

**AN INVESTIGATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ENROLLMENT
IN THE LESTER E. KABACOFF SCHOOL OF HOTEL,
RESTAURANT AND TOURISM ADMINISTRATION**

By

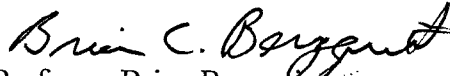
Ricardo Fredricks

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree

Hospitality and Tourism

Approved: 3 Semester Credit


Professor Brian Bergquist
Investigation Advisor

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin-Stout
July 30, 2003

The Graduate School
University of Wisconsin – Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

<u>Fredricks</u>	..	<u>Ricardo</u>	<u>J</u>
(Writer) (Last Name)		(First)	(Initial)

AN INVESTIGATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ENROLLMENT IN THE LESTER
E. KABACOFF SCHOOL OF HOTEL, RESTAURANT AND TOURISM
ADMINISTRATION

(Title)

<u>Hospitality and Tourism</u>	<u>Brian Bergquist</u>	... June 30, 2003	<u>42</u>
(Graduate Major)		(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)	(No. Of Pages)

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association
(Name of Style of Manual used in this Study)

Abstract

The rhythmic Jazz music, spicy Creole cuisine, eclectic architecture, Mardi Gras and the bohemian “party” population combine to create a unique “melting pot” culture and beautiful city. Although the population of New Orleans consists of persons from virtually every ethnicity the city proper is 66 percent African American.

The uniqueness of New Orleans beckons people from all parts of the world to visit and as a result makes it a huge tourism destination with 35,000 (and growing) hotel rooms. The lodging industry, as with most hospitality service businesses, is labor intensive and requires an inordinately large number of front-line employees. In New Orleans African Americans occupy the majority of front-line positions, however, as tourism and the lodging industry continue to expand and dominate the economy of New Orleans, it is apparent that the city's largest population segment, is underrepresented within the highest levels of management in the lodging industry. Nevertheless, African Americans are choosing to prepare themselves for upper management careers in other industries as opposed to the lodging industry.

The primary objective of the research was to investigate the serious and perplexing challenge of recruiting African American students by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans. To this end, the study has revealed that the recruiting deficit of African American students experienced by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Administration as being generated by the school, the lodging industry, and possibly an innate bias of the local African American community towards the service industries.

Furthermore, the study has revealed that the shortcomings and challenges experienced in the areas of leadership, change and diversity by the New Orleans lodging industry are not unique or limited to the New Orleans area but pervasive throughout the lodging industry.

In addition to identifying a possible bias toward the service industry within the African American community and reporting shortcomings of both the School and the lodging industry as contributors to the recruiting deficit of African American students at the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration; the study proposes strategies that could be implemented to: (a) increase African American enrollment in the school; (b) augment the number of upper managerial positions held by African Americans; and (c) ultimately change the observation of the African American community that the lodging industry is not openly inviting, ripe with opportunity, and a worthy career path to pursue.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to extend a sincere thank you to those who have supported me in the completion this research project.

Brian Bergquist
Faculty Advisor
University of Wisconsin – Stout

Dr. Yvette Green
Editor
University of New Orleans

Ms. Martha Said
Administrative Assistant
University of New Orleans

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	ii
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Introduction.....	1
Need for the study.....	2
Statement of purpose.....	2
Objectives of the study.....	2
Limitations.....	3
Overview of the study.....	4
 CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Leadership.....	5
Change.....	7
Diversity.....	9
The Lodging Industry.....	11
Summary.....	13
 CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Introduction.....	14
Statement of purpose.....	14

Objectives.....	15
Research design.....	15
Sample.....	16
Research instrument.....	16
Research procedures.....	16
Treatment of the data.....	18
Summary.....	19

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction.....	20
Objective one findings.....	21
Objective two findings.....	25
Objective three findings.....	26
Summary.....	28

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction.....	29
Limitations.....	30
Conclusion.....	31
Creating Awareness (The School of HRT).....	32
Creating Awareness (The Industry).....	34
Implications.....	37

Recommendations for further study.....38

REFERENCES.....39

APPENDIX A.....41

Chapter One

Introduction

The rhythmic Jazz music, spicy Creole cuisine, eclectic architecture, Mardi Gras and the bohemian “party” culture combine to entice people from all parts of the world to visit and experience first-hand the uniqueness of New Orleans. [The Big Easy] New Orleans is a popular tourism destination hosting 8 million visitors and 3000 business meetings annually. In addition, visitor spending generates \$258.86 million in tax revenue for the local government. Furthermore, tourism creates \$2.19 billion of income for New Orleans residents, which constitutes 18.5% of all personal income and helps to support 138,400 jobs (Perry, 2003). Although tourism is the foundation “core” of the New Orleans economy and employs thousands of African Americans in front-line positions, it appears that African American College of Business Administration students at the University of New Orleans are not embracing the lodging industry as a viable career path.

The justification for such a statement is based on the fact that the undergraduate enrollment of African Americans in the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration (HRTA), a school within the College of Business Administration, is only 10%. However, by comparison, the enrollment of African American students in both the College of Business Administration (COB) and the University of New Orleans (UNO) is 19%.

Need for the study

The low enrollment of African Americans in the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration necessitates investigation because the African American population of New Orleans is 66%. According to the 2002 U.S. Census, the city of New Orleans is ranked tenth among most populated African American city. Furthermore, African Americans occupy the lion's share of front-line positions in the local lodging industry, however they are underrepresented within the highest levels of management.

Statement of Purpose

The intention of the investigative study is to identify why African American College of Business Administration students at the University of New Orleans, a public institution, are not pursuing a bachelors degree in Hospitality/Tourism to prepare themselves for future executive career opportunities in the hospitality/tourism industry. The hospitality and lodging industries are the largest industries in New Orleans and they employ thousands of African Americans in front-line positions in a primarily black city.

Objectives of the study

The study was based on achieving three objectives. The primary objective of the study is to investigate the serious and perplexing challenge of recruiting African American students (majors) by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans.

The second objective was to recommend a strategy for the Lester E Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration to increase African American enrollment. Lastly, the third objective was to identify strategies for the lodging industry to implement to demonstrate that the lodging industry of New Orleans is ripe with opportunities for African Americans and a viable career path for all that properly prepare themselves regardless of ethnicity.

Limitations

The four major limitations of the study were: 1) the sample population, 2) the sample size, 3) the methodology selected, and 4) the omission of quantitative methodology.

The sample population included in the study were limited to 14 junior and senior students, at the College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans and five members of the newly formed African American Hotel Managers Association of New Orleans. Therefore, the results of this study are being determined by a convenience sample of students and local industry professionals.

The small sample size limits the findings to the perceptions of the respondents and does not allow generalizations to the larger population of African American students in the College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans or all black local lodging professionals.

The methodology utilized to collect the data for this exploratory study was focus groups. According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), focus groups best enable the exploration of surprise information and new ideas, however, due to the limited sampling accuracy and interpretive nature of this qualitative device, the design chosen may present limitations to the study.

Finally, the fact that quantitative research methods in terms of data collection and analysis were not utilized in conjunction with the qualitative methods is a limiting factor to this inquiry.

Overview of the study

The focus of this study was to explore the inconsistencies in the undergraduate enrollment of African Americans between the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration (HRTA), a school within the College of Business Administration, the College of Business Administration and the University of New Orleans (UNO).

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The literature review is composed of three topics that together formulate the catalyst for the inequality of opportunity for minorities in the hospitality and lodging industries. In order to thrive, the hospitality and lodging industries must reevaluate how human capital is managed. The changing demographics of the population dictate a shift in business philosophy in the areas of leadership, managing change, and diversity.

Leadership

As increased diversity, constant internal and external environmental changes, shorter response times, globalization, unpredictable demographic changes and technological advances, continue to shape the business climate. The leadership within the lodging industry will be challenged to think outside-of-the-box, and be bold and creative in terms of managing human capital.

In their article, *leadership in the 21st century*, Allen, Bordas, Hickman, Matusak, Sorenson, and Whitmire (1998) write:

For years scholars have been trying to define or describe the nature of leadership. [However] today, driving forces exist that suggest that the purpose of leadership in the 21st century, rather than the definition, must be the focal point of our leadership studies.

Therefore, recognizing the context of these changing times, [we] propose that the *purpose of leadership* in the 21st century is

To create a supportive environment where people can thrive, grow, and live in peace with one another

To promote harmony with nature and thereby provide sustainability for future generations; and

To create communities of reciprocal care and shared responsibility—one where every person matters and each person’s welfare and dignity is respected and supported (Allen et. al, 1998).

Excepting the premise that the “purpose of leadership” must be the focal point of our leadership in the 21st century, what should the “purpose of the leadership focus” be for the lodging industry? The lodging industry should embrace “service” as a leadership focus. James Burns developed the leadership concept of “Servant Leadership”. He explains that the concept of “Servant Leadership” manifests itself in the care taken by the servant [leader] first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served (J. Thomas Wren, 1995).

In order for the lodging industry to successfully meet the challenges of conducting business in this new harsher environment, it will require strong, creative and brave leadership that refuses to accept as reality, high employee turnover rates, notoriously low wages, long hours of its managers and the negative perception by many that the lodging industry is an undesirable place to work, especially for minorities. The lodging industry will require leadership that can effectively build coalitions and managements teams by successfully managing human resources practices and in turn human capital (Enz & Siguaw, 2000).

Change

The hospitality and lodging industries are already experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified employees. According to the Multicultural Foodservice and Hospitality Alliance (MFHA), by the year 2005, minorities will comprise 34% of the industry workforce. This change in the workforce will require new and different strategies to attract the best and the brightest workers from all communities -regardless of race or ethnicity (MFHA, 1999)

Though not by design, it is easy for an industry to become somewhat arrogant, inwardly focused and politicized.

However, to successfully compete in the increasingly competitive and rapidly changing business environment of the new millennium, organizations must break free of old paradigms that unquestionably undermine efforts to create an business atmosphere that is openly inviting and conducive to fostering true equality. (Lewis, 1993)

Successful lodging operations will utilize their ability to recognize and manage change to maintain or gain a competitive edge over their competition. To effectively exploit the opportunities that will enviably be created by internal and external environmental changes, organizations and industries will have to be astute at first recognizing the need for change and, secondly, developing effective methods of identifying and overcoming the natural barriers to change experienced by organizations (Enz, 2001).

Along the pathway to creating an environment that is openly inviting and conducive to the professional development for persons of all ethnicities, organizations will have to develop strategies for overcoming the following barriers to organizational change: 1) reward systems that reinforce old behaviors, 2) Threats to existing balance of power, 3) incompatibility between the desired change and the organizational culture, and 4) incompatibility between the desired change and the social culture.

Implementing effective organizational change requires strong leadership, the support of top management and a paradigm shift in the organizational culture (Hickman, 1998).

Diversity

As the keynote speaker, at a national conference, William S. Norman, President and CEO of the Travel Industry Association of America, said to the attending members:

“The three largest minority groups in America today—African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian American/Pacific Islanders—today make up 26 percent of our population. This figure will grow to 36 percent by the year 2020 and to 47 percent by 2050. This means that, not long thereafter...the travel and tourism industry, just like every other industry, will be employing, marketing to, and courting a population that is a “majority of minorities (Norman, 1997).

The alcohol beverage industry, in recognition of the demographic changes noted by Mr. Norman, have already begun to change their marketing campaign efforts to target African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian American/Pacific Islanders. Mr. Norman ended his speech with a plea for his members to embrace greater diversity because it is practical, profitable, and ethical and the proper thing to do.

However, aside from being right, ethical and proper, the development and implementation of meaningful diversity programs in the workforce can greatly improve operational efficiency and production (Norman, 1997). According to Weiss, “If you look at the literature, heterogeneous teams are more innovative and productive than homogeneous teams”.

In his study, Thomas (1999), explains that due to changes in workforce demographics resulting from globalization and the rising popularity of team-based management techniques, multicultural workforces are a reality for a growing number of managers and that group cultural diversity [is] clearly related to group performance.

With the amount of evidence offered in support of contemporary leadership methods as servant leadership, the inevitable demographic changes of the population and the benefits of a diverse management team, why are there so few upper-management positions in the lodging industry occupied by minorities? If asked about their diversity programs, most, if not all, lodging GMs and HR managers would quickly point out the diverse make-up of their employees. According to Enz and Siguaw (2000), unfortunately, too many lodging operations seek to build a diverse work group by hiring many minority-group workers into low-paying, unskilled positions. Rather than creating an image of a positive multicultural environment, however, this crowding of minorities into low-paying, low-status positions fosters negative feelings. Unfortunately, minority-group members often feel less valued than do majority-group members due to stereotyping, ethnocentrism, and prejudice (Cox, 1991).

The Lodging Industry

Is the African American community's impression of the lodging industry as an undesirable place to work a justifiable one?

Based on a summation of the literature, the hospitality and lodging industries have failed to create an environment that is openly inviting for minorities and that is conducive to their development and career success (Enz & Siguaw, 2000).

The lack of creativity and willingness for industry leaders to think out of the box has developed a persistent and pervasive mindset that accepts as reality the problems of low wage, low skill, and long hours for managers (Enz, 2001). The problems experienced in attracting talent, according to several managers surveyed by Enz and Siguaw (2000), are due to the industry's notoriously poor wages, long working hours, seasonality and many managers felt that management-education and training programs were inadequate in most companies and that the industry had done a poor job of making the case for why a talented individual should remain in the industry (Enz and Siguaw, 2000).

Furthermore, the results of a study conducted by Kang & Gould (2002) revealed that the most frequently identified area of concern among hotel managers was human resources, including attracting, retaining, motivating, training, and developing the industry's work force.

The Bureau of Labor reports that African Americans occupy 9.2% of the executive, administrative, and managerial positions in the combined restaurant and lodging industries, however, most of these positions are at low and middle managements rather than the highest levels of management. (Charles & McCleary, 1997)

According to Woods (1999), the top three black managerial positions are housekeeping with 28.3%, steward with 25.7% and sous chef with 16.4%. Furthermore Woods (1999), reports that of the 45,000 hotels in the United States only 34 have African American general managers representing only 1 % of the total number of general managers nationally.

Although the literature paints a picture of harsh reality for African Americans in the hospitality and lodging industries, the news is not all bad. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has seen a greater responsiveness from the industry and has been pleased to witness the installation of various diversity officers to implement and direct project goals. However, progress in certain categories remains stagnant (Smith, 2000).

On February 23, 2000, Hotel Online reported that Choice Hotels International, the world's second-largest hotel franchiser, appointed William L. Jews to its board of directors making him the first African-American to serve on the company's board. Choice's hotel brands include Comfort, Quality, Clarion, Sleep, Econo Lodge, Rodeway Inn and MainStay Suites (Hotel Online, March 2000 press release).

Additional bright spots concerning the hospitality and lodging industries diversity effort identified by Charles & McCleary (1997) are:

- [HYATT] For the second year in a row, Hyatt leads the list in minority representation, with 62.5% of payroll. Equally impressive: About 35% of Hyatt managers are minorities, up eight percentage points from last year's figure.
- [MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL] Though it still has a small number of highly paid minorities, the hotel chain boosted its percentage of minority managers and officers. Employees give thumbs-ups to the English courses the company offers.
- [HILTON HOTELS] One indication of the clout diversity has here: Senior diversity VP Dorothy Hayden-Watkins reports directly to the CEO. As in other service firms, diversity is especially marked at the entry level. Some 62% of new hires are minorities (Charles & McCleary, 1997).

Summary

Review of the literature revealed management of human capital as it relates to leadership, managing change and diversity as the catalysts for the persistent mindset that formulates the inequality of opportunity for minorities in the hospitality and lodging industries.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

The utilization of qualitative data collection methods can help to develop an understanding of an otherwise unknown subject, give greater insight into reasons underlying various behaviors, practices, attitudes and decision making processes, and provide greater depth of knowledge on a given subject (Brotherton, 1999). According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), focus groups originated in the field of sociology, they began to be widely utilized in market research during the 1980s and are used today in numerous research applications.

Statement of Purpose

The intention of this study was to identify why African American College of Business Administration students at the University of New Orleans, a public institution, are not pursuing advance degrees in Hospitality/Tourism to prepare themselves for future executive career opportunities in the hospitality/tourism industry considering it is the largest local industry that employs thousand of African Americans in front-line positions in a primarily black city.

Objectives of the study

The inquiry was based on achieving three objectives. The primary objective of the study was to investigate the serious and perplexing challenge of recruiting African American students (majors) currently being experienced by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans. The objective was to recommend a strategy for the Lester E Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration to increase African American enrollment. Lastly, the third objective was to identify strategies for the lodging industry to implement to affirm to African Americans that in New Orleans the lodging industry is ripe with opportunities and a viable career path to pursue for those that take the necessary steps to prepare themselves for future executive career.

Research Design

The methodology utilized to collect the data for this exploratory study was the focus groups. Qualitative research methods best enable the exploration of surprise information and new ideas, however, due to the limited sampling accuracy and interpretive nature of this qualitative device, the design chosen may present limitations to the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2001).

Sample

The population of this study was limited to junior and senior students in the College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans and members of the newly formed African American Hotel Managers Association.

Three separate focus groups were convened. The population of the first focus group consisted of African Americans College of Business Administration students pursuing degrees in either of Marketing, Economics, Finance, Accounting, or Management. The population of the second focus group was comprised of African American College of Business HRTA majors. And lastly, the population of the third focus group consisted of members of the African American Hotel Managers Association.

Research Instrument

To provide structure and continuity to the focus group sessions, three series of discussion questions were developed based on achieving the three research objectives identified for the study (See Appendix A).

Research Procedures

The research procedure for the investigative query was as follows:

- **Identified the challenge**

The focus of the study was to question why the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans is experiencing difficulty in recruiting African American Hospitality, Restaurant and Tourism students.

- **Developed objectives**

This inquiry is based on achieving three objectives. The first objective of this study is to investigate the serious and perplexing challenge of recruiting African American students (majors) being experienced by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans. The second objective is to recommend a strategy for the Lester E Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration to increase African American enrollment. The third objective is to identify strategies for the lodging industry to implement to affirm to African Americans that the lodging industry is ripe with opportunities and a viable career path to pursue for those that take the necessary steps to prepare themselves for future executive career.

- **Identified research method**

Do to the exploratory nature of this investigation a qualitative research methodology, focus group, was utilized to collect the data.

- **Created instruments**

Focus group questions were developed based on each of the three objectives and specifically designed for the population of each group of participants namely, HRT majors, business students (non-HRT majors), and African American lodging managers.

- **Identified population/solicited participation**

The two student groups were offered a free three-course lunch to participate. To garner the participation of the African American Hotel Manages Association member the researcher hosted their monthly meeting in the HRT lab.

- **Gathered data**

The facilitator utilized previously developed objective based questions to focus the discussion and initiate dialog among participants. To facilitate the process and complete the exercise in the allotted time of one-hour the discussion of each topic was limited to five minutes. During the banter between participants, the facilitator used an audio tape-recorder and wrote notes to document the raw data.

Treatment of the Data

Upon completion of the discussion group sessions, the facilitator reviewed and organized the notes as they related to specific questions and objectives. Afterwards, the data from the audio - tapes were transcribed and interpreted in the context of the research questions and established research objectives.

Summary

The qualitative research methodology employed was appropriate for the study because qualitative research methods best enables the exploration of surprise information and new ideas. However, due to the interpretive nature of qualitative devices, the design chosen may present limitations to the validity of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

An analysis of the data collected supports that the hospitality and lodging industries are in paradigms concerning their management of human capital regarding the areas of leadership, diversity and change. Consequently, the hospitality and lodging industries have created, in the minds of many people, the perception that the industries are not viable career paths for minorities to pursue. Thereupon, partially contributing to the serious and perplexing challenge of recruiting African American (HRT) students by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans

The three research objectives developed for the study will serve as the organizational structure, each representing a major section, of this data analysis. The objectives will be presented in consecutive order. The research questions that were formulated to elicit data relevant to each objective will serve as the sub-sections of each objective. Please note that all of the research questions are not addressed because some were not productive in terms of generating significant data.

Pre-testing would have eliminated unproductive question from the research instrument, however, two of the previously stated limitations of the study, time constraints and scheduling of focus group participants, did not allow for refining the research instrument.

Objective one

Apparently, when discussing opportunities available to African American college graduates with family, (African American) friends and (African American) mentors/professionals the lodging industry is not spoken of favorably. One business student stated that her parents threatened to “cut-off” her educational funds if she chose to major in hospitality. Likewise, three black hospitality-majors reported that hospitality, as a career choice, is not spoken of at all when discussing educational choices and career plans with other African American students.

When asked if anyone had tried to dissuade them from pursuing a career in hospitality, a student replied, “yes my parents, they told me to “get a real career” something more sound like Marketing, Management or Accounting so I could make some money”.

“When I tell people that I am a HRT major, they look at me as if I am crazy” expressed another student. “I have to explain, to them, the depth and breath of the opportunities available in the hospitality and lodging industries because they are familiar only with the front-line positions and can’t understand why anyone would go to college for those type of jobs.”

Sensing an undercurrent, the facilitator put forth the question; in your opinion, does a negative bias toward the hospitality/lodging industries exist within the African American community in New Orleans? The overall consensus of the group of students was an astounding yes. When encouraged to elaborate, a student replied, “Yes, because many of their [family members] aunts or grandmothers worked in traditional front line positions such as housekeeping, bellman and wait-staff for many years with little to show for it.” Furthermore, the hospitality/lodging industry has a low status among the African American community because many of the tasks required in the performance of front-line service positions are associated with the servitude of slavery and the low status of domestic work.

When the African American managers were asked to discuss whether or not a negative bias, toward the hospitality and lodging industries, existed in New Orleans within the African American community they reiterated the sentiments of the students. One manager commented, “Any thing that involves serving we [African Americans] tend to shy away from because we have arrived and are beyond the servitude aspect of many front-line service jobs”.

She continued, “Take for example, the fingernail business, it is quite large, and dominated by Asians. However, the majority of the clients are African Americans. Yet, African Americans are not interested in owning such business because of its servitude nature. “

When given the task of evaluating the career advancement opportunities afforded African Americans in marketing, accounting, information technology, management and finance, the other disciplines offered in the College of Business Administration, in comparison to those provided in the hospitality and lodging industries their analysis provided the following results:

A business student stated, “no, I worked for several months in a hotel as a front desk clerk and noticed a large discrepancy in the ethnic make-up between of managers and employees. The front-line workers were primarily African Americans and that the managers were primarily Caucasians. Another business student, that had worked in a hotel for a short period stated that she was “turned off” to the lodging industry when working as a desk clerk, an African American coworker informed her that she had been a front desk clerk for many years.

In contrast, the HRT majors provided a different perspective. “Yes, in the long-term, however, by comparison, the beginning salaries offered for entry-level management positions in the lodging industry are lower than those offered in the fields of marketing, accounting, management and finance. It is ironic that many front-line workers, such as waiters, bartenders and cocktail servers earn more money than entry-level managers.

When the business students (Marketing, Accounting, IT, Management and Finance) were asked to evaluate the status, quality of life and compensation provided in their industry of choice to pursue their careers to those provided in the hospitality and lodging industries they, as a group, felt that their chosen field did provide more status, higher compensation and afforded its managers a better quality of life. However, when asked to provide justifications for their views only one student responded with, “they [lodging managers] have to work long hours, weekends and holidays, and various shifts because hotels are open 24/7”.

Next, when asked, if they would consider practicing their discipline (marketing, accounting, finance or information technology) in the lodging industry only one student responded “yes”.

Interestingly, the analysis of the lodging managers produced results that were similar to those of the business students as opposed to those of the hospitality students. The consensus of the industry managers was that the status, quality of life and compensation they experience in the lodging industry is not compatible to those experienced by their peers in marketing, accounting, management and financial industries. As justifications for their views they cited:

Objective two

In discussing the questions associated with objective two, recommend strategies that the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration could implement to increase African American enrollment the HRT students formulated the following data: One student stated, "The name of the program should be changed because the current name too narrowly defines the true breath and depth of the hospitality and tourism industries." "Yes," said another, "the current name of the school puts to much emphasis on food service and lodging." Others students were quick to agree regarding the name change another student added, "Furthermore, the title ending, administration, should be changed to management because even though the words are synonyms of each other, the word management is more indicative and representative of the focus of the school."

Aside from the name change, other strategies to increase African American enrollment in The HRT program included; 1) working more closely with High schools. 2) Emphasize the achievements of successful African American industry professionals in print materials and as classroom guest speakers, 3) host seminars for high school counselors, parents and others to educate them on the opportunities within the hospitality, lodging and tourism industries, 4) host "class night" gathering (socials) to foster camaraderie among HRT majors and invite influential African American industry professionals, 5) aggressively promote the program because many people are unaware that UNO has such a hospitality program.

Objective three

When the lodging industry managers were assigned the task of developing strategies for the New Orleans lodging industry to implement that would affirm to the African American community that is an openly inviting industry filled with advancement opportunities for those who properly prepare themselves regardless of ethnicity, The managers proposed the following: One manager suggested. "Providing more exposure of successful African American lodging executives would be an effective strategy for hotels to implement. As a result, the stereotypical perception, held by many Blacks in the New Orleans community, that advancement opportunities for African Americans in the lodging industry are limited to front-line and mid-level managerial positions would slowly be changed". She continued, "Furthermore, this strategy would produce positive results in the recruitment and retention of both African Americans managers and front-line employees."

Another point emphasized was that the lodging industry should do a better job of promoting from within the organization. One manager said, "I had to move around in order to be promoted." In support of her statement, another manager said, "The advice that I would offer to young African Americans in the lodging industry is: be willing to work hard, do your job well, learn all that you can and move-on to another property and a higher, better paying, position"

“Another strategy that would aid in the recruitment and retention of African American is the reinstatement management-training programs.” Management should encourage and support of the professional development efforts of young managers by reinstating management training programs” expressed one manager.

“The development of African American role models in upper-management and corporate level management positions would be an excellent example for African American front-line employees and mid-level managers”, offered one participant. “Furthermore,” said another in the group, “The lodging industry needs to walk-the-walk when it comes to diversity and equality.”

When asked, to identify specific initiatives implemented by their employer in terms of hiring, promoting and training of African Americans for top managerial positions no lodging manager present could provide one example.

Next, the lodging managers were challenged to describe, of their present employer, the level of commitment to the advancement of African Americans to top managerial positions. Unfortunately, all described their employer’s level of commitment toward the advancement of African Americans to top managerial as virtually non-existent.

In support, of the harsh description, one manager said, “currently, in New Orleans, there are only three African American General Managers and all three operate limited to mid-scale hotels.”

Another offered, “in New Orleans, African Americans account for only 4 percent of executive level management positions and 20 percent of entry level managerial positions.” As expressed by the members of the African American Hospitality Managers Association, during a focus group session, “General Managers of hotels have the power to greatly influence the initiatives and practices developed and implemented by the department of Human Resources.” To this end, a closing thought shared by one of the managers was, “The hotels are profiting from the consumer, however, they are not profiting from their employees by failing to nurture and develop them to their fullest potential.”

Summary

It appears that the managerial challenges being experienced by the New Orleans. lodging industry in terms of managing human capital is not limited to the city. A review of the literature revealed that the problems of out-dated leadership, resistance to change and inadequate implementation of effective diversity imitative are persistent and pervasive throughout the hospitality and lodging industries.

The demographic changes to the population and the increased speed at which business decisions must be made are inevitable. To compete effectively the hospitality and lodging industries must identify, recruit and retain the best and the brightest of the scarce human resources available regardless of ethnicity

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

Introduction:

In 1976 when the Hilton New Orleans Riverside opened with 1633 rooms it brought the total number of hotel rooms available in the city to 15,962. Today, May 2003, the city of New Orleans has 35,000 hotel rooms available represents a 119% increase in the size of the local lodging industry within a twenty-seven year period. In addition, New Orleans consistently records some of the highest occupancy rates in the United States. In 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002 New Orleans achieved occupancy rates of 70 %, 63.6, 64% and 62.4 respectfully. (Smith Travel research, 2003) Furthermore, New Orleans ranks third in conference exhibit space with 1.7 million square feet available with only Chicago and Las Vegas having more with 2.2 million square feet and 2 million square feet respectfully. The financial impact of the tourism industry in New Orleans is further substantiated by the fact that tourist expenditures exceed 3.5 billion dollars annually and tourism related jobs account for 16% of the city's total employment. Although tourism is the foundation "core" of the New Orleans economy and employs thousands of African Americans in front-line positions, it appears that African American College of Business Administration students at the University of New Orleans are not embracing the lodging industry as a viable career path.

The Bureau of Labor reports that African Americans occupy 9.2% of the executive, administrative, and managerial positions in the combined restaurant and lodging industries, however, most of these positions are at low and middle managements rather than the highest levels of management. According to Robert H. Woods, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the Center for the Study of Lodging Operations, the top three black managerial positions are housekeeping with 28.3%, steward with 25.7% and sous chef with 16.4%. Furthermore, Woods reports that of the 45000 hotels in the United States only 34 have African American general managers representing only 1% of the total number of general managers nationally. In comparison, New Orleans has three African American General Manager and manages low to mid-scale properties.

Limitations:

The four major limitations of this study were as follows: 1) the sample population, 2) the sample size, 3) the methodology selected, and 4) the omission of quantitative methodology.

The sample population included in the study were limited to 12 junior and senior students, at the College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans and five members of the newly formed African American Hotel Managers Association of New Orleans. Therefore, the results of this study are being determined by a convenience sample of students and local industry professionals.

The small sample size limits the findings to the perceptions of the respondents and does not allow generalizations to the larger population of African American students in the College of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans or all black local lodging professionals.

The methodology utilized to collect the data for this exploratory study was focus groups. According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), focus groups best enable the exploration of surprise information and new ideas, however, due to the limited sampling accuracy and interpretive nature of this qualitative device, the design chosen may present limitations to the study.

Finally, the fact that quantitative research methods in terms of data collection and analysis were not utilized in conjunction with the qualitative methods is a limiting factor to this inquiry.

Conclusions

The primary objective of the study was to investigate the serious and perplexing challenge of recruiting African American (HRT) students by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans.

As a result of the study, I have come to the conclusion, that the challenge of recruiting African American being faced by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration are created by the school, the hospitality industry and an innate bias of the African American community toward the service industries.

Over coming the challenges that originate from within the school and the lodging industry, though daunting, can be achieved within a short time frame of perhaps five year. However erasing the innate bias of the African American community toward the lodging industry will require a much longer period. . Never the less, I believe that if both the school and the industry were to implement the strategies proposed herein that the school would experience increased African American enrollment, the lodging industry would begin to profit from all of its employees and the African American community negative perception of the lodging industry would change.

Creating Awareness (The School of HRT)

Develop articulation agreements at the graduate level (Master of Science) between the institutions of higher learning in New Orleans and the University of New Orleans' School of HRTA. These agreements would permit students graduating from their undergraduate programs to enter an 18-month Masters program in Hospitality Management at UNO. A Master of Science in HRTA would equip graduates for entry-level managerial positions in tourism and hospitality.

Included within the MS in HRTA would be a series of internships and practicum's thereby permitting individuals to gain vital hands-on training while earning their masters degree. In addition, to encourage students to continue their educations, articulation agreements could be developed between UNO and junior collages that provide associate degrees in hospitality. Reputable junior collages, where many minority students began their secondary education, would fulfill their intended roles as intermediaries between high school hospitality programs and universities offering advanced degrees in hospitality.

The articulation agreements should be supported by industry scholarships, sufficient in quantity and amount, to enable qualified students to exploit this pathway to executive opportunities within the hospitality/tourism industry.

The School of HRTA in conjunction with both the local hospitality industry and Orleans Parish (county) high schools should establish an annual event designed to showcase all aspects of the hospitality/tourism industry executive career pathways and opportunities. Unfortunately, when many minorities think of careers in the hospitality/tourism industry they tend to think only of the highly visible front-line positions such as waiter, bartender, maid, doorman and front desk. This event would take on a trade-show format featuring booths representing all types of businesses and organizations that compose New Orleans hospitality/tourism industry

(e.g., Hotels, restaurants, attractions, destination management companies, convention services, convention and decorating companies, gaming organizations, and associations such as: the Louisiana Restaurant Association, National Association of Catering Executives, and the Hotel/Motel Association. Other professional organizations that impact hospitality /tourism should also be represented: The New Orleans Metropolitan Convention Visitors Bureau, and the Sports Foundation) students, parents, teachers and counselors would have the opportunity to interact with and learn from the representatives of these organizations.

Creating Awareness (The Industry)

According to the Multicultural Foodservice and Hospitality Alliance (MFHA), by the year 2005, minorities will comprise 34% of the industry workforce. This change in the workforce will require new and different strategies to attract the best and the brightest workers from all communities – regardless of race or ethnicity. The hospitality and tourism industries are already experiencing difficulty in recruiting and retaining qualified employees due to the strong economy and low unemployment rate.

Combine these two factors with the industry's high employee turnover rate, low entry-level salaries, demands of providing "service" 24/7, increased competition and the low stature (servitude) associated with many front line positions, the hospitality industry needs to take a proactive approach in marketing itself to minorities.

I believe that if the hospitality and lodging industries were to implement the following strategies the number of college students choosing hospitality as a major and minority representation within the highest levels of hospitality management would increase.

Just as the alcohol beverage industry did several years ago, when it formed the American Beverage Institute (ABI), the hospitality and lodging industry should form an institute or a coalition group, to represent them. In addition to promoting the positive aspects of the industry, an institute could educate the general public, educators, local government and state legislators of the opportunities available within the industry and the overall positive contributions to the quality of the community. Furthermore, the institute would take "issue" when information or facts about the industry are misrepresented. For example, when Mother Against Drunk Driving and others coined the slogan "Don't Drink and Drive" the American Beverage Institute developed and promoted a more accurate, and beverage industry friendly, message "Don't Drive Drunk". Most everyone wants to stop the irresponsible, illegal, and extremely dangerous behavior of drunk driving. However, the first message, which is extreme, suggests that total abstinence as the only means of reducing drunk driving. In addition, the first message could have a negative impact on the financial viability of bars and restaurants that could not survive without the liquor portion of their sales mix.

Many young African American, New Orleanians, do not have the opportunity to stay in up scale hotel properties to gain a “first-hand” experience of the services provided and the magnitude of the challenge to create those services for the guest. Hotels, working with local schools should create a mechanism to identify and select promising African American high school students and invite them and their parents to spend a couple of days as guest, requiring that part of each day be spent touring the facility, meeting the managers and learning about the career opportunities available. Likewise, other tourism related businesses should invite the same students and their parents, to visit, experience the services and gain knowledge of the broad scope of the different types of businesses within the hospitality and tourism industry.

In addition, a series of discussion groups focusing on career path direction (Sales, marketing, finance, purchasing, operations, etc.) could be conducted by minority graduates of the UNO School of HRTA who occupy successful executive positions in the industry. The event would also include scholarship awards and activities designed to encourage students to consider preparing themselves for a career in hospitality/tourism industry.

For this format to be effective the students would have to be prepared prior to attending the event. They would be required to learn about the various segments of the hospitality/tourism industry via assigned readings, presentations, tours, videos and trained on the trade-show format and write a brief paper demonstrating interest in learning more about the industry.

Implications

The changing demographics of the population dictate a shift in business philosophy in the areas of leadership, managing change, and diversity. In order for the lodging industry to successfully meet the challenges of conducting business in this new harsher environment, it will require strong, creative and brave leadership that refuses to accept as reality, high employee turnover rates, notoriously low wages, long hours of its managers and the negative perception by many that the lodging industry is an undesirable place to work, especially for minorities.

Successful lodging operations will utilize their ability to recognize and manage change to maintain or gain a competitive edge over their competition. To effectively exploit the opportunities that will enviably be created by internal and external environmental changes, organizations and industries will have to be astute at first recognizing the need for change and, secondly, developing effective methods of identifying and overcoming the natural barriers to change experienced by organizations.

Recommendations

Additional research is needed concerning the recruitment and retention of African American in hospitality programs, as students and faculty, and the lodging industry in upper most managerial positions. Furthermore, subsequent research should comprise of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In addition, succeeding research should be conducted without the limitations inherent in this effort (See limitations).

Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the serious and perplexing challenge of recruiting African American students (majors) by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration at the University of New Orleans. As a result of this study, I have come to the conclusion, that the challenge of recruiting African American being faced by the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration are created by the school, the hospitality industry and an innate bias of the African American community.

References

- Brotherlon, Bob. (Ed.). (1999). *The Handbook of Contemporary Management Research*.New York: Wiley & Son, Ltd.
- Charles, R.O. & McCleary, K.W. (1997, February). Recruitment and Retention of African American Managers. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 38(1), 24-29.
- Chen, C.Y. & Hickman, J. (2000, July 10). America's 50 Best Companies for Minorities (Features/Diversity Leaders). *Fortune*, 142(2), 190+.
- Choice Names William Jews To Board, Its First AFRICAN-AMERICAN DIRECTOR www.hotel-online.com/News/Press/Releases2000_1st/Mar00_WmJews.html
- Cooper, Donald, R., Schindler, Pamela, S. (2001). *Business research methods*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- (T.H. Cox, "The Multicultural Organization," *The Executive*, Vol. 5 (1991), pp. 45-56)
- Enz, C.A. & Siguaw J.A. (2000 February). Best Practices in Human Resources. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 41(1), 48-61
- Enz, K.A. (2001). What Keeps You Up at Night; Key Issues of Concern for Lodging Managers. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 42(2), 38-45
- Ferree, Thomas, (2003): The year of record breaking employee demand. *Lodging HR*, American Hotel & Lodging Association, Vol. 4, Issue 11, February
- Grensing-Pophal, L. (2000, September). Is Your Human Resource Department Diverse Enough?. *Human Resource Magazine*, 45(9), 46-52.
- Kang, S.K. & Gould, R. (2002). Hospitality Graduates' Employment Status and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education*, 14(4), 11-18.
- Hickman, G. R.(Ed). (1998). *Leading organizations: Perspectives for an era*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Robert C. Lewis, (1993) *Hospitality management education, Here today gone tomorrow*. The Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education: University of Guelph

- MultiCultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance. (1999) *Report to Industry MultiCultural Diversity – A profitable business strategy*. Minneapolis, MN
- Norman, William S., The Face of Hospitality, Quality. Through Diversity Conference, Orlando, Florida. Sept. 8, 1997. Online
[Http://www.tia.org/press/wsn0908speech.stm](http://www.tia.org/press/wsn0908speech.stm)
- Perry, Stevens, J., (2003, March) *Economic Forecast & Real Estate Seminar*. Real Estate Data Marketing Center in the Center of Economic Research Management at the University of New Orleans
- Smith, S. (2000, Oct 10). NAACP Grades Hotel Chain's Hiring Practices. *York Daily Record*, Pa. Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News. Retrieved October 12, 2000, from http://www.hotel-online.comeo/News/2000_Oct_10/K.YOH.971299194.html
- Thomas, D.C. (1999, March). Cultural Diversity and Work Group Effectiveness: An experimental study. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 30(2), 242-263
- Woods, R.H. & Viehand, D.G. (1999). *Diversity in the lodging industry by managerial job title*. Washington, D.C.: American Hotel Foundation.
- Wren, Thomas, J., (Eds.). (1995). *The Leader's Companion, Insights on leadership through the ages*. New York: Free Press

Appendix A: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Group 1 – African Americans (non-HRT)

1. When discussing career opportunities available to African American college graduates with family, (AA) friends and (AA) mentors/professional is the lodging industry spoken of favorably as a viable career choice?
2. In comparison, to the other College of Business disciplines (Marketing, Accounting, Information Technology, Management and Finance) do you think the lodging industry offer compatible career advancement opportunities for African Americans?
3. In comparison to the industry in which you choose to pursue your career (Marketing, Accounting, IT, Management and Finance), are status, quality of life and compensation provided in the lodging industry compatible at the various levels of management (entry, middle and upper management)?
4. Identify three major factors that influenced your choice of industry in which to pursue your career
5. What strategies could the lodging industry implement to enhance its appeal to African American College of Business students as a worthy career path to pursue that possesses both opportunity and advancement beyond middle management?
6. What strategies could the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration implement to recruit more African American College of Business students?
7. In spite of the fact that you choose another discipline within the College of Business as your major field of study, have or would you consider practicing your discipline within the lodging industry.

Group 2 – African American (HRT)

1. When discussing career opportunities available to African American college graduates with family, (AA) friends and (AA) mentors/professional is the lodging industry spoken of favorably as a viable career choice?

2. In comparison, to the other College of Business disciplines (Marketing, Accounting, Information Technology, Management and Finance) do you think the lodging industry offer compatible career advancement opportunities for African Americans?
3. Identify three major factors that influenced your choice of industry in which to pursue your career.
4. What strategies could the lodging industry implement to enhance its appeal to African American College of Business students as a worthy career path to pursue
5. What strategies could the Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Administration implement to recruit more African American College of Business students?
6. What is the highest managerial position held by an African American at the property in which you work?

Group #3 – African American Industry Professionals

1. What specific initiatives has your employer implemented in terms of hiring, promoting and training African Americans for top managerial positions?
2. In what ways has being an African American affected your career progression in your company?
3. In regard to your present position, how would you describe management's level of commitment in supporting the advancement of African Americans to top managerial positions?
4. What is the highest managerial position held by an African American in your company?
5. In comparison, do you think that the status, quality of life and compensation you experience in the lodging industry is compatible to those provided experienced by your peers in other industries (Marketing, Accounting, IT, Management and Finance)?
6. What strategies could your employer implement to recruit and retain more African American manager?