Hospitality Insights

Vision: To communicate hospitality research to practitioners in the hospitality industry in order to inform their thinking, processes and practices.

Editors-in-chief

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Hospitality Insights contains concise and accessible summaries of AUT's hospitality research. Our publication is aimed at a practitioner/industry audience, with a focus on relevant issues to help build a more sustainable hospitality industry for the future.

This journal will operate as a tangible vehicle for meaningful outreach with local and international hospitality communities. Our objective is to stimulate dialogue between academic researchers and industry practitioners, as well as with other interested members of the hospitality community. We believe such a discourse can improve business practice, sustainability and workers' wellbeing, and lead to the creation of more healthy societies, whilst also engendering impact and uptake of academic research.

See our full guidelines for contributors.

Editorial

Alison McIntosh, Shelagh Mooney and David Williamson

Kia ora whānau, kia ora tātou.

Welcome to the fourth issue of *Hospitality Insights*. The journal continues to present concise summaries of cutting-edge research and opinion that explore hospitality in all its contexts. Topics covered in this issue include 'The Cost of Convenience' – an industry perspective from the NZRA on the hidden 'costs' of convenience for hospitality businesses; 'The Value of Indigeneity in the Tourism and Hospitality Industry in Aotearoa – Manaakitanga'; 'Hospitality Training for Prisoners: A Second Chance?'; 'International Visitor Surveys: More than Just Numbers'; 'Accommodating Travellers with Pets: Is Auckland Ready?'; and finally, a reminder of the importance of social connections at work: 'Warm Workplace Relationships – How to Retain Hospitality Employees'.

The content of this issue is highly relevant to practitioners, researchers and all fellow travellers in the hospitality community. Our industry (both in New Zealand and internationally), is increasingly being recognised as a powerful force for social good. The research presented in this issue reflects our contemporary aspirations to make Aotearoa New Zealand a more inclusive society. The range of articles show how hospitableness can be extended to the marginalised in a myriad of ways. We can enshrine the Māori principles of manaakitanga ('warm' hospitality) to create equality in our tourism and hospitality practices, as well as using them to welcome former prison inmates to a hopeful new career. We can implement visitor surveys to improve the wellbeing of local communities and we can also offer sincere hospitality to the travellers whose companion animals are their 'family'. The aim of this journal remains: that by presenting this type of accessible research summary to a wide audience, the resulting engagement will lead to a more successful and sustainable hospitality community.

The cost of convenience

Marisa Bidois

Marisa Bidois was appointed to her role as CEO of the Restaurant Association of New Zealand in 2011 and has now led the association for eight years. Before becoming CEO, Bidois was professional development manager for the association's Auckland function facility, Taste, and looked after its employment relations and legal queries for four years. She has also worked outside of the industry, but always makes her way back because of the people from all walks of life who gather in the hospitality industry.

Hospitality businesses in New Zealand are seeing fewer and fewer payments made by cash, as customers opt for the convenience of paying their bill electronically. If customers love the convenience of paying by credit card, who should be responsible for the cost of this convenience – the business or the customer?

In a Restaurant Association survey conducted at the end of last year, members overwhelmingly (71%) indicated that the use of cash by customers is declining, with a Mastercard New Zealand survey last year backing this up. This widespread adoption of electronic payment by consumers sees merchants bearing the significant cost of the transaction through their merchant fees. New Zealand merchants pay substantially more to process credit and contactless debit card transactions than their counterparts in Australia and the UK (on average, New Zealand merchants pay merchant service fees of around 1.4%, while in Australia it is around 0.85%, according to estimates by COVEC and data from the Reserve Bank of Australia). Restaurant Association members typically pay even higher – between 1.8% and 2% in fees for each credit card transaction; members say they are charged the same rate for any card type. Forty-two percent have a 'fixed bundled rate', although another 26% say they are charged a split rate for credit card and debit cards. Only 5% have an 'unbundled' merchant fee, where different types of cards are charged different fees and merchants pay this cost plus an acquiring service fee from the bank.

There are undoubtedly advantages for businesses in accepting electronic payments, primarily in the speed of the transaction – particularly with several customers waiting to pay – and the speed in which the payment is deposited into your bank account. However, it comes at a large cost, which is challenging for an industry that runs on very small margins already. One member pointed out in the Association's recent survey:

> As the average return in New Zealand is 6% net profit, the banks are effectively charging 1/3 of the profit of the average business, which is diabolical. With technology advancements their costs have gone down but charges have gone up, clearly shown in their bottom line profits. It is a collective monopoly like a lot of big business in New Zealand. (Restaurant Association member)

Of our members, 66% say they would switch banks if they could receive a saving equating to an overall 2.5–5% reduction in the cost of accepting credit cards. Currently though, short of refusing to accept credit card payments, it is

difficult to avoid merchant fees. Emerging payment options and growing trends via NFC (Near Field Communication) capable mobile phones (such as ApplePay, GooglePay and Digital Wallets) are now more widely available. Whilst offering convenience and arguably faster transaction speed, these payment methods offer no relief to the fee incurred by a business for acceptance.

Alternative payment solutions now exist in New Zealand, but there are few choices. To date, most are aimed at the Chinese market, with payment methods restricted to tourist and student visitors, and immigrants retaining banking capability in their country of origin. The Restaurant Association's survey indicated that only 24% of members currently accept other payment channels like China Union Pay, Alipay or WeChat. In reality these alternative payment solutions currently only form a small portion of the total volume of transactions a business processes, so will not generate any meaningful reduction in the total costs of cards/payment processing.

Surcharging, however, is a way for operators to offset the merchant fee imposed upon them by the banks. Surcharging simply means a charge to cover a merchant's cost for processing a credit card. They are now being used by increasing numbers of tourism and hospitality businesses. Feedback from member businesses is that there is little reaction or negative feedback from customers. In the 2018 survey, a Restaurant Association member commented:

> *We added a surcharge to cover the transaction fee on credit cards and have had no complaints. It's just a matter of cents and gives us an opportunity to explain that we have always worn the cost of the surcharges but this is increasingly difficult.*

Feedback from some members is that they find the practice unfriendly and others would prefer to incorporate this fee into their menu pricing structure, as this member pointed out: "*I don't care about the cost. It is added into the budgets and is picked up at menu price changes time, so it is paid for by the customer anyway.*" Individual businesses need to decide if a surcharge would create tension in the business/customer relationship; however, it is reassuring to know that, if a business does decide to add a surcharge, it is becoming a far more mainstream option than it used to be.

From a legal standpoint, merchants are required under the Fair Trading Act to ensure representations around their card payment fees are accurate and not misleading. This means if you are being charged a 1.8% merchant fee by your bank, it is not reasonable to apply a 3% credit card convenience fee to your customer. We've noticed some merchants prefer to pass on only a portion of the cost with a surcharge – say 1% – as a cost recovery practice. For a $100 bill, that is just a $1 addition to the bill for the consumer.

The payments landscape is changing rapidly, and in the future new technology will dramatically change the way we pay and receive payments. In the meantime, the Restaurant Association are developing further information for members around surcharging, with implementation and training for staff. We'll also continue advocating on behalf of members to ensure the payment system delivers good outcomes for both consumers and our member merchants.

Corresponding author

Marisa Bidois can be contacted at: marisa@restaurantnz.co.nz

The value of indigeneity in the tourism and hospitality industry in Aotearoa – manaakitanga

Keri-Anne Wikitera

Dr Keri-Anne Wikitera is a lecturer/researcher working in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at AUT University. Her Māori tribal affiliations are Tūhourangi Ngāti Wahiao and Ngāti Whakaue of Te Arawa. Her tribe is from the Rotorua region and are recognised as one of the nation's principle drivers of Māori tourism. As such, her personal and academic interests include the intersection of Indigenous history and knowledge systems, tourism development, and intercultural exchange with particular regard to Māori cultural tourism.

Hospitality within the Indigenous paradigm of manaakitanga (translated as 'warm hospitality') is founded on an 'ethic of care'. This ethic of care creates the space for a multi-dimensional wealth, encompassing "spiritual, cultural, social, environmental and economic well-being" [1]. This is similar to the UNWTO's sustainable development goals, which are underpinned by the three dimensions of economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainable development [2]. Manaakitanga in Māori contexts such as marae and many iwi (tribal) organisations demands a values-centred approach that is based on the principle of reciprocity. This form of exchange extends beyond the economic focus of traditional business models and, when applied to non-Māori contexts, demands a degree of culturalising commerce rather than commercialising culture.

In the global tourism and hospitality industries, Indigenous cultures have become more significant to countries as a means to differentiate themselves from others [3]. Indigenous cultures are appealing to emerging tourism markets and the resultant economic benefits have led industry stakeholders, throughout the global-local nexus, to include Indigenous cultures in national tourism and hospitality offerings. In the context of the New Zealand tourism and hospitality industry, Māori culture is presented in several key ways. For example, the use of manaakitanga in New Zealand tourism marketing [4] highlights and promotes the significance of the culture to the nation. Tourism and hospitality can both support economic development as well as promote the uniqueness, authenticity and beauty of Indigenous cultures that encourages visitation, differentiates nations and showcases national pride. The tourism and hospitality industry is not always beneficial, however, to the actual Indigenous communities from which the intellectual property is derived. There is evidence that shows the use of deep and meaningful cultural values are sometimes misunderstood, exploited and not reflected in actual practice within the industry.

Indeed, analysis of the engagement of Māori women in the hospitality industry, for example, shows that there are distinct inequities in employment [5]. While these inequities are not unique to tourism and hospitality, the evidence shows that Māori women in service-sector employment, such as hospitality, are disproportionately represented in low paid, lower skilled, precarious work [6]. It is a paradox that Māori women's contribution as the face of the industry is not associated with decent work and career progression.

This paper follows a presentation delivered at the Critical Hospitality Symposium in 2018, where the concept of manaakitanga was critically applied to a range of 'hospitality' contexts as a point of social analysis. The importance of sustainable development in the industry lends well to engaging in further research on how Māori cultural frameworks can be used to address inequalities in hospitality as a starting point for a broader research agenda in creating high impact future value and growth for New Zealand's hospitality industry. This research agenda challenges current business models that tag on Māori cultural concepts as promotional tools for organisational profit-driven praxis. Indigenous frameworks of knowledge, such as manaakitanga, can create the space to bring together the key dimensions necessary for a more equitable, richer, ethical and sustainable global tourism and hospitality industry.

Corresponding author

Keri-Anne Wikitera can be contacted at: keri-anne.wikitera@aut.ac.nz

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Hospitality training for prisoners: a second chance?

Tracy Harkison and Alison McIntosh

Tracy is the programme leader for the Bachelor of International Hospitality Management at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand. Her research passions are hospitality education and the co-creation of luxury accommodation experiences.

Alison McIntosh joined AUT as professor of hospitality and tourism in February 2017. Her research focuses on issues of social justice and advocacy through tourism and hospitality in the pursuit of social change. Her recent work examines accessible travel, and hospitality training and employment for people with disabilities.

Noting rising statistics relating to incarceration and reoffending, there has been increased attention given to analysing the delivery, effectiveness and challenges of hospitality training and employment programmes for rehabilitating prisoners. The stigma of having a criminal record and being unreliable and untrustworthy remains a significant barrier for prisoners in gaining employment. This stigma may be compounded by a prisoner's lack of skills, education, social problems and poor (physical and mental) health. However, there are now an increasing number of prisons around the world offering qualifications in catering, or a hospitality social enterprise such as a jailhouse café; for example, the Verne café and The Clink restaurants in the U.K. Our research sought to fill a gap in understanding about how the public feel about such initiatives, which aim to give prisoners a second chance.

Using the case study of the very successful annual 'Gate to Plate' event in Wellington, our research gained various perspectives on the use of this prison event as a social model of rehabilitation through hospitality training. Specifically, we used thematic analysis [1] to analyse public information sources about the event. Sources included newspaper articles, trade magazines, social media, information taken from the New Zealand Department of Corrections website, independent reviews of the event, and a radio interview with one of the inmates.

Since 2012, local industry chefs and minimum-security prisoner-cooks from Rimutaka prison have teamed together to produce fine dining cuisine for the annual 'Wellington on a Plate' festival – a festival designed to showcase the region's food and beverages. The inmates are usually experienced in cooking and working towards a cooking qualification. During the 'Gate to Plate' event as part of the Wellington festival, Rimutaka prison hosts 160 paying members of the public and more than 60 stakeholders over three nights. After clearing security and a briefing, guests experience a glimpse of 'life inside' and are served a three-course dinner in the Staff Training College followed by a question and answer session with the prisoner-cooks. The event is an innovative way to show the public the work happening to rehabilitate prisoners, and an opportunity to break down the negative stereotypes of offenders.

Our research revealed three common themes in the content of the public information sources we analysed. The themes were: 'breaking the stereotypes'; 'pride and passion to make a difference'; and 'training for rehabilitation'. The

first theme emerged from comments by chefs, journalists and other guests on their change in attitude toward a more positive perception of prisoners as a result of attending the event, suggesting that this type of initiative may enable transformation in terms of social identity. The second theme saw inmates commonly discussing their passion and desire to 'make a difference' for themselves; a fresh start. Thus, the passion of volunteering in such an event can provide a sense of new meaning for a new future. The third theme related to common positive reports of the importance of in-prison training and qualifications for rehabilitation.

While this paper makes no claim about the effectiveness of the 'Gate to Plate' event as a reforming rehabilitation practice for prisoners, there is mounting evidence worldwide to suggest that in-prison training and post-release employment programmes can successfully assist prisoners to remain custody free post-release (e.g. [2]). As such, we encourage further research to examine how hospitality training and employment may provide a positive opportunity to change lives through enabling a second chance.

This research was presented at the CHME (Council of Hospitality Management Education) conference in May 2019 at the University of Greenwich in England.

Corresponding author

Tracy Harkison can be contacted at: tracy.harkison@aut.ac.nz

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International visitor surveys: more than just numbers

Tracy Berno, Eilidh Thorburn, Minghui Sun and Simon Milne

Tracy Berno is an associate professor at the School of Hospitality and Tourism, Auckland University of Technology (AUT), where she lectures in food and culture, and food politics. Her research interests include the relationship between agriculture, tourism and cuisine, and sustainable food systems.

Eilidh Thorburn is a researcher, educator, facilitator and research officer at the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute, AUT (NZTRI). Eilidh has over five years of applied tourism research experience, and has worked on tourism and economic development projects for the IFC/World Bank in the South Pacific and

International visitor surveys (IVS) are traditionally designed to provide destinations with marketing data and intelligence. The New Zealand Tourism Research Institute has been developing new approaches to IVS implementation and data collection in the Pacific Islands that can provide a much richer source of information [1]. The research outlined here is the first to utilise an IVS to explore the positioning of cuisine in the culinary identity of a destination – specifically, the cuisine of the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands is known primarily for its sun, sea and sand features, rather than its culinary attributes. Drawing on data mining of the Cook Islands IVS (2012–2016) and a web audit of destination websites and menus, this paper considers the positioning of food and food-related activities within the Pacific nation's tourism experience.

National tourism organisations are increasingly seeking competitive advantage by utilising their local cuisines as tourist attractions. Research suggests that distinctive local cuisines can act as both a tourism attraction, and as a means of shaping the identity of a destination [2, 3]. In addition to providing an important source of marketable images, local cuisine can also provide a unique experience for tourists. This reinforces the competitiveness and sustainability of the destination [2].

The cuisine of the Cook Islands has come up repeatedly in recommendations for how the country can grow its tourism revenue. Recommendations have been made to improve the food product on offer, develop a distinctive Cook Islands cuisine based on fresh, local produce, and to promote a Cook Islands cuisine experience [4, 5], and to use these to market the Cook Islands as a destination for local food tourism experiences [4]. Despite these recommendations, Cook Island cuisine features less prominently than stereotypical sun, sea, and sand marketing images, and little is known about tourists' perceptions of and satisfaction with food and food-related activities [6]. Our research addresses this gap by mining IVS data to gain a deeper understanding of tourists' experiences and perceptions of food in the Cook Islands and assessing whether local food can be positioned as means of creating a unique destination identity.

Two methods were used to develop a picture of where food sits in the Cook Islands tourist experience: one focussed on tourist feedback; and the other focused on how food is portrayed in relevant online media. Analysis of all food-related data collected as part of the national IVS between 1 April 2012 and 30 June 2016 was conducted (N = 10,950). A web audit also focused on how food is positioned

the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Mindy Sun has a background of working in the Chinese tourism industry. She gained her doctoral degree from the University of Waikato. Mindy has been involved in several research projects sponsored by national tourism organisations and regional tourism organisations. Her research interests involve Chinese outbound tourism, social media marketing in China, tourist satisfaction, and tourist behaviour.
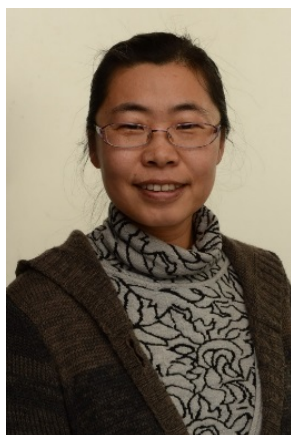
Simon Milne is a professor of tourism in the School of Hospitality and Tourism, AUT, where he is also the associate head of school for research and development. Simon is the

as part of the Cook Islands tourism product.

After identifying the quantitative food-related questions in the IVS, satisfaction with these activities was analysed. Qualitative comments related to food experiences were also examined. The results suggest that participation in food-related activities is generally a positive feature of the visitor experience. The web-audit revealed, however, that food is not a salient feature in the majority of Cook Islands-related websites, and when food did feature, it tended to be oriented towards international cuisine with a 'touch of the Pacific' rather than specifically Cook Islands cuisine. This reinforced findings from the IVS data mining that Cook Islands food is presented as a generic tropical 'seafood and fruit' cuisine that, largely, lacks the defining and differentiating features of authentic Cook Island cuisine.

High participation rates in food-related activities and overall positive evaluations by visitors emerged from the IVS data, yet a dearth of images and information on the country's food suggests that the Cook Islands is not exploiting its cuisine and food experiences to their full potential. As a direct result of this secondary analysis of IVS data, which highlighted the importance of and potential for food-related activities, the Cook Islands Government is now actively addressing this gap by developing a range of food-related resources and information that can better link tourism to local cuisine. In addition to developing a greater presence of local food in online resources, the Cook Islands Tourism Corporation has also taken on board the messages from the IVS to drive the development of Takurua [7] – an initiative to develop and document local, traditional cuisine and share it with the world. This approach is part of a broader ongoing effort to differentiate the Cook Islands from other South Pacific destinations through its unique cultural attributes.

Data mining and secondary analysis of IVS data has not been restricted to the identification of food-related opportunities. Secondary analysis of IVS data in the Pacific has also been used to investigate the impact of other niche markets such as events [8] and to gauge the impact of environmental incidents, for example Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu [9] and algal bloom in the Cook Islands [10], thus reinforcing that IVS data are a rich source of information and are indeed more than just numbers.

Corresponding author

Tracy Berno can be contacted at tracy.berno@aut.ac.nz

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founding director of the New Zealand Tourism Research Institute and has worked as a consultant for a range of New Zealand and international organisations, including UNDP, UNEP, UNIDO, UNESCAP and the World Bank (IFC), and the World Tourism Organisation.

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Accommodating travellers with pets: is Auckland ready?

Yiqi Chen and Heike Schänzel

Yiqi Chen is a Master of International Tourism Management graduate from Auckland University of Technology. Raising a variety of pets since childhood combined with her passion for travelling has sparked her interest in pet tourism. Yiqi completed a Master of Marketing at Brunel University and worked for several years promoting China's metropolitan expansions before moving to New Zealand to pursue her passion.

Heike Schänzel is an associate professor at Auckland University of Technology in Auckland, New Zealand, and programme leader for post-graduate tourism. Her research interests include tourist behaviour and experiences; families, children

New Zealand is considered a nation of pet lovers, with 64 percent of households owning at least one pet [1]. The aim of this study [2] was to explore what the main considerations were for hospitality operators in Auckland with regards to offering pet-friendly services. To answer this question, several key aspects were considered: pet tourism trends; market expansion of pet-friendly accommodations; the profitability of allowing pets; and operational implications, such as additional investment and labour costs. This explorative research interviewed ten accommodation providers in Auckland: five pet-friendly and five non-pet-friendly. These operators represented owners or managers of hotels, motels, lodges and apartments spread across Auckland and Waiheke Island. Research on operators' perspectives on pet tourism is unexplored, with previous literature focusing on tourists' perceptions [3–5]. This study hopes to provide practical implications for the industry, especially for the New Zealand context.

New Zealand's pet tourism market is considered small and mainly domestic. According to popular global dog travel directory Bring Fido [6], in 2017 there were a mere fifteen pet-friendly accommodations in Auckland, in stark contrast to other cities such as New York (367), London (96) and Paris (643). Interviewees' opinions on the profitability of accommodating pet tourists varied. Non-pet operators rejected the idea of allowing pets due to an abundance of non-pet customers and were reluctant to accept perceived pet-related risks. Their pre-conceptions were likely formed by operating in silos without conducting any research on pet tourism and its market landscape. There was a genuine fear of negative online reviews which cannot be easily amended and can have significant longevity. Their key perceived risks were related to hygiene and allergy concerns for other customers. Preventative measures were believed to involve significant investment into property renovation.

Pet friendly operators, who mainly accommodated dogs, shared a different perspective through their own experiences. They expressed high trust and optimism for pet tourists and had rarely experienced any major pet-related incidents. From a hygiene and allergy point of view, the risks were considered minimal and customers bore the responsibility when stating their allergies. Pet-friendly operators stated that no additional workload or costs were incurred through accommodating pets. Significant renovations were not deemed necessary, instead relying on what they already had. However, in the unlikely

and adolescents in tourism; sociality in tourism; femininities and (paternal) masculinities in tourism research; innovative and qualitative research methodologies; and critical theory development in tourism and hospitality.

event of a major pet-related incident, the interviewees expressed that their trust towards accommodating pets would waver, meaning their tolerance of risk was not resilient. At the time of the research, pet-friendly operators were relaxed about pet policies and had not formalised them. The majority were conveying rules to pet tourists through word of mouth, such as that pets must be on a leash in public areas, instead of through written and signed agreements. Tellingly, pet-friendly operators did not perceive New Zealand's pet tourism market as lucrative. They were allowing pets as an extension of service and lacked motivation to expand or to cater for more pets.

The study highlights the potential for growth in the domestic pet tourism market despite the current stalemate, where those who allowed pets were supportive and vice versa. Improving this situation might require unified pet-friendly associations and certain levels of government intervention. In parallel, all operators should break out of silos and socialise more with their pet-friendly peers to gain knowledge and validate assumptions. Pet-friendly operators could improve engagement with pet tourists through standardised policies and formal agreements. With guidance and support from their peers, more accommodations may be capable of handling pets. Pet owners could look forward to a day when travelling with pets becomes much more accessible due to abundant pet-friendly accommodation.

Corresponding author

Heike Schänzel can be contacted at: heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz

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Warm workplace relationships: how to retain hospitality employees

Shelagh Mooney

Shelagh is postgraduate programme leader (hospitality) in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand, where she lectures in organisational behaviour and human resources management. Shelagh's career research explores the effects of gender and other dimensions of diversity in employment, focusing on organisational processes within the hospitality context. Her studies have been published in employment journals as well as in tourism and hospitality-specific publications.

This article addresses the significance of workplace social connections for hospitality workers. When examining high turnover in hospitality, the focus is generally negative, such as shift work and low pay [1]. Surprisingly, for a sector that employs one in 11 people [2], little attention focuses on the positive aspects. In New Zealand, hospitality work is considered inferior, to be endured while waiting for more exciting opportunities [3]. Yet a recent New Zealand study shows that hospitality employees at all levels are fulfilled by being recognised as professionals and from the variety, challenge and growth possibilities of their work. The study drew from boundaryless career theory about the social competencies that enable career success for individuals [4]:

- knowing 'why' they are engaged in this career (individual motivation and identity);
- knowing 'how' they are supposed to perform (skills and expertise); and
- knowing 'who' – significant networks (relationships and reputation).

In the qualitative study, data were firstly collected through focus groups with hospitality professionals who had left the industry after working there for at least 10 years. Then, interviews took place with current hospitality employees in a variety of roles, from general manager to kitchen porter with an average of 25 years' experience. Thematic analysis was carried out separately on each study before results were combined.

Findings

Positive relationships linked to career social competencies [4] forged hospitality workers' professional identities, building long careers:

1. Good relationships supported workers' professional identity

The findings showed that participants knew clearly 'why' they stayed; for example, they loved meeting different people. However, career motivations changed with their life and career stage – sometimes caregiving commitments took priority; at other times, gaining promotion was most important. One housekeeping supervisor explained how she refused a pay rise to move to another hotel because the money was not as important as established relationships. Being viewed as an excellent kitchen porter or manager ensured that employers tailored jobs to employees' circumstances.

2. *Being professionally excellent was deeply satisfying*

Knowing 'how' referred to the expertise that experienced employees demonstrated to managers and co-workers. They were dedicated, knowledgeable and passionate. Affirmation by guests was rewarding; one restaurant manager described her intense satisfaction when professional associations rebooked their Christmas functions because "I will look after them".

3. *Relationships and reputation*

Employees gained their reputation by showing 'the right people' that they were professionals. Their experience and networks were their '*pedigree*'. Endorsement from peers and managers increased job autonomy and better opportunities at all levels. Mentoring relationships formed organically, and older employees spoke of the enjoyment they experienced from 'giving back' in their turn and mentoring others.

Practical implications

This study reveals that strong social connections are founded on respectful relationships between hospitality employers and employees, where workers know they are valued. Employers should ask whether career aspirations are the driving force for individuals, and if so, let employees know there is a plan for their next position. If unable to provide further development over time, managers should facilitate moves among their networks. In turn, they will receive new recruits. To keep professionals who are content to remain at their current level, employers should ask, and provide, what is important to them – certain shifts, a sustainable lifestyle (i.e. a living wage) or an aspect they enjoy. Upskilling remains an important motivator.

Employees *do not* stay with employers (and co-workers) who show no respect by refusing to put rosters online; giving less than one weeks' notice of shifts; providing insufficient hours; or not accommodating workers' study or care-giving commitments. Training plans for new team members accelerate good relationships, and studies show that retention of new employees is increased by induction processes; however, these are frequently missing. In sum, good social relations in the workplace are not a 'luxury' option in hospitality environments, they are essential.

Corresponding author

Shelagh Mooney can be contacted at: shelagh.mooney@aut.ac.nz

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