# A Comparative Study of Students’ Perceptions of Managerial Competencies and their Implications on Tourism and Hospitality Education in Botswana

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| **ABSTRACT**  Educational institutions act as avenues for human resource development in the tourism and hospitality industry. However, research, though anecdotal, indicates that institutions of higher education in Botswana have failed to inculcate the skills and competencies required for tourism and hospitality graduates. This study is therefore based on tourism and hospitality students’ perceptions towards managerial competencies that would enable them to work and become successful managers in the industry upon graduation. The self-assessment of managerial skills (SAMS) instrument was used on a purposive sample of 84 students from the University of Botswana and 150 students at Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. Findings reveal dominance of the mentor role amongst both sets of students. This finding to some extent reveals that students from both universities have higher levels of human relations skills than other skills. Such findings have implications on academia’s approach to teaching and learning in tourism and hospitality. For instance, faculties and industry partners are encouraged to allow students the opportunity and flexibility to engage in supervisory and coordination roles through such activities as executive shadow training and student managed projects.  **Keywords:** tourism and hospitality education, managerial competencies, students’ perceptions |

**INTRODUCTION**

The intensive nature of the tourism and hospitality industry and its personalized approach to service has created a need for a reliable source of educated professionals, with requisite competency skills. A number of studies investigating this relationship (e.g. Baum, 2002; Chapman & Lovell, 2006) instigate the importance of imparting and enhancing relevant competency skills in tourism and hospitality graduates. However most of these studies have been based on employers’ or industry’s perceptions of competencies required of undergraduates. Thus, being criticised of adopting a one sided perspective that ignores undergraduates’ own perceptions (Christou, 2000). In order to address this gap, students at two prominent institutions in Botswana that offer undergraduate education and training in tourism and/or hospitality were surveyed. This study was undertaken for two main reasons: to identify the strongest and weakest managerial competencies of tourism students at Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (hereinafter referred to as Limkokwing University) and to compare these competencies with those of tourism and hospitality students at the University of Botswana (UB). This is an exploratory study aimed at examining if differences in students’ perceptions of managerial competencies required for tourism and hospitality at the two institutions exist. The findings could be used to inform academia of learning and teaching approaches required for tourism and hospitality management.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Tourism is widely recognised as an engine for employment creation. In 2012 alone, it was responsible for the creation of 10% of all new jobs. The industry continues to grow faster than the manufacturing, financial services and retail sectors (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2013). Botswana Tourism Board (BTB) (2009:12) however acknowledges the shortage of ‘Batswana who possess the relevant qualifications and experience to function at managerial levels’. Although Botswana mainly relies on expatriate labour for senior level positions, this has been highly criticised for its relationship with repatriation of foreign earnings and the creation of a ‘high end’ type of tourism (Mbaiwa, 2005).

In order to address the critical skills shortage in the industry, Botswana introduced its first Tourism and Hospitality Management Programme in 2006. Before then the country had no formal training institute for tourism and hospitality degree programmes (Kendall, 2002). The country had responded to such challenges by offering scholarships to students for studying tourism and hospitality at Bachelor degree levels, in countries such as South Africa, Australia, USA, Switzerland, Kenya, and Zimbabwe (BTB, 2009). Nevertheless, many stakeholders believe that a considerable number of students, who have received training in the areas of hospitality and tourism abroad, are not really interested in working in the industry upon graduation (BTB, 2009). Faced with such challenges and in order to further emphasise on development of tourism and hospitality management and professional services, a number of private and public institutions, such as Limkokwing University, ABM University College and Ba Isago University College offering training in these fields have recently opened up in the country. However even with such progress, the Training Needs Analysis Report (BTB, 2009) indicated that most of these institutions, both private and public, provide content that is inadequate or content that is not fully aligned to the industry’s needs. The Training Needs Report further highlights a ‘mismatch’ of skills as tourism and hospitality graduates for instance, even upon graduation would still not have the adequate knowledge, skills or training required by employers. This is in support of Riggs and Hughey (2011), who observe the existence of a long-standing gap between what industries would expect from graduates and the skills and competencies that students possess, generally.

Botswana’s prioritised investment in the tourism industry should be coupled by prioritised human resources development for the tourism and hospitality industry. The main objective of educators is to provide industry with the appropriate human resource capital, possessing requisite management competencies (Christou, 2002). The extent to which these institutions have been successful in imparting such skills is worth considering in the context of Botswana. Manwa, Chipfuva and Mahachi, (2011) clearly reiterate that most tourism and hospitality programmes offered in the country have been salient on which skills or competencies they aim to equip students with. In addition, no skills or competency audits amongst graduates have been done at national level to investigate the effectiveness of such programmes (Manwa, et al., 2011). In the context of Botswana, employers in general expect, *inter alia,* communication skills, business administration and human relation skills amongst graduates for selection (Botswana Training Authority [BOTA], 2005: 19). In Botswana, the need to enhance personal skills and attributes such as communication skills in the industry was viewed as the number one factor required for Batswana’s progression into managerial positions, by all stakeholders consulted in the Training Needs Analysis Report (BTB, 2009: 80).

This study therefore draws from Quinn, Faerman, Thompson and McGrath’s (1996) Competing Values Framework (CVF), in order to identify skills and competencies required of tourism and hospitality students and the extent to which they perceive they exert such skills. The CVF, also explored by Walo (2001) and Dimmock, Breen, and Walo (2003) in Australia, was found to be ideal for the tourism and hospitality industry, as it offers the opportunity for an examination of key managerial skills and competencies necessary for the effectiveness of managers (Walo, 2001). The CVF (Figure 1) is based on four historical models of organizational theory (Quinn *et al*, 1996). From Figure 1, the human relations model is characterized by flexibility and an internal focus, while the open systems culture is dominated by flexibility and an external focus (Lamond, 2003). The internal process has an internal focus and a control orientation, while the rational goal model is characterized by an external focus and a control orientation (Lamond, 2003).

In relation to the four models, the CVF identifies eight management roles (innovator, mentor, broker, facilitator, producer, monitor, director, and coordinator), that emanate from these four models (Figure 1). These eight managerial roles are based on a grouping of management competencies. From Figure 1 for instance, the innovator role comprise three competencies: living with change, creative thinking and managing change. Each management role comprises three competencies giving a total of 24 competencies (Riggs & Hughey, 2011). Each role complements the ones next to it and contrasts with those opposite it (Lamond, 2003). An effective manager according to the model should be able to utilize all the four models (Lamond, 2003; Riggs & Hughey, 2011).

The CVF was used in a similar study for tourism and hospitality students at the UB (Mahachi, 2012). Findings revealed that students perceived themselves to be most confident in the managerial role of mentorship and in the competency of interpersonal communication. The study also revealed that students perceived themselves to be least competent in the managerial role of coordinating and the competency of controlling. This study was therefore meant to compare managerial competencies of tourism and hospitality students at the UB with those of tourism students at Limkokwing University.

**Figure 1: Competency Values Framework**



**Source: Quinn *et al*. cited in Dimmock, 1999.**

**METHODOLOGY**

This paper presents the results of a comparative study that was carried out among Tourism and Hospitality students of both the UB and Limkokwing University in Gaborone. Results from the UB have been presented in an earlier study (Mahachi, 2012). The study employed a survey approach, wherein the Self-Assessment of Managerial Skills (SAMS) instrument was adopted, modified and distributed to the students for self-assessment. The instrument was segmented into two parts. The first part captured a brief demographic profile of the respondent, in terms of such characteristics as age, gender and type of level of study. The second part comprises 113 statements describing a variety of competency skills in managerial work. The 113 statements are used to compute 24 competency variables and 8 managerial roles are illustrated in Table 1. For instance, the aggregate mean score obtained from statements 1, 25, 56, 80, 97 in Table 1, is the score for the competency of taking initiative, while the aggregate average score of statements 9, 33, 57, 88, 105 is the score for the competency of goal setting. Scores from statements 17, 41, 72, 89 are averaged to obtain the score for the competency of delegating. The average score of these three competencies: taking initiative, goal setting, and delegating, is the score for the director role. Table 1 further illustrates how the other 21 competencies and the other seven managerial roles are computed. Students were requested to respond to each statement using a Likert Scale ranging from 1-7, where 1 represented strongly disagree and 7 represented strongly agree. In essence the questionnaire was completely closed.

**Table 1**: **Computations of 24 Managerial Competencies and 8 Managerial Roles**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Statement** | **Competency** | **Role** |
| 1, 25, 56, 80, 97 | Taking Initiative | Director Role |
| 9,33,57,88,105 | Goal setting |
| 17, 41, 72, 89 | Delegating |
| 2, 26, 55, 79, 98 | Productivity | Producer Role |
| 10, 34, 58, 87, 106 | Motivating Others |
| 18, 42, 71, 96, 112 | Time and Stress management |
| 3, 27, 54, 78 | Planning | Coordinator Role |
| 11, 35, 59, 86, 99 | Organising |
| 19, 43, 70, 95 | Controlling |
| 4, 28, 53, 77, 100 | Reducing information | Monitor Role |
| 12, 36, 60, 85, 107 | Analyse information |
| 20, 44, 69, 94 | Written expression |
| 5, 29, 52, 76, 101 | Understanding self and others | Mentor Role |
| 13, 37, 61, 84, 108 | Interpersonal Communication |
| 21, 45, 68, 93 | Developing others |
| 6, 30, 51, 75 | Team building | Facilitator Role |
| 14, 38, 62, 83, 102 | Participative decision making |
| 22, 46, 67, 92 | Conflict management |
| 7, 31, 50, 74, 103, 111 | Living with change | Innovator Role |
| 15, 39, 63, 82, 109 | Creative thinking |
| 23, 47, 66, 91, 113 | Managing change |
| 8, 32, 49, 73, 104 | Power Base | Broker Role |
| 16, 40, 64, 81 | Negotiating |
| 24, 48, 65, 90, 110 | Oral Presentation |

For the UB, the survey instrument was administered during tutorial classes to a purposive sample of 84 students registered for the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Tourism and Hospitality Management (Mahachi, 2012). The degree introduced in 2006, is four years in duration and is offered by the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management within the Faculty of Business. For Limkokwing University, a purposive sample of 150 students enrolled for the Bachelor of Tourism Management Honours Degree was used. Questionnaires for Limkokwing students were distributed during classes where students would fill them in and return them to their respective lecturer at the beginning of the lecture. The Bachelor of Tourism Management Honours Degree at Limkokwing University is also four years in duration and offered within the Faculty of Business and Globalisation. A total sample of 215 students was surveyed. Of this total, 84 were from UB, while 150 were from Limkokwing University. The sample was selected through use of typical case purposive sampling as the group of students were deemed representative of the cases under study, who were mainly tourism and/or hospitality students (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). A purposive form of sampling was selected because students were not obliged to complete the questionnaire. In addition, responses were purposive retrieved from students who had attended classes on that particular day.

While the self-administration approach is known for such limitations as low response rate, and incomplete questionnaires (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000; Kitchin & Tate, 2000), it was particularly preferred for its ability to source un-prejudiced data from the respondents. Since the respondents were filling in the questionnaire themselves, it is believed that they ordinarily expressed their honest views on questions asked though opportunity for over reporting also existed (Breen, Walo, & Dimmock, 2004). Furthermore, the challenge of low response rate was addressed by way of asking the students to fill the questionnaire in class and return so that they could be checked for completion.

Mean ratings for the 24 competencies and 8 managerial roles observed were analysed from the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 19. Cronbach Alpha reliability tests were performed in order to measure the consistency of statements used in the study. In addition, *t*-tests were conducted to compare the perceptions of managerial competencies and roles by students from Limkokwing University with those of UB students.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

**Reliability Analysis**

The values of alpha for each managerial role (Table 2) fall within the acceptable range of 0.7 to 0.95 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). This means questionnaire items that measured the same managerial role, were related and consistent with each other.

**Demographic Profile of Limkokwing and University of Botswana Respondents**

Of the 150 surveys distributed among undergraduate students at Limkokwing University, 87.3% (N=131) were usable. There were more females than males in this study. At Limkokwing they accounted for 82% of the sample whilst for UB they represented 73% of the sample (Mahachi, 2012). Of all respondents, 59% were in the age brackets 21 – 23 and 16% were aged 24 – 26, while 15% represented those 18 – 20 years of age. Only 2.3% were 29 years and older. For the UB, the results are a bit dissimilar as the majority (59.7%) were aged 18-20 years (Mahachi, 2012). Third years were represented by 21.4%, while first and second year combined were at 27.5% (N=36). For both Universities the highest level of education amongst students was a Senior Secondary Certificate (91% for Limkokwing and 80.2% for UB). Most of the respondents (51.1%) were enrolled in level 4 (fourth year) of their Tourism Management programme at Limkokwing University, whilst the majority (44%) of students at UB were in their first year.

**Table 2:** **Inter-Item Reliability Analysis of Managerial Roles**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Managerial Role** | **Number of Questionnaire Statements** | **Cronbach Alpha value** |
| Director Role | 14 | .820 |
| Producer Role | 15 | .814 |
| Coordinator Role | 13 | .809 |
| Monitor Role | 14 | .820 |
| Mentor Role | 14 | .816 |
| Facilitator Role | 13 | .874 |
| Innovator Role | 16 | .822 |
| Broker Role | 14 | .868 |

**Students’ Perceptions of Managerial Competencies and Roles: A Comparison**

This section presents findings of students’ perceptions of managerial competencies and roles at Limkokwing University and makes a comparison with students’ perceptions from the University of Botswana. Table 2 presents the ranked mean scores of Limkokwing University students’ perceptions on managerial competencies. These have been presented alongside the UB’s students’ mean ratings of managerial competencies for comparison purposes.

*Mentor, Facilitator, Broker and Coordinator Roles*

Similarities in the ranking for the mentor, broker and coordinator roles at number one, seven and eight, respectively for both universities were noted in Table 3. The mentor role assessed by three competencies (‘interpersonal communication’, ‘understanding self and others’ and ‘developing others’) received the highest rating for both Universities. As illustrated in Table 4, in all of the ranked 24 management competencies, ‘Understanding self and others’ is ranked the highest with mean score of 5.55 and a standard deviation of 0.90, while ‘Controlling’ has the lowest mean score of 4.62 for Limkokwing. For the UB, the ‘understanding self and others’ competency shows a lower mean score of 5.40. In the case of the data from the UB sample, ‘Interpersonal communication’ is the highest of all the competencies with the mean score of 5.45 and a standard deviation of 0.87, but ‘interpersonal communication mean score for Limkokwing is lower with 5.37. This probably is an effect of exposure that students at the UB are exerted to during industrial attachment especially within hospitality institutions. The trend with hospitality training is an emphasis on the development of interpersonal skills, which have been under developed especially in hospitality management students (Weinstein, 1989 in Okeiyi *et al*., 1994). These skills are equally important, however, for tourism students as they interact with guests.

**Table 3 Ranked Mean Scores for Perceived Managerial Roles of Limkokwing Students**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Managerial Role** | **University of Botswana** | **Limkokwing University** | ***t*-value** | **Sig.** |
| Director | 5.096 | 5.244 | -1.330 | 0.185 |
| Producer | 5.029 | 5.256 | -1.972 | 0.050 |
| Coordinator | 4.757 | 4.985 | -1.734 | 0.084 |
| Monitor | 4.941 | 5.062 | -1.010 | 0.314 |
| Mentor | 5.316 | 5.395 | -0.720 | 0.472 |
| Facilitator | 5.032 | 5.193 | -1.206 | 0.229 |
| Innovator | 4.885 | 5.068 | -1.686 | 0.093 |
| Broker | 4.829 | 5.026 | -1.458 | 0.146 |
|  | **N=77** | **N= 131** |  |  |

Note: The negative *t*-values mean that mean scores for Limkokwing students’ perceptions were higher than those for the University of Botswana, for the related managerial roles.

Students from Limkokwing University perceived they were most competent in the mentor role at a mean score of 5.39 (Table 3). This perception for the mentor role was similar to findings from UB students (mean rating=5.31). This suggests commonality in the importance attached to human relations skills especially that the facilitator role also falls in the first half (in terms of mean ratings) of the eight managerial roles for both universities. Both the mentor and facilitator roles are part of the human relations model that relates to a management approach that builds cohesion, commitment and morale amongst workers (Walo, 2000). The facilitator role was assessed by use of the three management competencies of ‘participation’ , ‘team building’ and ‘conflict management’ with mean scores of 5.21, 5.23 and 5.14, respectively, for Limkokwing students. Overall results for the facilitator role for Limkokwing students were higher than those for UB students at means of 5.19 and 5.03 respectively (Table 3).

Higher ratings for the mentor and facilitator roles greatly imply the ability of the tourism and/or hospitality students’ inclination towards human relation skills that allow them to successfully work in tourism and hospitality set ups that are service oriented. Human relation skills especially, mentor skills, allow them to relate well with others and to engage in teamwork, an aspect of work that is highly expected by tourism and hospitality employers. In essence the success of a hotel for instance depends on its team work (Hu, Horng & Sun, 2009). The industry requires graduates with strong human relations skills and as such, educators should provide the best opportunity for the enhancement of these skills throughout tourism and/or hospitality programmes (Walo, 2000).

The broker role was assessed by use of three competencies, that is, ‘power base’, ‘negotiating’ and ‘oral presentation’. In the analysis, the broker role is ranked number seven from the entire eight managerial roles (Table 3), with average scores ranging from 4.82 (oral presentations), 5.101 (negotiating) to 5.15 (power base) for Limkokwing students (Table 4). Mean scores for the ‘oral presentation’ competency for UB were lower (4.51) than Limkokwing (4.82). However in ranked order the broker role was ranked number seven out of the eight managerial roles by Limkokwing students.

**Table 4:** **Ranked Mean Scores for Perceived Managerial Competencies of Limkokwing Students**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Competency** | **University of Botswana** | **Limkokwing University** | ***t*-value** | **2-Tail Sig.** |
| Taking Initiative | 5.436 | 5.548 | -0.929 | 0.354 |
| Goal setting | 4.930 | 5.154 | -1.672 | 0.96 |
| Delegating | 4.925 | 5.036 | -0.805 | 0.422 |
| Productivity | 5.325 | 5.527 | -1.684 | 0.094 |
| Motivating Others | 5.029 | 5.235 | -1.482 | 0.140 |
| Time and Stress management | 4.730 | 4.950 | -1.854 | 0.065 |
| Planning | 5.130 | 5.385 | -1.751 | 0.081 |
| Organising | 4.805 | 5.006 | -1.029 | 0.305 |
| Controlling | 4.334 | 4.619 | -1.471 | 0.143 |
| Reducing information | 4.940 | 5.096 | -1.009 | 0.314 |
| Analyse information | 4.784 | 4.944 | -1.082 | 0.280 |
| Written expression | 5.091 | 5.141 | -0.355 | 0.723 |
| Understanding self and others | 5.403 | 5.551 | -1.158 | 0.248 |
| Interpersonal Communication | 5.449 | 5.366 | 0.614 | 0.540 |
| Developing others | 5.094 | 5.265 | -1.168 | 0.244 |
| Team building | 5.013 | 5.229 | -1.476 | 0.142 |
| Participative decision making | 5.086 | 5.206 | -0.869 | 0.386 |
| Conflict management | 4.991 | 5.140 | -0.962 | 0.337 |
| Living with change | 5.130 | 5.305 | -1.643 | 0.102 |
| Creative thinking | 4.956 | 5.087 | -1.198 | 0.232 |
| Managing change | 4.569 | 4.812 | -1.416 | 0.158 |
| Power Base | 4.922 | 5.151 | -1.722 | 0.087 |
| Negotiating | 5.058 | 5.107 | -0.370 | 0.712 |
| Oral Presentation | 4.506 | 4.820 | -1.610 | 0.109 |
| **Note:** The negative *t*-values mean that mean scores for Limkokwing students’ perceptions were higher than those for the University of Botswana, for the related managerial competencies. | | | | |

Students from both universities perceived themselves to be least competent in the managerial role of coordinator at 4.99 and 4.76 for Limkokwing and UB, respectively. The coordinator role was measured by two competency variables of ‘organizing’ and ‘controlling’. In the case of the Limkokwing sample, the ‘organizing’ competency has average scores of 4.95 and ‘controlling’ has 4.63. In addition, students from both Universities perceived themselves to be less competent in the controlling aspect of the coordinator role. Students from both universities perceived themselves to be least competent in the managerial role of coordination, probably due to a lack of adequate work experience. In addition, the majority of students (59%) were generally young (21-23 years) and would have not acquired prior work experience important in building capacity in coordination. In order to enhance coordination skills, Mahachi (2012) suggests the adoption of activities beyond traditional class room instruction where students could engage in volunteerism in clubs for instance.

*Producer, Director, Innovator and Monitor Roles*

The Producer role obtained a higher mean rating at 5.26 for Limkokwing students in comparison to a mean rating of 5.03 for students at the UB (see Table 3). This role was ranked second after the mentor role by Limkokwing students but fourth by UB students. The Producer role comprises competencies of ‘productivity’, ‘motivating others’ and ‘time and stress management’. Limkokwing students’ perceptions were higher in these three competencies than they were for UB students (Table 4). Because of the higher ratings in the producer role, these results imply that Limkokwing students perceive themselves of having higher productivity levels, and as such are more task oriented and work focused than their counterparts. This raises implications on the employability of tourism and hospitality as employers would most likely recruit employees who are task oriented and work focused. On the other hand, this raises some concern for academics at UB as they need to prepare their students to be more focused with work.

In total, the director role came third after producer role (see Table 3).With reference to this role, respondents from Limkokwing, rated ‘taking initiative’ at 5.548, ‘goal setting’ at 5.15 and ‘delegating’ at 5.07 (Table 4). In these three management competencies as perceived by the respondents, ‘delegating’ competency became the least perceived with a 5.07 mean code. In the case of UB, the mean score for ‘delegating’ was 4.923. Overall observation is that, more students at Limkokwing are more responsive to the ‘delegating’ competency than those at UB.

The innovator role comprises two competencies, ‘living with change’ with a mean score of 5.30 and ‘managing change’ at 4.81. Based on analysis, both Limkokwing and UB students ranked ‘managing change’ competency lower with 4.81 and 4.57 respectively. This could be because at undergraduate level, most students have never worked and therefore would not be competent with managing change in tourism and hospitality related enterprises or organizations. Academics should rely more on internship based work experience to impart such skills.

The monitor role is constructed from three management competencies which include: written expression, reducing information and analysing information and with the averages of items ranging from 5.14, 5.10, and 4.94 respectively (Table 4). Comparatively, both Limkokwing and UB students’ competence in ‘written information’ is relatively similar (5.14; 5.09), while ‘analysing information’ is higher with Limkokwing than UB students.

**Results of Independent Sample *t*-tests**

Independent sample t-tests were conducted on mean scores for perceptions of managerial competencies and roles from both universities. Results indicate that, there were no significant differences between Limkokwing students’ perceptions and UB students’ perceptions of their managerial competencies (Table 4). In addition there were no significant differences between the perceptions of managerial roles amongst students from both universities (Table 3). Specifically these statistical results suggest that perceptions were similar though mean ratings were higher for Limkokwing University in all but one of the managerial competencies.

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This paper used results from studies conducted among Tourism and Hospitality undergraduate students at the Universities of Botswana and Limkokwing in Gaborone. A modified version of the Self-Assessment of Managerial skills (SAMS) instrument was used in both instances. The mean averages for student perceptions on competencies associated with the eight roles on Quinn et al.’s (1996) Competency Values Framework (CVF) were computed and compared between the two institutions. In essence, this study has conclusively highlighted that Limkokwing students had high perceptions of their managerial competencies and roles. In all the managerial competencies except for ‘interpersonal communication’, mean scores were relatively higher for Limkokwing students than for the UB students. This would be probably because the sample from Limkokwing comprised more fourth year level students than other levels. However, this does not in any way rule out the possibilities of over and under reporting by students. Neither does it disregard the fact that training at the two institutions may inadvertently place emphasis on different managerial competencies. The latter point is given more impetus by the fact that even the programs offered by the two Universities, themselves, have different nomenclature. The University of Botswana offers a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Tourism and Hospitality Management degree, while Limkokwing University offers a Bachelor of Tourism Management Honours Degree. Nonetheless, students from both universities compete for and are absorbed into positions within the same industry.

Findings also indicate that mean scores in all the eight managerial roles for Limkokwing students were also relatively higher than for the UB students. The study has revealed that students from the two universities perceived themselves to be highly competent in the mentor role. The mentor role is an important managerial role that allows students to interact with others as a team. This clearly implies that tourism and hospitality students from the two universities meet employers’ expectations as far as human relation skills are concerned. However, the fact that UB students’ fared low in relation to Limkokwing students, in all the eight managerial roles, raises concern for their future employability and performance in the industry. This is reiterated by employers’ observations that in general, employees in the tourism and hospitality industry, lack capacity in managerial and leadership skills (BTB, 2009). Faculties and industry partners are therefore urged to emphasise training associated with the accumulation of supervisory and coordination skills. Such training can comprise of executive shadowing and management traineeship programmes. Although some hotel companies have offered management training to University of Botswana students, this is a privilege for only a selected number of students, in most cases, the best performing students per cohort. In future, the curriculum and hence the tourism programmes offered at both universities should emphasise more training targeted at the acquisition of key management and leadership skills which are currently an area of concern amongst employees in the tourism industry as mentioned.

The study also revealed low perceptions of the coordinator role from both universities. The faculties in particular should offer a blend of learning experiences in the curriculum that could be used to develop these competencies. For instance academics should inherently rely on the importance of programmes such as internship in imparting these requisite skills. Through such programmes, tasks that assume coordination functions could be assigned to students at the host organisation by the faculties. Host organisations should also be flexible in allowing students the opportunity to exercise delegation and coordination functions. As such, faculties and industry should work together in addressing these competency skills.

Though mean scores for managerial competencies and roles were relatively higher in the case of Limkokwing students, results of independent sample *t*-tests indicate that there were no statistically significant differences between students’ perceptions from the two universities. However, given the nature of the research tool that was mainly close ended, there is still need for a follow up study where qualitative techniques could be used to elicit more possible reasons behind these findings. This study also opens up avenues for future research investigating the existence of any relationship between students’ perceptions before graduation and their perceptions upon recruitment within the industry.

In the final analysis, this paper sheds light on a commonly ignored, and yet very critical, area of scholarship. Student perceptions of their own competencies are vital in understanding the literature on the relationship between employer expectations and perceptions of skills sets possessed by graduates of feeder institutions. With Botswana Tourism Board’s needs analysis study reporting that tourism and hospitality graduates in Botswana are either inadequately trained or lack the requisite skills for the industry, it is only critical to find out the way in which the said graduates evaluate themselves in this regard.

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