

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The hotel industry is a key driver of tourism and is also recognized as a pillar of Macau's economy. Its significance keeps on growing with burgeoning investments in hotel projects in the region. The success of the hotel industry considerably depends on the service that employees provide. Facing a limited labor market that could meet the standard of quality service and the keen labor competition in the gaming industry, training and development among hotel staff plays an essential role in maintaining and enhancing employee performance.

The objective of this study is to investigate the training and development needs of the hotel industry in Macau. It adopts a qualitative approach using Macau data obtained in the first quarter of 2007 and collected through semi-structured and open-ended interviews with 10 managers and 21 employees of 3-star to 5-star hotels. This is supplemented with the researcher's workplace observations on the training needs of various hotels.

The research adopted the needs analysis framework of Noe (2005) and Blanchard & Thacker (2004) to develop the interview questions used in evaluating the training and development needs of the industry. Based on the needs analysis framework, the interview questions were developed according to organizational, operational and person analyses for both managers and employees.

The findings of the study support the proposition that training and development

needs of the hotel industry in Macau are principally determined by operational analysis, and secondarily by organizational and person analysis. It also showed variations in the training needs among 3-star, 4-star and 5-star hotels. Five-star hotels placed more effort and resources to obtain the necessary data in analyzing the actual training needs of the employees than 4-star and 3-star hotels. Furthermore, 5-star hotels provided a greater variety of training programs given the fact that they have more resources at hand.

A majority of the managers and employees that were interviewed suggested further training based on personal needs. They emphasized the need for training programs focusing on improving interpersonal relationships, leadership development and management skills. Employees clamored for programs related to handling daily operations as well as advancing their personal career through personalized training. Managers also agreed that more training should be devoted to developing employees' leadership skill so they could work independently.

Implications drawn from this research have practical significance for both hoteliers and hotel educators. In the coming years, the hotel industry will continue to be an important part of the tourism industry and play an essential role in Macau's economy. Further research on each of the hotel categories is suggested given their uniqueness and the special training and development needs of their respective staff members.