1.01$, $df(9,4)$, $p=1.00$), facility management skill ($F'=1.89$, $df(4,9)$, $p=.39$), and human resource management skill ($F'=2.59$, $df(4,9)$, $p=.22$) indicated that there were no significant difference on the perceived importance across gender.

Hypotheses: 3-A, 3-B, 3-C, 3-D, 3-E and 3-A', 3-B', 3-C', 3-D', 3-E'

The t-test assumed that there were no significant difference on perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills, and human resource management skills among different levels of academic status (sophomore, junior, and senior) in the pretest and posttest.

Since there were three levels of academic status, analysis of variance (ANOVA) model was used. Table X and Table XI presented the results of ANOVA for the pretest and the posttest.

Table X

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS ACADEMIC STATUS IN THE PRETEST

Skill Category	Df	ANOVA SS	Mean Square	F	p
General Management	2	62.10	31.05	1.23	.33
Financial Management	2	98.40	49.20	1.42	.29
Marketing Management	2	4.76	2.38	.08	.93
Facility Management	2	5.03	2.51	.18	.84
Human Resource Management	2	27.03	13.51	.42	.67

N=13

Table XI

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS ACADEMIC STATUS IN THE POSTTEST

Skill Category	Df	SS	Mean Square	F	p
General Management	2	60.03	30.01	1.16	.35
Financial Management	2	36.33	18.17	.33	.73
Marketing Management	2	153.69	76.85	2.59	.12
Facility Management	2	17.40	8.70	.37	.70
Human Resource Management	2	30.69	15.35	.21	.82

N=15

Table X showed the general management skill ($F=1.23$, $p=.33$), financial management skill ($F=1.42$, $p=.29$), marketing management skill ($F=.08$, $p=.93$), facility management skill ($F=.18$, $p=.84$) and human resource management skill ($F=.42$, $p=.67$) were not significant indicating that there were no significant difference across the levels of academic status in the pretest.

In the Table XI, the general management skill ($F=1.16$, $p=.35$), financial management skill ($F=.33$, $p=.73$), marketing management skill ($F=2.59$, $p=.12$), facility management skill ($F=.37$, $p=.70$), and human resource management skill ($F=.21$, $p=.82$) indicated that there were no significant difference across the levels of academic status in the posttest.

Hypotheses: 4-A, 4-B, 4-C, 4-D, 4-E and 4-A', 4-B', 4-C', 4-D', 4-E'

The correlated t-test assumed the null hypotheses that there were no significant differences on the perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills across lodging work experience in the pretest and posttest.

Table XII and Table XIII showed the result of the t-test for the pretest and posttest.

Table XII

T-TEST FOR CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS WORK EXPERIENCE IN LODGING INDUSTRY IN THE PRETEST

Skill Category	Work-Experience	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	t	p
General Management	No-Exp.	37.82	5.46	-1.93	.08
	Exp.	41.00	0	-.80	.44
Financial Management	No-Exp.	45.00	6.31	-.68	.59
	Exp.	48.00	5.66	-.62	.55
Marketing Management	No-Exp.	31.09	5.56	.42	.71
	Exp.	30.00	2.80	.26	.80
Facility Management	No-Exp.	28.00	3.74	.66	.54
	Exp.	27.00	1.41	.36	.72
Human Resource Management	No-Exp.	62.18	5.85	1.08	.31
	Exp.	60.00	1.41	.51	.62

N=13

Table XIII

T-TEST VALUES FOR CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILL, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS LODGING WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE POSTTEST

Skill Category	Work-Experience.	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	t	p
General Management	No-Exp.	38.54	5.61	-1.62	.13
	Exp.	42.00	2.58	-1.17	.26
Financial Management	No-Exp.	43.09	7.05	-1.64	.15
	Exp.	49.00	5.83	-1.49	.16
Marketing Management	No-Exp.	29.64	5.18	-.13	.90
	Exp.	30.25	8.96	-.17	.87
Facility Management	No-Exp.	26.00	4.49	-.67	.54
	Exp.	28.00	5.35	-.73	.48
Human Resource Management	No-Exp.	60.27	7.94	-.66	.54
	Exp.	63.75	9.323	-.72	.48

N=15

Table XII showed that there were no significant difference on perceived importance between the respondents who had lodging work experience and those who did not have lodging work experience by the categories of general management skills, financial management skill, marketing management skill, facility management skills and human resource management skills in the pretest.

Table XIII showed the same results. There were no significant differences on perceived importance between the respondents who had lodging work experience and those who did not have lodging work experience by the categories of general

management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills in the posttest.

Hypotheses: 5-A, 5-B, 5-C, 5-D, 5-E and 5-A', 5-B', 5-C', 5-D', 5-E'

There were no significant differences on perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills across work experience in food service in the pretest and posttest.

Table XIV and Table XV presented the t-test analysis results for those hypotheses.

Table XIV

T-TEST FOR CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS WORK EXPERIENCE IN FOOD SERVICE IN PRETEST

Skill Category	Work Experience	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	t	p
General Management	No-Exp.	39.33	2.89	.54	.60
	Exp.	38.00	5.72	.38	.71
Financial Management	No-Exp.	47.67	6.35	.69	.54
	Exp.	44.80	6.20	.70	.50
Marketing Management	No-Exp.	31.00	2.55	.04	.97
	Exp.	30.90	5.82	.03	.98
Facility Management	No-Exp.	29.00	1.00	1.10	.29
	Exp.	27.50	3.894	.64	.53
Human Resource Management	No-Exp.	60.00	1.00	-1.19	.26
	Exp.	62.40	6.11	-.66	.52

N=13

Table XV

T-TEST FOR CATEGORIES OF GENERAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS, MARKETING MANAGEMENT SKILLS, FACILITY MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SKILLS ACROSS WORK EXPERIENCE IN FOOD SERVICE IN THE POSTTEST

Skill Category	Work Experience	Mean of Sum Scores	Standard Deviation	T	P
General Management	No-Exp.	37.60	6.23	-.89	.41
	Exp.	40.40	4.58	-.99	.34
Financial Management	No-Exp.	42.20	8.23	-.88	.41
	Exp.	45.90	6.54	-.95	.36
Marketing Management	No-Exp.	26.60	4.98	-1.63	.13
	Exp.	31.40	6.10	-1.52	.15
Facility Management	No-Exp.	23.80	3.42	-1.93	.08
	Exp.	27.90	4.68	-1.73	.11
Human Resource Management	No-Exp.	58.20	10.99	-.85	.43
	Exp.	62.70	6.46	-1.01	.33

N=15

The t-values for general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills indicated that there were no significant difference between the respondents who had work experience in food service and those who did not have in the pretest and posttest.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the course HRAD 3363 Lodging Front Office System at the OSU's School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration by assessing the participants' perceptions on the importance of managerial skills related to the front office and room operation, which changed as a result of taking the course. Correlation in specific variables including gender, academic status and work experience with the different perceived importance of the managerial skills were also investigated.

The quasi-experimental method was used in this study. A pretest and a posttest were conducted at the beginning and the end of the spring semester 1998. The population for the study was comprised of the sixteen students who took the class at that semester.

A Likert scale survey instrument was used to accomplish the objectives of the study. The instrument contained three parts: level of students' agreement toward the room operation job and the laboratory assignment of course HRAD 3363, level of perceived importance of managerial skills in the category of general management, financial management, marketing management, facility management and human resource management, and demographic information.

Questionnaires were sent to the students who were taking the class at the third week as pretest; the identical questionnaires were sent to the same students who were

taking the class at the last week of the spring semester. Students were asked to complete the questionnaires after the class. The special time was chosen in order to encourage and guarantee the same group of students to involve in this study, although the study was voluntary. Total sixteen students returned the questionnaires in both pretest and posttest. Thirteen students completed the questionnaires in pretest and fifteen students completed the questionnaires in the posttest.

Summary of the Findings

Based upon the information gained as a result of the study, including the demographics, the following findings were identified:

Perceptions toward the laboratory assignments:

The students' perceptions on the laboratory assignments of the course HRAD 3363 decreased after the students taking the course. The agreement toward the satisfaction of the laboratory assignment statistic significantly decreased in the posttest.

Hypotheses H 1: A to E: There will be no significant difference in perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills after taking the course.

In general, there were no statistically significant differences in perceived importance between the pretest and posttest. By close examination of the students' ratings, the researcher found that the students rated general management more important after taking the class, on the contrary, the financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills were reported less important after taking the class.

Hypotheses H 2: A to E and A' to E': There will be no significant difference in perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing

management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills across gender in both the pretest and posttest.

The results in this study turned out that there were statistically significant difference in perceived important on marketing management and facility management skills across gender in pretest. But there were no significant differences on other managerial skills across gender in both the pretest and posttest. The female students in this study perceived the general, financial, human resource and facility management skills more important and marketing management skills less important in both pretest and posttest compared with the male students.

Hypotheses H 3: A to E and A' to E': There will be no significant differences in perceived importance on the general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills across academic status in the pretest and posttest.

There were three levels of academic status involved in this study. Most students were in their junior and senior years. The researcher found that there were no significant differences in perceived importance on those managerial skills across the different academic status.

Hypotheses H 4: A to E and A' to E': There will be no significant differences in perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills across the lodging work experience in the pretest and posttest.

There were no statistically significant differences in perceived importance of those managerial skills found. A small number of students in this study had work experience in lodging industry. The students who had lodging work experience rated the general management skills and financial management skills a little higher than those who did not have lodging work experience in the pretest. But in the posttest, the average

scores from the students who had lodging work experience were higher than those who did not have lodging work experience in all categories of the managerial skills.

Hypotheses H5: A to E and A' to E': There will be no significant differences in perceived importance on general management skills, financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills across food service work experience in the pretest and posttest.

There were no statistically significant differences in perceived importance on those managerial skills found in both the pretest and posttest. It was observed that there were more food service experience in the pretest and posttest. The difference in perceived importance on human resource management skills in the pretest was near to significant given the p value equaled to 0.0526.

In the pretest, the students who had food service work experience rated the importance of general, financial, marketing, facility management skills lower than those who did not have food service experience. But in the posttest, the situation turned out to be that all average scores from the students who had food services were higher than those students who did not have food service experiences.

Discussion

The findings in this study were far from conclusive due to the small sample size and lack of a control group. Based on the findings of the study the following conclusion were drawn:

1. It is inappropriate to believe that the students were completely satisfied with the laboratory assignments of the course HRAD 3363.
2. Taking the course HRAD 3363 did not affect the students' perceived importance of the managerial skills including general management skills,

financial management skills, marketing management skills, facility management skills and human resource management skills.

3. There existed different perceptions on the perceived importance of the managerial skills across gender, although this study itself can not explain why the difference existed.

Since it was the first time for the course HRAD 3363 to provide students with hands-on experience from laboratory assignments at the OSU Student Union hotel. It is understandable that the students had high perceptions toward the laboratory assignments. At the other hand, by examining the laboratory assignments, the research found that most of the assignments focused on the basic service procedures of the room and front office operation instead of the managerial issues which ask high level of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This helps to explain why the students' perception toward the laboratory assignment decreased after taking the course.

The validity of the research was challenged by the instrument and the design itself. The one-group pretest-posttest design was used in this research. History, maturation, regression, instrumentation and testing competed explanation frequently this type of quasi-experimental design. The history threat can not be ruled out in the study. Since most students in this study were juniors and seniors, who had taking or were taking courses on marketing, human resource and other operational courses, the researcher had to admit that it is difficult to draw confident causal conclusion in this study. Since three students and one student did not complete the questionnaires in the pretest and posttest separately, that caused the pretest and posttest groups were less than totally comparable, the plausible threats to the validity of the study was increased significantly.

Weimer (1993) suggested that five components of effective instruction: 1) enthusiasm, 2) preparation and organization, 3) ability to stimulate student thought and interest, 4) clarity, and 5) knowledge and love of the content. The current study only examined or tried to examine the effect of taking the course to stimulate the students thought and knowledge of the content. It did not examine the effectiveness of how the instructor delivered the class from the points suggested above by Weimer. It can hardly draw a simple conclusion whether the course was effective or not in this case.

Recommendations for Future Study

The course HRAD 3363, Lodging Front Office System, was the first laboratory class on the hotel front office and room operation in the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration. The information presented in this study should be useful to the instructor of the course in improving the quality of the curriculum. Hospitality industry with the emphasis on service required the management programs to devote attention to the art of managing people. The current laboratory courses in hospitality programs often focused on the procedures of operation and techniques of services. Acquainting students with human and organizational behaviors are becoming more and more important. (Thomas, 1989). The information presented in the study implicated this demand.

The following recommendations for practice in the future study are offered:

1. As a junior level class, the HRAD 3363 should more focus on stimulating students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities and enhancing students' ability to analyze behavior in the work place. More creative laboratory assignments need to be designed and provided.

2. Absence of a control group was problematic in that this study might be tempted to ascribe any gains in the targeted skill areas to learning in the context of this course in front office and room operation. This study was exploratory. Future research designs should consider the use of a control group.

3. Only pooled data were used in the current study. Paired data in this type of research was deemed to have greater power available for data analysis to determine if there exists difference after taking the treatment.

4. Weimer's suggestions on the components of effective instruction implied to use multiple methods to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum. More construct on the questionnaire to measure students' beliefs and attitudes toward the course itself were requested in future research design.

It is important for a hospitality management program to evaluate the effectiveness of its curriculum consistent and continuously. It helps the instructor to redesign the curriculum and make it more effective and efficient. This study was just the beginning; as the program develops into mature, further investigation must be undertaken to better evaluate the effectiveness of the courses and better serve both the students and the industry's needs.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
INSTRUMENT

Career Opportunities Evaluation

This survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. It consists of 2 sections. Section I lists a number of statements about the laboratory course and asks you to rank your level of agreement with each statement. Section II asks you to describe the level of importance of each management skill with regard to a successful lodging room operations manager. Please do not put your name on any page.

Section I: Review the statements listed below. What level of agreement do you have with each statement related to HRAD 3363?

Circle the level of agreement from 1 to 5 for each statement.

- Rating Scale: 1 -Strongly Disagree
 2 -Disagree
 3 -Undecided
 4 -Agree
 5 -Strongly Agree

LEVEL OF AGREEMENT

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Some room operations jobs seem reasonable to me.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have clear ideas about possible room operations jobs for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I will not learn anything about room operations jobs through the laboratory assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I have some clear ideas about unsuitable room operations jobs for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I will learn something about myself through the laboratory assignments.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The laboratory assignments will be a good experience for me.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I would recommend the class and its laboratory assignments to a friend.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The laboratory assignments will encourage me to find out more information about room operations jobs.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The laboratory assignments will be unsatisfactory in learning more about room operations jobs.	1	2	3	4	5

Section II: Review the management skills listed. How important is each skill for a manager in lodging room operations?

Circle the level of importance from 1 to 5 to indicate the level of importance of skills required in lodging room operations.

- Rating Scale: 1 -Not importance
 2 -Minor Importance
 3 -Moderate Importance
 4 -Major Importance
 5 -Critical Importance

	<u>LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE</u>				
	Not Importance	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Critical Importance
1. Preparing financial plans	1	2	3	4	5
2. Establishing financial goals	1	2	3	4	5
3. Authorizing expenditures	1	2	3	4	5
4. Managing purchasing processes	1	2	3	4	5
5. Monitoring purchasing controls	1	2	3	4	5
6. Developing financial forecasts	1	2	3	4	5
7. Monitoring financial performance	1	2	3	4	5
8. Recognizing cost variances and causes	1	2	3	4	5
9. Developing financial corrective action plans	1	2	3	4	5
10. Developing plans to correct financial deficiencies	1	2	3	4	5
11. Comparing financial results to budgets	1	2	3	4	5
12. Enforcing quality and service standards	1	2	3	4	5
13. Developing operational plans	1	2	3	4	5
14. Implementing operational plans	1	2	3	4	5
15. Assuring quality customer experiences	1	2	3	4	5
16. Identifying operational problems or issues	1	2	3	4	5
17. Monitoring effective labor scheduling techniques	1	2	3	4	5
18. Developing solutions to operational problems or issues	1	2	3	4	5
19. Implementing corrective action for operational problems	1	2	3	4	5
20. Enforcing organizational policies and procedures	1	2	3	4	5
21. Supervising the execution of organizational marketing and promotional plans	1	2	3	4	5
22. Developing in-house advertising programs and promotional materials	1	2	3	4	5
23. Implementing marketing concepts and promotional programs	1	2	3	4	5
24. Developing an awareness of customer preferences	1	2	3	4	5

	Not Importance	Minor Importance	Moderate Importance	Major Importance	Critical Importance
25. Assessing competitor operations, including marketing and advertising campaigns	1	2	3	4	5
26. Gathering consumer research information	1	2	3	4	5
27. Assisting in community relations programs	1	2	3	4	5
28. Supervising new product introduction	1	2	3	4	5
29. Approving low-cost improvements to facilities	1	2	3	4	5
30. Recommending more costly improvements to facilities	1	2	3	4	5
31. Supervising preventative maintenance programs	1	2	3	4	5
32. Supervising outside contractors performing maintenance or improvements	1	2	3	4	5
33. Monitoring security and safety procedures	1	2	3	4	5
34. Recognizing hotel safety issues	1	2	3	4	5
35. Conducting cost benefit analysis for repair and maintenance proposal	1	2	3	4	5
36. Analyzing personnel needs and developing manpower plans	1	2	3	4	5
37. Training and developing employees	1	2	3	4	5
38. Supervising training programs	1	2	3	4	5
39. Preparing employees for promotion	1	2	3	4	5
40. Effectively managing employee relations issues	1	2	3	4	5
41. Conducting formal performance evaluations	1	2	3	4	5
42. Minimizing employee turnover	1	2	3	4	5
43. Coaching/Motivating employees	1	2	3	4	5
44. Taking disciplinary action when necessary	1	2	3	4	5
45. Ensuring personnel practices are in compliance with all regulations	1	2	3	4	5
46. Modeling effective supervisory behavior	1	2	3	4	5
47. Maintaining a favorable work environment	1	2	3	4	5
48. Serving as a resource to employees	1	2	3	4	5
49. Providing constructive feedback to employees when appropriate	1	2	3	4	5

Section III: Demographics

Please circle one answer or fill in the blank.

1. Your gender is (circle one):
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
2. Class:
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Graduate Student
3. How old are you? _____
4. Status:
 - a. In State Student
 - b. Out of State Student
 - c. International Student
5. Work Experience:
 - a. Lodging (years) _____
 - b. Food Service (years) _____
 - c. Other _____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

APPENDIX B
COVER LETTER

Dear Student:

The School of Hotel Administration believes this new hands-on approach to teaching lodging operations will provide students real-time hotel service and management experience. Understanding students' attitude and perception on the effectiveness of this experience-based simulation course is very important to curriculum development.

We ask that you complete a short questionnaire, which focuses on your perceptions toward lodging careers and the skills necessary for success. **Your responses will remain anonymous.** The grade you receive in this course will not be related in any way to your participation (or lack of) in this study. Receiving your views is extremely important to the outcome of this study.

Thank you again for your time and willingness to participate in this study. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please call us at (405)744-8483 or Gay Clarkson, Institutional Review Board Secretary, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK74078; telephone number: (405) 744-5700.

Sincerely,

Tian Jing, B. A.
Graduate Research Assistant

Jeff Beck, Ph.D
Assistant Professor

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

IRB # 10-001-000

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Appendix C: IRB Consent Form

APPENDIX C

IRB CONSENT FORM

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: January 30, 1998

IRB #: HE-98-047

Proposal Title: CURRICULUM EVALUATION: EFFECTIVENESS OF A REAL-TIME HOTEL
LABORATORY COURSE

Principal Investigator(s): Jeffrey A. Beck, Tian Jing

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

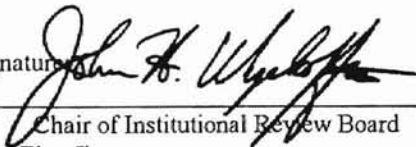
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT
NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE
APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR
PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE
SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature



Chair of Institutional Review Board

Cc: Tian Jing

Date: January 30, 1998

VITA

Jing Tian

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CURRICULUM EVALUATION: EFFECTIVENESS OF A REAL TIME LABORATORY COURSE

Major Field: Hospitality Management

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tianjin, People's Republic of China, on June 12, 1971, the daughter of Zhong Qi Tian and Zun Ying Jiang.

Education: Graduated from Xin Hua Highschool, Tianjin, P. R. China in July 1989; received Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from Tianjin University of Commerce, Tianjin, P. R. China in June 1993; Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Hotel and Restaurant Administration at Oklahoma State University in December, 1998.

Experience: Assistant manager of Front Office Department at Tian Hua Hotel, Tianjin, P. R. China, 1993-1996; Employed by Oklahoma State University, School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration, 1996 to present.