

**An exploratory study of the preferred qualities of managerial hospitality
candidates in New Zealand's four-and-five-star hotels.**

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Attestation of Authorship

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signed: _____

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Abstract

The number of students majoring in hospitality management has increased sharply in the past few decades, along with the rapid development of the hospitality industry in New Zealand. Most hospitality graduates aspiring to reach management level soon after graduation quickly realise they are disadvantaged in competing for managerial positions against staff without degrees who have more industry experience. Previous studies have explored what the hospitality industry expects from hospitality graduates. However, a particular perspective looking into what four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand expect from hospitality candidates, especially from those looking for management positions, is missing. This study was therefore conducted to identify the requirements for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels.

Data were collected from 125 job advertisements for managerial hospitality candidates in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels from 1 June 2017 to 31 July 2017. The findings reveal five main categories of requirements for managerial candidates, including soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates. Soft skills (such as communication skills, leadership, or flexibility with rosters) are the most valued dimensions for prospective managers, although the specific requirements for soft skills differ according to management levels. Managerial hospitality candidates also need a good command of hard skills, which are also important and valued. The degree of requirement for hard skills increases with management level. Although the requirements for candidates' educational qualifications in New Zealand's hotels are not high generally, taking a degree in hospitality management still increases the possibility of being hired when competing against rivals with other majors. Years of working experience is an objective standard in this industry, because higher management positions require more years of experience in general. Additionally, it is advantageous or even necessary for managerial hospitality candidates to have obtained NZ driving licences, LCQ certificates, and first aid certificates when applying for management roles.

This study successfully filled a knowledge gap in the literature relating to the specific requirements for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. Additionally, the findings of this study provide practical implications for hospitality education providers and hospitality students, allowing them to understand what students need to be equipped with to be successful in management roles in the hospitality industry.

Chapter1: Introduction

This research investigates the requirements for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. This chapter firstly presents the research background to shed some light on the motives for conducting this research and presents the research aims and questions. Secondly, it briefly introduces the research methodology and methods adopted for this study. Finally, it outlines the structure of this dissertation in order to present an overview of the research.

1.1 Research background

The tourism industry has witnessed sharp growth in the past two decades worldwide, with the number of international tourist arrivals increasing drastically from 527 million in 1995 to 1,184 million in 2015. In 2016 alone, worldwide international tourist arrivals grew by 3.9% to reach a total of 1,235 million, an increase of 46 million compared to the previous year (World Tourism Organization, 2017). This worldwide trend of sharp growth is also evident in New Zealand, as New Zealand's international visitor arrivals have increased significantly from 2.61 million in 2012 to 3.27 million in 2016, accounting for a 25% increase in international visitor arrivals over the last four years, and this figure is expected to reach 4.59 million by 2025 (Statistics New Zealand, 2016a). This fast growth in the tourism industry consequently boosts the hospitality industry. Indeed, the hospitality industry has become one of the fastest growing industries in New Zealand (Harkison, Poulston & Kim, 2011). In fact, the Ministry of Tourism (2016) forecasts that by 2023, the total annual international traveller spend in the hospitality market is expected to increase by 52%.

In addition to boosting the hospitality industry, the development of international travel between the 1940s and the 21st century has also contributed to the rapid growth of hospitality education both worldwide (Tesone, 2008) and in New Zealand (Harkison, 2004b). Ever since the first undergraduate programme in hospitality was offered by

Cornell University in 1922 (Cornell School of Hotel Administration, 2017), the number of hospitality programmes at universities has been growing globally (Raybould & Wilkins, 2006). In New Zealand, more hospitality education providers have emerged since the 1990s with the development of the hospitality industry (Harkison, 2009).

Along with the rapid development of the hospitality industry in New Zealand, the number of students majoring in hospitality management has also increased sharply (Cox, 2015). However, hospitality education does not provide students with adequate advantages in terms of practical skills that enhance employability in real workplaces; employers in Australia, for example, have complained that hospitality students are not equipped with the necessary skills (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Most hospitality graduates expecting to reach senior management soon after graduation realise they are disadvantaged in competing for managerial positions against staff without degrees who have more industry experience (Harkison, 2004a; Petrova & Mason, 2004). This advantage to less educated but more experienced operators also exists within New Zealand's hospitality industry (Harkison et al., 2011).

The estimated increase in visitor numbers implies potential growth for the hospitality industry and increasing demands for hospitality qualified employees (O'Mahony & Sillitoe, 2001). It is therefore important for hospitality candidates to understand what the industry wants from its candidates, especially for those wanting to pursue career development in the industry and reach managerial positions.

1.2 Research aim and questions

Most students taking a degree in hospitality management expect to reach management roles (Harkison, 2004a). The job responsibilities of managers vary depending on specific roles and levels.ENZ (2009), and Rudman (2017) categorised managerial levels as entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level, in line with their corresponding job responsibilities. Thus, the role-specific responsibilities of managers may generate specific and different requirements for managerial hospitality candidates. Also, job applicants are more likely

to apply for a position in a company with a favourable brand image or reputation (Wallace, Lings, Cameron, & Sheldon, 2014). Therefore, hospitality candidates would be more likely to apply for jobs in four- and five-star hotels which have a better brand image and reputation (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2008). Additionally, four- and five-star hotels represent superior service quality (Yang & Mattila, 2016). The requirements for staff at these hotels are thus likely to be higher. Therefore, it is useful to provide a lens for potential candidates to understand what four- and five-star hotels want through systematically examining the specific requirements such hotels have for managers. The research aim of this study therefore is to identify the requirements for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. The three research questions designed to meet the objectives of the study are as follows:

1. What are the required soft and hard skills for managerial candidates in four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand?
2. What are the requirements of educational qualifications for managerial candidates in four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand?
3. What are the requirements of supplementary certificates for managerial candidates in four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand?

1.3 Research methodology and methods

To achieve the research aim, this study examined online job advertisements collected from job websites and the official websites of a sample of hotels in New Zealand. A qualitative-inductive research strategy was adopted to conduct this research. Using an interpretivist paradigm, secondary sources were utilised to provide data, and a summative approach to qualitative content analysis was adopted in the analysis phase. Specifically targeting four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand, the study collected online job advertisements particularly searching for managerial hospitality candidates. Then, the data were analysed using word counts and interpreting the codes derived from textual data from the advertisements.

1.4 Dissertation structure

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters: introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion. The major contents of each chapter are as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter introduces the research background, the rationale for conducting this research, the research aim, the research questions, and the overall methodology and methods adopted for this study.

Chapter 2: Literature review. This chapter reviews hospitality education in the New Zealand context, and the role of hospitality degrees from an industry perspective. It also reviews the skills developed through hospitality education and the key concept of employability, including what employability is and what employability skills actually involve. Existing literature regarding what the hospitality industry requires from hospitality students is discussed. The final sections of the chapter provide an overview of the characteristics of four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand and the generic concepts of managerial levels.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter explains the research methodology and methods adopted for this study, explaining why the qualitative-inductive research strategy and interpretivist paradigm was chosen. It identifies the population and secondary sources used for this study. The final sections explain the data collection and data analysis methods and processes.

Chapter 4: Findings. This chapter presents the findings of the research. Five categories of managerial requirements were identified: soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates. This chapter also explains how these categories were identified, presents the specific findings under each category, and discusses the differences and similarities of the specific requirements for different types of managerial candidates.

Chapter 5: Discussion. This chapter analyses the major findings regarding soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates. It presents further discussion about the major results in this study through comparing and contrasting the results with theories in the existing academic literature.

Chapter 6: Conclusion. This chapter provides an overall conclusion to the research. The main findings are discussed in relation to the research aim, and their theoretical and practical implications are identified. Limitations of the research are highlighted in order to conclude with recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Previous studies have explored what the hospitality industry expects from hospitality graduates through case studies, questionnaires, or interviews. However, as will be shown in this literature review, a particular perspective looking into what four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand expect from hospitality candidates, especially from those looking for management positions, is missing. Firstly, this chapter discusses hospitality education in New Zealand and the role of the hospitality degree within the industry. Secondly, it discusses the skills developed through hospitality education. Thirdly, it defines employability and outlines what employability skills actually involve. Fourthly, the chapter reviews existing literature regarding what the hospitality industry requires from hospitality graduates. In the final sections, the chapter provides an overview of the characteristics of New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels and the generic concepts of managerial levels.

2.2 Hospitality education in New Zealand

There is a difference between a hospitality degree and a vocational qualification in hospitality. Vocational qualifications aim at preparing graduates for operative jobs through teaching technical skills, and they often focus on work-related skills (Ricci, 2005). For example, the culinary programmes offered by the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in New Zealand deliver practical cooking skills (Manukau Institute of Technology, 2017). A hospitality degree programme, in contrast, often emphasises the students' development of critical thinking skills and theory knowledge within the context of hospitality (Harper, Brown, & Irvine, 2005). For example, the Master of International Hospitality Management programme offered by Auckland University of Technology (AUT) aims to develop abilities in critical evaluation, analysis of information, and analytical ability to resolve complex issues (Auckland University of Technology, 2017). In universities, hospitality degree programme students are more likely to obtain generic

skills (Harkison et al., 2011), whereas in other types of vocational hospitality education programmes, students are given technical skills (Ricci, 2005). Therefore, the skills that hospitality education providers in New Zealand deliver can be categorised into technical and generic skills.

Theoretically, these skills obtained from hospitality education programmes should help hospitality graduates meet employers' demands for well-trained employees (Tesone, 2008); however, the hospitality industry often complains that hospitality graduates are not ready for the real working environment (Huang, 2014). This problem raises three major questions about hospitality education:

1. What is the role of a hospitality degree?
2. What skills are developed through hospitality education?
3. What does the hospitality industry require from hospitality graduates?

These questions will be discussed in the following sections.

2.3 The role of hospitality degrees

In reality, hospitality degrees are not highly valued by the industry. Harkison et al. (2011) conducted a questionnaire study to explore the gap between hospitality managers' and hospitality students' views of the value of hospitality degrees in New Zealand. They found that hospitality students valued degrees more than did hospitality managers, and speculated the reason for this was probably due to the late introduction of hospitality degree programmes in New Zealand. Many hospitality managers do not have a hospitality degree; rather, they reach senior management through rich working experiences gained in various positions (Harkison et al., 2011). Therefore, with their career experience, these managers may value rich working experience over a hospitality degree. However, the reality that the hospitality degree is not highly valued by hospitality managers or the industry does not mean the hospitality degree lacks real value.

Most hospitality management degree undergraduates have high hopes for their future career prospects (O'Mahony & Sillitoe, 2001), such as reaching a senior-level management position soon after graduation (Harkison, 2004a). The reality, however, is not what they expect. Several studies have examined the length of time it takes to become a general manager (GM) in a hotel. In Australia, the length of time was about 12 years (Ladkin, 2002); in New Zealand, the length of time was about 11 years (Steele, 2003); in Scotland, the length of time was about 10 years (Harper et al., 2005). In addition, Ladkin and Juwaheer (2000) revealed that there is no direct link between having a degree and progressing towards becoming a hotel GM. Steele (2003) suggested that in New Zealand hotels, the employee's typical route to becoming a senior-level manager involves first progressing from supervisory and entry-level management positions to middle-level management positions before eventually becoming a GM. It has also been suggested that the accumulated work experience gained from the working environment seems to contribute more to career progression than does education (Ladkin, 2000). Many graduates overestimate their accumulated work experience from part-time jobs or internships, and graduates still lack practical management experience due to inadequate exposure to management activities (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Consequently, the hospitality industry assumes graduates should commence their careers in operational positions (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). While some graduates are indeed recruited into management level positions, they still need to undertake management training that requires them to gain operations experience in the first 12 or 18 months (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). This makes it unrealistic for hospitality graduates to expect to reach management positions soon after graduation.

Despite the time it takes for graduates to reach management level positions after graduating, qualifications are still useful. In a study conducted in Scotland, 64% of GM respondents believed that formal qualifications were conducive to career development and helped prospective managers progress faster to GM status (Harper et al., 2005). Unqualified managers may reach their first managerial positions at a younger age than qualified managers because qualified managers spend more time on education; however, qualified managers progress comparatively faster to hotel GM positions because their

formal education contributes to the development of functional managerial skills required for higher levels of management (Harper et al., 2005). This advantage of having a degree is also supported by Ladkin (2002), who noted that the most rapid way to advance in a hospitality career is to obtain a master's degree in hospitality.

2.4 The skills developed through hospitality education

As previously mentioned, hospitality students can obtain both technical and generic skills from hospitality education providers (Harkison et al., 2011). *Technical skills*, also termed as *hard skills*, refer to subject-specific or professional knowledge and skills (Tsitskari, Goudas, Tsalouchou, & Michalopoulou, 2017). Knowledge about cost control in a restaurant provided by hospitality education is an example of a hard skill (Weber, Crawford, Lee, & Dennison, 2013). *Generic skills*, also termed as *employability skills*, are key competencies for employment (Raybould & Wilkins, 2006). Employability skills, however, do not provide students with ideal competitiveness in the real hotel environment (O'Driscoll, 2012). In order to understand the reason for this, an understanding of the nature of employability and its related skills is required, as discussed in the following section.

2.4.1 The nature of employability

Employability can be broadly defined as the ability to gain and retain a formal job or to transfer to a new one after completing higher education (Fugate, Kinicki, & Ashforth, 2004). Employability relates to “a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy” (Yorke, 2004, p. 410). Another definition by Pool and Sewell (2007, p. 280) was “having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful.” Wang and Tsai (2014, p. 126) defined employability as “a set of knowledge, skills, and attributes that allow one to choose a career, to be employed, to transfer freely in the job market, to grow, to fulfil job duties, to show

commitment to work, to feel satisfied or succeed, and to realize personal potential.” From these definitions, it could be inferred that the core concept of employability generally refers to the probability that graduates will be considered likely to be successful in their employment (Harvey, 2001).

2.4.2 The skills and personal attributes involved in employability

Most definitions of employability include reference to the possession of skills and personal attributes. Many terms, such as generic skills (Raybould & Wilkins, 2006) or soft skills (Wang & Tsai, 2014), are used in the literature to describe employability-related skills. *Soft skills* refer to personal attributes such as adaptability and interpersonal skills (Tsitskari et al., 2017). As the development of employability skills increases the likelihood of employment (Yang, Cheung, & Fang, 2015), several studies have evaluated what employability skills and personal attributes are deemed necessary from different perspectives, and in particular, from the perspectives of graduates, employers, and higher education institutions. Table 2.1 provides a comparison of the employability skills identified through these studies. Skills commonly cited are in bold, while personal attributes that may be linked to personality traits are underlined.

Table 2.1 Comparison of employability frameworks

Authors and Dates	Main Findings	Study Topic
Abraham and Karns (2009)	Communication skills Problem-solver <u>Results oriented</u> Interpersonal skills Leadership skills Customer focused <u>Flexible/adaptable</u> Team worker <u>Dependable</u> Quality focused	Top 10 competencies identified by businesses in the USA

Authors and Dates	Main Findings	Study Topic
Archer and Davison (2008)	Communication skills Teamworking skills <u>Integrate</u> Intellectual <u>Confident</u> <u>Character/personality</u> Planning and organisational skills Literate (good written skills) Numeracy (good with numbers) Analysis and decision-making skills	Employers in the UK
Andrews and Higson (2008)	Professional <u>Reliable</u> <u>Able to cope with uncertainty</u> <u>Able to work under pressure</u> Able to think and plan strategically Capable of communicating and interacting with others, either in teams or through networking Good written and verbal communication skills Information and communication technology skills <u>Creative and self-confident</u> <u>Willing to learn and accept responsibility</u> Good self-management and time management skills	Employer and graduate perspectives: multiple sources
Kreber (2006)	<u>Able and willing to contribute to innovation and be creative</u> <u>Able to cope with uncertainties</u> <u>Interested in and prepared for lifelong learning</u> Social sensitivity and communicative skills Teamwork Prepare themselves for the internationalisation of the labour market through an understanding of various cultures <u>Willing to take on responsibilities</u> Entrepreneurial Literate in areas of knowledge forming the basis for various professional skills, for example, in new technologies Versatile in generic skills that cut across disciplines	Multiple countries – competencies higher education institutions should provide

Note. **Bold** indicates items common to all frameworks. Underlining indicates attributes potentially linked to personality traits.

As presented in Table 2.1, graduates, employers, and higher education institutions consider different personal attributes (such as dependability, integrity, or confidence) and skills (such as leadership skills or problem-solving skills) to be linked to employability. Although the specific employability skills required vary depending on whether they are considered by graduates, employers, or higher education institutions, some skills are common to all three, namely, communication skills or interpersonal skills and teamwork skills. Similarly, Chen, Kanfer, DeShon, Mathieu, and Kozlowski (2009) indicated that interpersonal skills are increasingly being valued as the most determinant factor of employability by employers along with an increased emphasis on teamwork in the workplaces.

Some of the employability (generic) skills presented in Table 2.1 are also the emphasis of hospitality education programmes. In fact, it has been noted that higher education and training programmes for hospitality and tourism set the development of such generic skills as a priority; in particular, they focus on generic skills such as communication, showing initiative, problem-solving, delivering customer service, and demonstrating a willingness to learn (Baum, 2002). However, the generic skills emphasised in hospitality education may not be the same aspects valued by the hospitality industry. It is therefore important to consider what the hospitality industry expects from graduates.

2.5 The hospitality industry's requirements for graduates

As employers will ultimately decide who is hired, it is important to understand what hotel recruiters want from new hospitality candidates (Hogan, Chamorro-Premuzic, & Kaiser, 2013). Several researchers have investigated this very issue. Table 2.2 provides a comparative summary of what generic and technical skills are required from hospitality graduates.

Table 2.2 Comparison of requirements for hospitality students from the industry

Authors and dates	Essential skills		Respondents
	Generic skills	Technical skills	
Tesone and Ricci (2012)	Able to work as part of a team Knowledge of grooming Able to project a professional image Effective listening, verbal, and written communication skills		156 hotel managers and executives in Orlando
Kamau and Waudo (2012)	Conflict resolution Self-initiative Understanding the level of service expected by international guests	Sales and marketing	106 human resource managers in Nairobi hotels
Zopiatis (2007)	Positive attitude Communication skills Human skills Self-discipline	Basic hospitality technical skills	77 hospitality professionals in Cyprus
Nelson and Dopson (2001)	Identifying and solving managerial problems Demonstrating leadership abilities Developing positive customer relationships Adapting the organisation to meet customer needs Solving customer problems Developing positive employee relations Demonstrating effective oral communication skills Training and coaching employees Managing crisis situations	Cost control knowledge	302 hotel executives who were members of the American Hotel and Motel Association, 94 human resource specialists, and 250 of the sponsoring school's alumni

As can be determined from Table 2.2, the hospitality industry places much more value on the generic skills, or soft skills, discussed in the previous section, such as communication skills, leadership abilities, or problem-solving skills. This is consistent with the findings of Baum (2002) which indicated that technical, or hard skills, are not highly valued by the hospitality industry. Similarly, Raybould, and Wilkins (2005) argued the hospitality industry has shifted its focus from technical skills to generic skills in the past few decades.

Also evident in Table 2.2 is the consistent importance the industry places on communication skills. An important component of communication skills is, of course, language ability. As the hospitality working environment tends to be cross-cultural, language ability is becoming increasingly important in guaranteeing effective communication between hospitality staff and customers (Blue & Harun, 2003).

According to the aforementioned studies, it is clear that generic skills are highly valued by hospitality employers. However, technical or hard skills, especially practical operational skills, are also valued (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005); after all, real-world experience is irreplaceable in this hands-on industry (Moreo, Green, & O'Halloran, 2017). However, whether hard skills such as practical operational skills are also valued and required of graduates for management roles that focus more on managing and leading staff (Enz, 2009) is yet to be determined.

There are other requirements beyond generic and technical skills that are valued by the industry. Kwok (2012) conducted a study in the USA to investigate what factors were considered significant selection criteria by hospitality industry managers. Results revealed another dimension valued by the hospitality industry: the 'person-organisation and person-job fit.' This dimension was considered paramount for both entry-level and managerial-level candidates. From the human resource manager's perspective, even though a potential candidate may have mastered proficient technical or hands-on skills, these skills mean little for staff retention or further career development if the candidate's personality, values, and attitudes do not blend in with those of the organisation (Kwok, 2012). This is in line with the findings of Bednarska (2016) that revealed the fit between the staff and the organisation contributes to employees' job pursuit intentions and further helps reduce staff turnover. From the organisation's perspective, the key to staff retention is to find the 'fit,' and the reason for pursuing a good 'person-organisation and person-job fit' is primarily due to the hospitality industry's high staff turnover rate (Blomme, Van Rheede, & Tromp, 2009). As these studies were conducted outside of New Zealand, it would be helpful to also review the situation in the New Zealand hospitality industry.

Yet another requirement to consider is the credentials themselves, as hospitality certificates could also be required by the industry (O'Halloran, 2013). Using 79 online surveys, Moreo et al. (2017) measured the value of hospitality certificates from the perspective of North American hotel managers. These researchers found that from a list of available certificates, the Guest Service Professional, Alcohol Awareness, and ServSafe Food Safety certificates were not necessary, but were most preferred by hotel managers. Hotel recruiters would like to see new graduates obtain these three certificates, but have greater expectations of experienced industry professionals in these hard skill areas. Moreo et al.'s (2017) study, however, was limited to the North American region, and the requirements for certificates in New Zealand's hospitality industry could be totally different. Hence, further examination into certificates requirements in New Zealand's industry is yet to be conducted.

Most studies investigating the hospitality industry's requirements for graduates have been conducted outside of New Zealand. However, one study has investigated the issue within the New Zealand context. Cox (2015) combined data from interviews and surveys to explore the elements that make a successful hospitality student in New Zealand from different perspectives of the graduates, the teachers, and the industry. The most important elements valued by the industry were all related to generic skills: passion was rated as the highest, followed by being creative, having a good work ethic, interpersonal skills, and personality. Technical skills were not completely overlooked by the industry, but only three skills (i.e., basic technical skills, business acumen, and system knowledge) were mentioned. According to Cox (2015), technical skills can be taught and obtained through work experience, but the passion to serve people, the ability to create emotional relationships with customers, and dedication to the work are the attributes the industry looks for the most in graduates. This provides valuable insight into New Zealand's industry requirements for hospitality graduates in general. However, it does not provide insight into whether these same requirements apply specifically to managerial hospitality candidates.

Existing studies have explored the role of hospitality degrees for graduates from the industry perspective. They have also explored what the hospitality industry expects from hospitality graduates in terms of generic (soft) skills, technical (hard) skills, and credentials (certificates). The existing literature provides a background for this study to go a step further and take a particular interest in the New Zealand hospitality industry's expectations for soft and hard skills, certificates, and qualifications for *managerial* hospitality candidates, as opposed to hospitality candidates in general, and especially for those looking for managerial positions in four- and five-star hotels. Hospitality graduates are potential hospitality management candidates, but the category of managerial candidates also includes those who have worked in the industry for a while and are pursuing career progress. The rationale for choosing this particular perspective from which to investigate New Zealand's hospitality industry requirements are as follows:

1. Most students taking a degree in hospitality management aspire to reach management roles (Harkison, 2004a). It is therefore necessary for them to understand what the specific requirements are for hospitality managers.
2. Job applicants are more likely to apply for a position in a company with a favourable brand image or reputation (Wallace, Lings, Cameron, & Sheldon, 2014). Therefore, hospitality candidates would be more likely to apply for jobs in four- and five-star hotels which have a better brand image and reputation (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2008). Additionally, four- and five-star hotels represent superior service quality (Yang & Mattila, 2016). The requirements for staff at these hotels are thus likely to be higher.
3. Managers have different job responsibilities based on specific roles and levels (Enz, 2009) and functions in human resources management (Rudman, 2017). The specific requirements for managers are thus likely to be different from general requirements for graduates.

Therefore, the role-specific responsibilities of managers and higher service standards in the four- or five-star hotel are both likely to generate specific and different requirements for managerial hospitality candidates. It is thus useful to provide a lens for potential candidates to understand what four- and five-star hotels want through systematically

examining the specific requirements such hotels have for managers. The following section further provides an overview of the characteristics of four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand, followed by an overview of the generic concepts of managerial levels.

2.6 Defining four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand

Hotel classifications, or hotel ratings, are used to categorise hotels based on quality. Hotel classifications can be granted by national or local governments, hotel associations, travel websites, travel guide books, national consumer travel organisations, and private organisations (Denizci Guillet & Law, 2010). Hotel classification systems vary by country, as there is no internationally unified classification system (Cser & Ohuchi, 2008; Rhee & Yang, 2015). However, the hotel star-rating classification system is universally acknowledged as the most commonly used. It rates or categorises hotels by awarding them one to five stars according to objective criteria such as services, facilities, room sizes, and infrastructures (Martin-Fuentes, 2016). Although the hotel star-rating classification is recognised as the most common system to categorise hotels (Martin-Fuentes, 2016), the specific objective criteria or standards for awarding stars under each classification system can vary.

In New Zealand, Qualmark's rating system is the main hotel classification system. Qualmark provides a star-rating system for the accommodation sector which uses a scale of one to five stars, with five stars representing the highest quality (Qualmark, 2017). The issuing organisation, Qualmark New Zealand Limited, was jointly established in 1993 by Tourism New Zealand, a government-owned organisation, and the New Zealand Automobile Association, a privately-owned organisation. Qualmark's aim is to provide domestic and international tourists with quality accommodation products (Qualmark, 2017). As the first tourism industry licensing system in the world, Qualmark has now become the nationally standardised, authorised hotel classification system used across all tourism businesses in New Zealand (Venkatraman, 2005). Qualmark gives specific descriptions of four-star (four-star plus) and five-star hotels, and four-star (four-star plus) hotels are excellent at consistently achieving high quality levels in a wide range of

facilities and services, while five-star hotels are among the best available in New Zealand (Qualmark, 2017).

2.7 Generic concepts of managerial levels

A manager's level in an organisation's hierarchy of authority influences his or her salary, managerial activities, and behaviours; accordingly, different managerial levels incur different responsibilities (Enz, 2009). Rudman (2017) categorised managerial levels as entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level, in line with their corresponding job responsibilities. Kuratko, Ireland, Covin, and Hornsby (2005) classified managerial levels in a similar way, but termed entry-level as operating-level and senior-level as top-level. Therefore, it could be said that Rudman's managerial level classification is widely accepted and is a logical way to describe managerial levels in an organisation. Considering this, the managerial level categories proposed by Rudman will be used in this dissertation, and are defined as follows:

- Senior-level managers are responsible for strategic decision-making relevant to an organisation's future developmental direction.
- Middle-level managers are responsible for effective communication between top-level managers and operating-level managers when interactively synthesising information and disseminating information.
- Entry-level managers are responsible for front-line work. They absorb relevant information gained from outside the business while responding to information from middle-level managers that is based on top-level managers' decisions (Rudman, 2017).

2.8 Summary

Prior studies have suggested that the hospitality industry values generic (soft) skills such as communication skills, a positive attitude, being a team worker, self-discipline, or passion over technical (hard) skills (Baum, 2002; Cox, 2015; Zopiatis, 2007). There is comparatively less emphasis on hard skills, with only a few requirements such as cost

control knowledge, sales and marketing skills, system knowledge, or business acumen (Nelson & Dopson, 2001; Kamau & Waudu, 2012; Cox, 2015). Moreo et al. (2017) has highlighted that obtaining certain industry-preferred certificates can be advantageous, but not necessarily required, for candidates. Most of the existing research, however, was either conducted outside New Zealand (e.g., Zopiatis; 2007; Moreo et al., 2017) or focused on the industry's requirements for hospitality graduates in general (e.g. Harkison et al., 2011; Cox, 2015) as opposed to management candidates specifically.

Most students obtaining a degree in hospitality management expect to be successful in their career and aspire to management positions (O'Mahony & Sillitoe, 2001; Harkison, 2004a). Many expect to reach management level shortly after graduating and entering the workforce (Harkison, 2004a). However, it is unrealistic for hospitality graduates to reach senior management roles soon after graduation, even with degrees (Harkison et al., 2011). Practical industry experience, after all, is irreplaceable in this hands-on industry (Moreo et al., 2017). Still, those with academic qualifications do reach management level sooner than those without qualifications due to the practical managerial skills acquired through education (Harper et al., 2005).

Despite research into hospitality industry requirements worldwide and in New Zealand, there has been a lack of research systematically examining the specific requirements for managerial hospitality candidates in New Zealand. This is an important area of investigation, given that many hospitality graduates aim for these positions, and the role-specific responsibilities of managers are likely to generate different requirements for managerial hospitality candidates than for general hospitality candidates. Also, candidates are more likely to apply for jobs in four- and five-star hotels which have better brand images and reputations (Kimpakorn & Tocquer, 2008) as well as higher service standards (Yang & Mattila, 2016). These factors are equally likely to put forward different requirements for candidates. Therefore, it is useful to provide potential managerial hospitality candidates with a lens to understand what four- and five-star hotels actually want. This study will fill these research gaps by identifying the requirements of New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level

management employees through systematic examination of requirements in generic (soft) skills, technical (hard) skills, educational qualifications, and supplementary certificates.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains and justifies the research methodology and methods adopted for this study. Firstly, the chapter presents a brief overview of the research objective, followed by an outline and explanation of the qualitative research strategy. Secondly, it explains why an interpretivist paradigm was chosen. Thirdly, the research population for the study is explained. Fourthly, the chapter explains and justifies the data collection method, data collection process and sampling, data analysis method, and data analysis process. Finally, the chapter briefly summarises the application of the research methodology and methods in this study.

3.2 Research objective

The aim of this study was to identify the requirements for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. To achieve this, online job advertisements were collected from job websites and official websites of New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. Data from online job advertisements were then analysed. The following three research questions were used to meet the aim of this study:

1. What are the required soft and hard skills for managerial candidates in four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand?
2. What are the requirements of educational qualifications for managerial candidates in four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand?
3. What are the requirements of supplementary certificates for managerial candidates in four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand?

3.3 Qualitative research strategy

A *methodology* refers to a strategy or plan for how research should be undertaken

(Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). A methodology guides researchers to select one set of research methods over another (Wahyuni, 2012). There are two main approaches to conducting research: the *qualitative approach* and the *quantitative approach* (Bryman, 2015).

The qualitative approach works with textual rather than numerical data (Grbich, 2013). It enables researchers to understand phenomena in detail by discovering main themes and central concerns within the data, as qualitative data tends to be comprised of words (Atieno, 2009). This approach tends to use inductive methods (Saunders et al., 2012); inductive methods begin with data collection and analysis and proceed to theory formulation, and they are more likely to work with qualitative data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

The quantitative approach, in contrast, normally works with numerical rather than textual data, and cannot necessarily allow for more detailed interpretation by penetrating the numbers (Creswell, 2013). It also tends to be deductive (Saunders et al., 2012). Deductive methods initially put forward hypotheses using existing literature, and then collect data to test these hypotheses (Blaikie, 2009).

Given the different characteristics of qualitative and quantitative methods, a qualitative approach was considered more appropriate for this study than a quantitative approach. Firstly, the data collected from online job advertisements were qualitative as they featured rich textual content rather than numbers. Different hotels, as different individuals, are likely to have different specific requirements for candidates, so it was useful to adopt a qualitative approach to identify these specific requirements by analysing the text in hotel job advertisements. Secondly, this research suited an inductive approach, as data were collected and analysed first, and there were no hypotheses to begin with. Therefore, a qualitative-inductive approach was used for this study.

3.4 Interpretivist research paradigm

The two paradigms considered for this research were interpretivism and positivism. A *paradigm* is essentially a way of thinking about how the world is perceived, and it serves as a belief system that guides the behaviour of the researcher (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). There are two major philosophical dimensions that can differentiate research paradigms: *ontology* and *epistemology* (Kalof, Dan, & Dietz, 2008). Ontology is about the nature of reality, while epistemology is about how we come to know what we know (Saunders et al., 2012).

The positivism paradigm is usually associated with a quantitative approach which puts forward a testable hypothesis (Gray, 2014) and tends to rely on primary statistical data (Saunders et al., 2012). These characteristics made positivism inappropriate for this study, as this research did not aim to test hypotheses; rather, it aimed to reveal and interpret the requirements that different four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand had for managerial candidates. Secondly, this research relied on qualitative textual data rich in content, rather than on statistical or numerical data.

The interpretivist paradigm was deemed most appropriate for this research. In terms of epistemology, interpretivists believe that different individuals will come to know things differently because different individuals' perceptions can be different, and the social world is too complex to be described by generalisations (Gray, 2014). Therefore, in order to understand social reality or ontology, which can be varied and complex, the subjective interpretations and perspectives of individuals need to be combined; this is why the interpretivist paradigm is called interpretivist (Scotland, 2012). Saunders et al. (2012) argued that the qualitative approach is in line with the interpretivist epistemological position; other researchers have similarly stated that qualitative data are usually associated with the interpretivist approach (Grant & Giddings, 2002). Working with qualitative data, interpretivist researchers tend to analyse and interpret each individual subject in the research to acquire an understanding of their reality.

In this study, each hotel could be considered as a different individual, so the specific requirements for the same positions are likely to vary depending on the hotel. In addition, each management level is different, so the specific requirements could also vary depending on management level. As the interpretivist perspective posits that each different individual constitutes the ongoing social reality (Wahyuni, 2012), interpretivism allowed for identifying the specific requirements for different managerial candidates in each individual four- or five-star hotel, and it allowed the researcher to view the specific requirements as different ontologies or realities according to different hotels' interpretations. Furthermore, the data collected from job advertisements for this study were qualitative, rich in textual rather than numerical information, and the analysis of data was also qualitative as it involved analysing text content and interpreting meanings. As such, the qualitative data collection and analysis used for this study fit the interpretivist approach.

3.5 Population of four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand

A research population refers to the total number of possible units or elements included in research (Gray, 2014). The population for this study was all of the four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand as categorised by Qualmark (see section 2.6). There were 125 four-star (four-star plus) and five-star hotels in New Zealand at the time of this research (Qualmark, 2017); this was the population for the study (see Appendix).

3.6 Research methods

Research methods are the procedures and specific approaches employed to collect and analyse data associated with the research question(s) (Slevitch, 2011; Wahyuni, 2012). In order to address the research questions of this study, job advertisement data were collected from two main secondary data sources. The data were then analysed using qualitative content analysis to reveal four- and five-star hotels' requirements for managerial candidates.

3.6.1 Data collection method

Secondary data refers to data that have been collected previously by other researchers or for purposes other than research, such as official statistics or documents kept regularly by organisations (Hox & Boeije, 2005; Smith, 2008). One type of secondary source is mass media, such as magazine reports (Kumar, 2014) or online advertisements (Gray, 2014). Secondary data in the form of online job advertisements were chosen for this study for the following reasons:

- Secondary data are available in a larger quantity. When researchers are able to conduct analyses with access to a larger quantity of data, the reliability of results is increased (Rabinovich & Cheon, 2011).
- Secondary data are more objective because the researcher's preconceptions are removed from the data collection process (Rabinovich & Cheon, 2011).
- Collecting secondary data requires fewer resources, which increases the feasibility of conducting the research (Rabinovich & Cheon, 2011).
- Using secondary data does not require ethics approval. When researchers have direct contact with participants, researchers need to first consider the viewpoint of participants and identify potential ethical issues, such as privacy violation, psychological impacts, or other concerns, and then propose solutions to deal with those issues. All ethical issues need to be addressed in the research proposal and granted ethics approval from the researcher's academic institution (Kumar, 2014). The data collected from job advertisements did not raise any privacy concerns because there was no direct contact between the researcher and the participants. Ethical issues were therefore not a concern, and ethics approval was not required.
- Collecting secondary data is time efficient. It saves the time normally required for designing a collection instrument, awaiting respondents, and gathering the data; therefore, secondary data is recommended for student researchers (Gray, 2014).
- Secondary data are likely to be more authentic (and therefore more accurate) than primary data collected for a study, as the original purpose of secondary data was to meet a specific need not connected to the research (Gray, 2014).

Other methods for obtaining data were impractical for this study. For example, conducting interviews with hotel recruiters or managers from all four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand would have been time-consuming, and would not necessarily have provided true answers to the research questions. However, online job advertisements containing specific requirements for candidates were readily available in large quantities, which facilitated the process of data collection and ensured the scale of data (Gray, 2014). Furthermore, specific requirements in job advertisements are true reflections of what different four- and five-star hotels consider necessary, and are not limited to hotel recruiters' or managers' ideas about what they want.

3.6.2 Data collection process and sampling

The data collection process involved gathering job advertisements from two main sources: the official websites of four- and five-star hotels and the SEEK website. The SEEK website was included as a source because not all hotels had their own official websites. Additionally, SEEK aims to address the needs of job hunters and employers as well as to facilitate the matching between job hunters and employers across the online employment marketplace. SEEK covers jobs in Australia, New Zealand, China, Brazil, and another 13 countries (SEEK, 2017). In New Zealand, SEEK is the most frequently used online employment marketplace, and can provide the greatest amount of job advertisements, despite the possibility that some hotels may not post job advertisements on SEEK (SEEK, 2017). Job advertisements posted on SEEK and the official websites of four- and five-star hotels were collected from 1 June 2017 to 31 July 2017.

Not all four-star (four-star plus) and five-star hotels posted job advertisements online during the data collection period. Of the 125 four-star (four-star plus) and five-star hotels in New Zealand, 41 hotels posted job advertisements seeking managerial hospitality candidates. This resulted in a sample of 125 online job advertisements for the 41 hotels that had job vacancies during the data collection period. Of the 125 online job advertisements, 2 were for senior-level management positions (e.g., General Manager and Hotel Manager), 26 were for middle-level management positions (e.g., Marketing

Manager, Food and Beverage Manager), and 97 were for entry-level management positions (e.g., Restaurant Manager, Marketing and Sales Coordinator).

Data collection focused on two important sections of the job advertisements, one being the job description itself, and the other being the applicant's requirements (Riley, 2014). Through job descriptions, potential applicants can understand what they would be expected to do by viewing key responsibilities or objectives. Through applicant requirements, potential applicants can gain more detailed information about requirements for a particular job, such as key skills, technical or professional qualifications, knowledge, attributes, or competencies (Rudman, 2017).

3.6.3 Data analysis method – qualitative content analysis

The procedures for qualitative data analysis tend to involve reviewing, synthesising, and interpreting data (Golafshani, 2003). The data collected from online job advertisements were descriptive and textual data. Textual data need to be analysed and interpreted for meaning (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). Therefore, qualitative content analysis was well-suited for the analysis. Qualitative content analysis allows for the content of textual data to be interpreted by initially breaking the data down into meaningful chunks that can be categorised and coded, and then establishing patterns for the whole data set by relating the categories to one another (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007).

As the repetition of words in the data may indicate a common theme in content analysis, this method tends to start with simply counting the number of times specific words appear in the data (Weber, 1990). However, unlike quantitative content analysis that stops at this point (Kondracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002), qualitative content analysis continues interpreting the content from large amounts of text to reveal the meanings underlying the words (Grbich, 2013). That is, qualitative content analysis combines word counts and textual data interpretation (Grbich, 2013). Hsieh and Shannon (2005) defined this combination as a summative approach to qualitative content analysis. A summative

approach to qualitative content analysis not only allows quantifying large amounts of text but also allows providing a reflective insight into the meaning derived from the textual data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

3.6.4 Data analysis process

There are no systematic rules for conducting qualitative content analysis (Weber, 1990; Schreier, 2014). Elo and Kyngäs (2008) suggested the qualitative content analysis process has five main phases: preparation, open coding, creating categories, abstraction, and reporting. Schreier (2014) proposed six key steps to completing qualitative content analysis: building the coding frame, carrying out segmentations, engaging in trial coding, evaluating and modifying the coding frame, conducting the main analysis, and presenting and interpreting the findings. As this study adopted a summative approach to qualitative content analysis, word counting was one of the procedures of data analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Despite different analysis processes, the main point of qualitative content analysis is to classify many words of text into smaller content categories (Weber, 1990). The specific data analysis process used for this study involved five main steps which were applied as follows:

Step 1: As defined by Rudman (2017), different job titles are categorised at different levels of management. General Manager and Hotel Manager, for example, are senior-level management positions; Marketing Manager, and Food and Beverage Manager are middle-level management roles; Restaurant Manager, and Marketing and Sales Coordinator belong to entry-level management. Using these criteria, the job advertisements were sorted into groups according to management level (i.e., entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level) and transcribed after the job advertisements were collected. Then, the analysis process began with reading and rereading the textual data from the job advertisements for each management level. The purpose of this step was to initially identify what requirements of four- and five-star hotels involved.

Step 2: Main categories were identified. Categories were generated in both data-driven and concept-driven ways, which are usually combined together (Schreier, 2014). In concept-driven category generation, categories are identified using previous knowledge, such as knowledge gained through literature review. In the literature, the necessary requirements of the hospitality industry for candidates had been categorised as soft skills (e.g. Nelson & Dopson, 2001), hard skills (e.g. Kwok, 2012), and supplementary certificates (e.g. Moreo et al., 2017). In data-driven category generation, categories are identified based on the collected data (Schreier, 2014). Another two frequently occurring requirements that emerged through reading and rereading the advertisements were years of working experience and educational qualifications. In summarising the categories from both data-driven and concept-driven generation, five categories of requirements emerged: soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates.

Step 3: After developing the five main categories from the data, relevant subcategories of each category were identified. Subcategories were also generated in both data-driven and concept-driven ways. For example, the literature review revealed time management was one of the soft skills required by the industry (see Andrews & Higson, 2008). Therefore, *time management skills* were identified as one concept-driven subcategory of soft skills when it occurred in the advertisements. The precise words that occurred in advertisements were not always “time management,” but sometimes carried similar meaning or represented aspects of *time management skills*, such as “meeting deadlines” and “setting priorities.” These words were accordingly grouped together, based on their similar meanings, within the subcategory *time management skills*. In this process, precise words were considered codes, and these codes were grouped together within a single subcategory based on the meanings and characteristics of the codes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). In another example, *knowledge of finance* was not mentioned in the literature as one of the required hard skills, but it did occur in the advertisement data. Therefore, *knowledge of finance* was created as one data-driven subcategory of hard skills. The data-driven generation of subcategories was also completed in a somewhat concept-driven way, because *knowledge of finance* was considered a subcategory of hard skills based on the

definition of hard skills given in the literature.

Step 4: The word frequency of subcategories belonging to the relevant main categories was calculated manually so as to understand the level of importance of different requirements, because the repetition of words in content analysis implies their level of importance in the document (Grbich, 2013). The frequency calculation was conducted three times by reading and rereading advertisements until it was certain that no new concepts could be detected as new subcategories (Schreier, 2014).

Step 5: Results were tabulated and presented for each category, with the tables listing subcategories and presenting two percentages: the percentage of each subcategory's occurrence within the total number of advertisements, and the percentage of each subcategory's occurrence within the relevant category. Additionally, to interpret some requirements in detail, quotations from the advertisements were also presented.

3.7 Summary

This chapter explained the methodology and methods adopted for this study. The aim of this study was to identify the requirements for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. Using an interpretivist approach, data were collected from secondary sources and a summative approach to qualitative content analysis was used for analysis. Online job advertisements posted by four- and five-star hotels seeking managerial candidates were collected from two main sources: hotels' websites and the SEEK website. Textual data from the advertisements were analysed using word counts and interpretation of codes derived from the textual content. The results of the data analysis will be presented in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

Data collection resulted in 125 online job advertisements, of which 97 were for entry-level management positions, 26 were for middle-level management positions, and 2 were for senior-level management positions. Data analysis revealed five main categories of requirements for managerial candidates in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. These main categories included soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates.

This chapter explains how these categories were identified, presents the specific findings for each category, and discusses the differences and similarities of the specific requirements for different levels of managerial candidates (i.e., entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level), providing quotes from the advertisements for greater detail. To identify and compare the importance of subcategorised requirements with regard to the different levels of management, the number of times each subcategory of a particular category occurred was counted. Because the numbers of advertisements pertinent to entry-level (97), middle-level (26), and senior-level (2) management positions were different, percentages were calculated in two ways to present the results more clearly. For each group of advertisements, two percentages are presented: the percentage of each subcategory's occurrence within the total number of advertisements, and the percentage of each subcategory's occurrence within the relevant category. Results are presented according to the five main categories, and the chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.

4.2 Soft skills

Soft skills occurred frequently in the job advertisements as a requirement. Hotel recruiters placed a lot of emphasis on the importance of acquiring soft skills for all managerial hospitality candidates. The specific soft skills required for senior-level management

candidates according to the job advertisements are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Soft skills required for senior-level hotel managers (2 advertisements)

Soft Skills	Frequency	% of Skills	% of Adverts
Customer service skills	2	28.6%	100%
Communication skills	1	14.3%	50%
Teamwork	1	14.3%	50%
Innovation	1	14.3%	50%
Leadership	1	14.3%	50%
Personality	1	14.3%	50%

As there were only two advertisements for senior-level management candidates, the maximum number of times each subcategory occurred was two, and the minimum was one. In the text, the requirements for *customer service skills* were mentioned in both advertisements:

- *Provide service excellence to our customers.*
- *Passion for service excellence in building a customer service culture.*

Other requirements for soft skills included *communication skills*, *teamwork*, *innovation*, *leadership*, and *personality*:

- *Excellent communication skills, be motivated, confident, and professional in all dealing[s] with guests, colleagues and staff members.*
- *Be a good team builder.*
- *Possess an innovative mind to develop food and beverage promotions.*
- *Great leadership skills with an open-door policy.*

These specific soft skills for senior-level management were also found in the requirements for the middle-level management candidates, which are presented in Table 4.2 on the following page.

Table 4.2 Soft skills required for middle-level hotel managers (26 advertisements)

Soft Skills	Frequency	% of Skills	% of Adverts	Rank
Communication skills	26	11.7%	100%	1
Demonstrating leadership	24	10.8%	92.3%	2
Relationship with customers	22	9.9%	84.6%	3
Flexibility with rosters	18	8.1%	69.2%	4
Creativity and innovation	15	6.7%	57.7%	5
Teamwork	14	6.3%	53.8%	6
Time management skills	13	5.8%	50%	7
Attitude/Personality	12	5.4%	46.2%	8
Decision-making	12	5.4%	46.2%	8
Organisational skills	11	4.9%	42.3%	9
Problem-solving (guests' and employees' complaints)	8	3.6%	30.8%	10
Self-motivation/Independence	7	3.1%	26.9%	11
Attention to detail	7	3.1%	26.9%	11
Interpersonal skills	7	3.1%	26.9%	11
Personal grooming	6	2.7%	23.1%	12
Work under pressure	5	2.2%	19.2%	13
Results driven	5	2.2%	19.2%	13
Multi-tasking	5	2.2%	19.2%	13
Presentation skills	4	1.8%	15.4%	14
Hard working	2	0.9%	7.7%	15

In total, there were 20 soft skills frequently mentioned as requirements for middle-level management candidates. *Communication skills* ranked as the highest, or most important, having occurred in all the advertisements; that is, requirements for communication skills were mentioned in all 26 advertisements. English oral and writing skills were particularly sought after:

- ... *excellent communication skills, written and oral proficiency in English.*
- *Strong communication skills with excellent command of both verbal and written English.*
- *You'll also be a strong communicator in the English language.*
- *Confident communicator with the ability to speak to all manner of stakeholders.*

Demonstrating leadership was ranked as the second most important soft skill for middle-level management candidates (26: 92.3%). Related words such as “motivate,” “coach,”

“mentor,” and “train” also frequently appeared together, denoting requirements for leadership:

- *Leadership skills including coaching and mentoring you can prove.*
- *Display passion for people leadership and team motivation.*
- *Strong leadership skills to effectively manage and motivate the team to achieve high levels of performance and exceed targets.*
- *You'll play an integral part in fostering a highly-motivated team of professionals through your strong leadership skills.*
- *Strong leadership skills and proven experience in leading and training by example.*

Relationship with customers ranked third for middle-level management candidates, accounting for 84.6% of all 26 advertisements and 9.9% of all mentioned soft skills. Hotel recruiters put emphasis on retaining and developing positive customer relationships; sometimes references to customer service skills appeared together with this dimension:

- *... in order to attract potential customers and retain existing ones.*
- *... that encourages client, customer feedback to understand customer needs and improve the service quality for the future business.*
- *Ability to build genuine relationships with customers with proven result[s] in maintaining and increasing client portfolios.*
- *You must have high standards of service and actively look for new ways to attract and retain new guest[s].*

Ranked fourth was *flexibility with rosters*, being mentioned in 69.2% of all 26 advertisements:

- *You are flexible with the ability to work 5 shifts per week - AM or PM shifts Monday to Sunday.*
- *... and be able to work variable shifts.*
- *Flexible working hours including the ability to work weekends, public holidays, morning and night shifts.*
- *Flexibility to work rostered shifts across 7 days including public holidays and occasionally covering the graveyard night shift on their rostered days off.*

Creativity and innovation was also valued by hotel recruiters as a soft skill for middle-level management candidates, ranking fifth and occurring in 57.7% of the 26 advertisements:

- *Show your creativity with offerings and will have a successful track record of utilising these.*
- *Innovative and passionate about creating new ideas to create an outstanding customer experience.*
- *Responsible for leading creativity in the kitchen brigade.*
- *Execute the culinary vision of (Hotel X) through their own creativity and ideas when designing conference menus and concepts.*
- *Expected to market creative ideas to promote business.*

Teamwork (26: 53.8%), *time management skills* (26: 50%), *attitude/personality* (26: 46.2%), *decision-making* (26: 46.2%), and *organisational skills* (26: 42.3%) constituted the rest of the top 10 soft skills for middle-level management. They were also frequently mentioned in the advertisements with a slight difference in frequency. Some skills less frequently mentioned, such as *presentation skills* (26: 15.4%), were pertinent to sales and marketing department positions. However, the top 10 soft skills required for entry-level management candidates were slightly different (see Table 4.3).

There were 23 soft skills frequently mentioned in the applicant requirements for entry-level managers. The most highly ranked skill was *customer service skills*, having occurred in 86.6% of all 97 advertisements, and accounting for 13.2% of all soft skill areas. Hotel recruiters demonstrated their strong requirements for customer service skills through the following:

- *Excellent customer service skills are a must.*
- *You must provide a consistent, high level of service for all customer contact.*
- *You will be enthusiastic about delivering great, memorable customer service.*
- *Passion for providing genuine and spirited service.*
- *Exceptional service and high standards are very important to ensure we meet and exceed customer expectations.*

Table 4.3 Soft skills required for entry-level hotel managers (97 advertisements)

Soft Skill Areas	Frequency	% of Skills	% of Adverts	Rank
Customer service skills	83	13.2%	86.6%	1
Communication skills	79	12.5%	81.4%	2
Attitude/Personality	57	9.0%	59.8%	3
Flexibility with rosters	44	7.0%	45.3%	4
Demonstrating leadership	39	6.2%	40.2%	5
Attention to detail	35	5.5%	36.1%	6
Personal grooming	32	5.1%	33.0%	7
Teamwork	31	4.9%	32.0%	8
Self-motivation/Independence	30	4.8%	30.9%	9
Staff training and development	29	4.6%	30.0%	10
Time management skills	26	4.1%	26.8%	11
Problem-solving (guests' complaints)	24	3.8%	24.7%	12
Multi-tasking	22	3.5%	22.7%	13
Interpersonal skills	19	3.0%	19.6%	14
Organisational skills	16	2.5%	16.5%	15
Work under pressure	14	2.2%	14.9%	16
Dedication	12	1.9%	12.4%	17
Creativity and innovation	11	1.7%	11.3%	18
Decision-making	11	1.7%	11.3%	18
Results driven	9	1.4%	9.3%	20
Telephone manner	4	0.6%	4.1%	21
Sense of humour	2	0.3%	2.1%	22
Ability to influence others	2	0.3%	2.1%	22

Communication skills was rated second in terms of importance, with a slightly lower frequency of occurrence (97: 81.4%), and accounting for 12.5% of all soft skills. The importance of strong English verbal and written skills were both emphasised:

- *Excellent English communication skills, both written and verbal.*
- *Strong English communication skills (written and verbal).*
- *Articulate verbal and written communication skills in English.*
- *High level of English communication skills – both verbal and written.*

Ranked as third was *attitude/personality*, which occurred in 59.8% of all the advertisements and accounted for 9.0% of all soft skills. The words most commonly used to describe *attitude* were “positive” and “can do,” while words such as “friendly,” “confident,” “bubbly,” “approachable,” “proactive,” “enthusiastic,” and “passionate”

occurred frequently to describe *personality*. Also, references to the customer service and team members were closely related to the requirements mentioned for *attitude/personality*:

- *Enthusiastic and a positive, bubbly, can do attitude to meet and exceed guests' expectations.*
- *This role is highly customer focused therefore you will need to be highly motivated with an approachable and friendly personality.*
- *Proactive, friendly and helpful attitude to fellow team members and guests.*
- *A confident, friendly personality to fit into our small team and to interact with our many regular customers.*
- *A passionate, friendly, confident professional who excels at delivering customer service and inspiring the team.*
- *... passionate about building a rapport with our guests.*

Flexibility with rosters (97: 45.3%) was another aspect, ranked fourth, that hotel recruiters highlighted:

- *You are flexible with the ability to work 5 shifts per week- AM or PM shifts Monday to Sunday.*
- *Days must be flexible and cover weekends and overtime where necessary.*
- *All applicants must be reliable and flexible with some weekend work required.*
- *Enjoy working a flexible roster including shift work, weekends and public holidays.*

Demonstrating leadership was another essential soft skill required for entry-level managers, ranked fifth in importance (97: 40.2%):

- *Strong leadership skills to drive the team and the department.*
- *Engaging leadership style that articulates the team's work while working shoulder to shoulder.*
- *Display strong leadership qualities and skills.*
- *Provide strong leadership and guidance of all Food and Beverage team members.*

The remaining top 10 soft skills were comprised of *attention to detail* (97: 36.1%), *personal grooming* (97: 33.0%), *teamwork* (97: 32.0%), *self-motivation/independence* (97: 30.9%), and *staff training and development* (97: 30.0%). These requirements occurred comparatively frequently within the advertisements, with only slight differences in frequency between them. In contrast, the references to other skills such as *results driven* (97: 9.3%), *telephone manner* (97: 4.1%), or *sense of humour* (97: 2.1%) occurred relatively less frequently in advertisements for entry-level managers.

As presented in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3, there were more than 20 requirements under soft skills for both entry-level and middle-level management candidates. However, the top 10 soft skills required were different between these two management level groups (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Comparison of requirements for top 10 soft skills (ranked by frequency)

Rank	Entry-level Management	Middle-level Management
1	Customer service skills	Communication skills
2	Communication skills	Demonstrating leadership
3	Attitude/Personality	Relationship with customers
4	Flexibility with rosters	Flexibility with rosters
5	Demonstrating leadership	Creativity and innovation
6	Attention to detail	Teamwork
7	Personal grooming	Time management skills
8	Teamwork	Attitude/Personality
9	Self-motivation/independence	Decision-making
10	Staff training and development	Organisational skills

As presented in Table 4.4, *flexibility with rosters* ranked as the fourth most important requirement for both entry-level managers and middle-level managers. Other soft skills required for both management levels, albeit with different rankings, included *communication skills* (2nd for entry-level management, 1st for middle-level management), *teamwork* (8th for entry-level management, 6th for middle-level management), *demonstrating leadership* (5th for entry-level management, 2nd for middle-level management) and *attitude/personality* (3rd for entry-level management, 8th for middle-level management). Differences in soft skills requirements between the two management

groups were also reflected in the focus on different skills within similar dimensions. For example, *customer service skills* for entry-level management and *relationship with customers* for middle-level management are similar dimensions, however, the former emphasises the skill of serving customers, and the latter emphasises the skill of developing or maintaining positive relationships with current or potential customers. The remaining top 10 soft skills were different for each group: *attention to detail*, *personal grooming*, *self-motivation/independence*, and *staff training and development* were required for entry-level management but not for middle-level management; likewise, *creativity and innovation*, *time management skills*, *decision-making*, and *organisational skills* were required for middle-level management but not for entry-level management.

Overall, the frequency of references to soft skills in management position advertisements was very high. There clearly are explicit and frequent requirements for soft skills. This demonstrates the emphasis hotel recruiters put on soft skills when recruiting potential management staff.

4.3 Hard skills

Not all advertisements explicitly mentioned requirements for the hard skills. Of 125 online job advertisements, 52 of them (125: 41.6%) mentioned requirements for hard skills. Requirements for hard skills fell into two subcategories: *role-specific skills* and *computer knowledge and skills*. Requirements for *role-specific skills* occurred in 38 (52: 73.1%) advertisements. Of these 38 advertisements, 2 were for senior-level management candidates, 19 were for middle-level management candidates, and 17 were for entry-level management candidates. The specific requirements for hard skills varied depending on different management positions and departments. The best way to present *role-specific skills* was to merge similar hard skill requirements based on job titles (see Table 4.5, Table 4.6, and Table 4.7).

Table 4.5 Hard skills requirements for senior-level hotel managers

Job Titles	Specific Requirements for Hard Skills
General Manager	Commercial acumen Competence in all facets of hotel management Sales and marketing Food and beverage Finance Statutes and compliance Industry regulations
Hotel Manager	Financial and revenue management skills Knowledge of front office Reservations Food and beverage departments

Table 4.6 Hard skills requirements for middle-level hotel managers

Job Titles	Specific Requirements for Hard Skills
Director of Sales	Financial and business acumen Understanding of the hotel and tourism industry Sales skills Budget control
Director of Business Development	Business acumen Knowledge of revenue forecasting Local markets Events planning
Reservations Sales Manager	Yield management skills Knowledge of Global Distribution System
Project Manager	Knowledge of digital technologies
Executive Chef	Budget management Knowledge of menu design and creation Food preparation methods Food safety control procedures Ordering and stock control Food control plan
Director of Finance	Numeracy Maths or accounting
Property Manager	Knowledge of health and safety legislation
Director of Finance	Numeracy Maths or accounting
Marketing Manager	Ability to manage external agencies Knowledge of managing websites
Associate Director of Revenue Management	Revenue management skills Knowledge of distribution systems

Jobs	Specific requirements for hard skills
Director of Food and Beverage	Financial management skills Knowledge of food and wine Menu pricing Food safety Occupational health and safety
Revenue Manager	Revenue management skills Average daily rate maximisation Gross operating profit optimisation Knowledge of distribution systems Revenue forecasting
Purchasing Manager	Knowledge of purchasing systems Accounting procedure
Maintenance Manager	General handyman techniques Electrical Plumbing Painting Building maintenance

Table 4.7 Hard skills requirements for entry-level hotel managers

Jobs	Specific requirements for hard skills
Restaurant Manager	Knowledge of food and beverage Food and safety Stock control Menu planning Financial management skills
Duty Manager	Knowledge of reception system Restaurant and bar
Conferences Sales Coordinator	Knowledge of sales and catering
Bar Supervisor	Knowledge of all beverages served in the bar Beverage recipes Beverage presentation
Front Office Supervisor	Knowledge of local tourist attractions Cash and credit handling
Food and Beverage Supervisor	Knowledge of food and beverage Stock control Food safety
Sales and Marketing Coordinator	Knowledge of managing websites Content management systems

As presented in Tables 4.5 to 4.7, except for the General Manager and Hotel Manager positions, which required knowledge and skills of almost all aspects of a hotel, the

specific hard skills required by hotel recruiters were more role-specific, as they varied according to job title. For example, four- and five-star hotels require purchasing managers to have knowledge of purchasing systems, marketing managers to be able to manage websites and social media, and maintenance managers to have repair and maintenance skills. Additionally, as reflected in the words used in online job advertisements, the degree of requests for hard skills differed based on management level. For example, modifiers for hard skills requirements in middle-level and senior-level advertisements included words such as “strong,” “solid,” “in-depth,” and “exceptional,” as evidenced by the following requirements for General Manager (senior-level position) and Director of Finance (middle-level position):

- *The successful candidate should have strong commercial acumen.*
- *In-depth operation knowledge of Front Office / Reservation / Food and Beverage systems.*
- *Exceptional financial and forecasting skills.*
- *Solid financial management knowledge and skills.*
- *Demonstrating strong awareness of occupational health and safety.*

By contrast, these intense modifiers did not occur in descriptions of entry-level manager requirements; that is, the descriptions of entry-level manager requirements contained modifiers that denoted less intensity or milder requirements:

- *Have stock control experience.*
- *Knowledge of wine is desirable.*
- *Good understanding of food safety.*
- *Experience in serving food and beverage is preferred.*

Computer knowledge and skills was the second subcategory of hard skills required by four- and five-star hotels for managerial candidates. However, this skill area was not explicitly mentioned in senior-level management advertisements. The requirements for *computer knowledge and skills* included five aspects of specific knowledge and skills. Table 4.8 lists and explains each aspect. Table 4.9 presents comparative results of aspect requirements for both entry-level and middle-level management candidates.

Table 4.8 Explanations of computer knowledge and skills

Aspect of Knowledge/Skills	Explanation
Microsoft Applications	Specifically refers to Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.
Opera	A property management system for hotels. The system automates hotel operations such as online reservations, guest bookings, guest details, check-ins, check-outs, food and beverage costing, and other amenities.
Fidelio	A property management system for hotels, similar to Opera, but older.
Micros (POS)	Point of Sale, a software and hardware used in the restaurant industry that mainly involves touchscreen computers for serving staff to place orders which are then sent to the kitchen and bar printers for preparation.
Delphi MPE	A computer program for use in managing hospitality facilities and for generating reports on hospitality facilities, especially for meetings and events business. This program can access instant, on-screen room and meeting space availability and full property detail for every hotel.

Table 4.9 Computer knowledge and skills requirements (comparative)

Aspect of Knowledge/Skills	Entry-level Management		Middle -level Management	
	Freq	% of Skills	Freq	% of Skills
Microsoft Applications	38	45.2%	13	44.8%
Opera	28	33.3%	12	41.4%
Micros (POS)	13	15.5%	1	3.4%
Delphi MPE	3	3.6%		
Fidelio			1	3.4%

As presented in Table 4.9, the top three *computer knowledge and skills* aspects required for both entry-level management and middle-level management were *Microsoft Applications*, *Opera*, and *Micros (POS)*. For entry-level management, Microsoft Applications accounted for 45.2%, followed by Opera (33.3%), Micros (15.5%) and Delphi MPE (3.6%). For middle-level management, Microsoft Applications accounted for 44.8%, followed by Opera (41.4%), Micros (3.4%), and Fidelio (3.4%). Opera was preferred to Fidelio by New Zealand hotels. Micros requirements were all noted for positions in food and beverage departments, while requirements for the knowledge of

Delphi MPE (3.6%) were in relation to jobs in sales and events departments.

Data analysis revealed two main attitudes towards the *computer knowledge and skills* aspect requirements for the entry-level managers. One attitude was that the aspect was necessary, the other was that the aspect was preferable, but not essential:

- *Opera knowledge advantageous but not essential.*
- *Knowledge of Micros would be an advantage.*
- *You will be proficient with Opera and in Word and Excel.*
- *The candidate should be familiar with Opera system.*

However, the requirements for *computer knowledge and skills* aspects for the middle-level managers was higher, as evidenced by modifiers such as “advanced,” “vast knowledge,” and “proficiency” in the following advertisement quotes:

- *Advanced user of Microsoft Excel and Opera.*
- *A vast knowledge of Opera.*
- *Proficiency with Micros is a pre-requisite.*

In general, the top three computer knowledge and skills for managerial candidates were Microsoft Applications, Opera, and Micros (POS). The management level impacted the degree of the requests for similar computer knowledge and skills.

4.4 Educational qualifications

In contrast to hard skill requirements, requirements for educational qualifications in managerial candidates were not clearly stated in online job advertisements. The senior-level management advertisements both mentioned educational qualifications as preferred, but were not specific as to the type of tertiary qualification:

- *Tertiary qualifications in Hotel Management an advantage.*
- *Relevant tertiary qualifications are desirable.*

Requirements for educational qualifications in entry-level and middle-level advertisements were slightly clearer, but infrequently mentioned. Table 4.10 presents comparative results for educational qualifications requirements for entry-level and middle-level managers.

Table 4.10 Educational qualifications requirements (comparative)

Entry-level Management			
Educational Qualification	Frequency	% of Educational Qualifications	% of Adverts
Bachelor's degree (hospitality management)	19	65.5%	19.6%
Vocational education (hospitality management)	5	17.9%	3.1%
No degrees	2	6.9%	2.1%
Other	2	6.9%	2.1%
Middle-level Management			
Educational Qualification	Frequency	% of Educational Qualifications	% of Adverts
Bachelor's degree (hospitality management)	5	62.5%	19.2%
Vocational education (hospitality management)	2	25%	3.8%
Qualification in hospitality management	1	12.5%	3.8%

As presented in Table 4.10, requests for specific educational qualifications were infrequent. They occurred in only 28.9% of all advertisements pertinent to the entry-level management candidates, and 30.8% in of all the advertisements relevant to the middle-level management candidates. Less than half the advertisements included educational qualifications as a requirement.

Most requirements for educational qualifications specified a hospitality management major. However, according to this sample of online job advertisements, the requirements for educational qualifications were not high. For example, degrees were not necessarily required for entry-level management candidates. The greatest percentage of requirements for entry-level and middle-level management advertisements were for *bachelor's degrees*, which accounted for 65.5% and 62.5% of all the educational qualifications requirements, respectively. The next most common requirement in terms of education was *vocational qualifications* for both entry-level management (17.9%) and middle-level management

(25%). The remaining instances of qualification requirements were vague for entry-level managers, as they did not clearly demonstrate requirements for either majors or educational achievement level, hence the vague category *others*. Similarly, *qualification in hospitality management*, which occurred as a requirement in one of the middle-level management job advertisements, was also vague, as it was not clear whether the qualification referred to credentials such as a vocational certificate or diploma, or a bachelor's or master's degree. A master's degree was not referenced at all as a requirement, regardless of management level. Despite this, when there is a requirement or preference for candidates with educational qualifications, it seems four- and five-star hotels prefer that candidates major in hospitality management in their degree.

4.5 Years of experience

Compared to the requirements for qualifications, hotel recruiters' requirements for years of experience presented some evident disparities among different management groups, as Table 4.11 shows.

Table 4.11 Years of experience required for hotel managers (comparative)

Minimum Years of Experience	Entry-Level		Middle-Level		Senior-Level	
	Freq	% of Years	Freq	% of Years	Freq	% of Years
Recent graduates	1	1.9%				
1 year	33	63.5%				
2 years	9	17.3%	2	12.5%		
3 years	9	17.3%	8	50 %		
5 years			6	37.5%		
8 years					1	100%

As presented in Table 4.11, the requirements for the minimum years of industry experience were quite different based on different management levels. For entry-level management, *one year* was the most frequently mentioned requirement, accounting for 63.5% of the requirements for years of experience in this group, while *two years* and *three years* of experience were mentioned equally, each accounting for 17.3% of the requirements for years of experience. Although it only occurred once, *recent graduates*

without any working experience may also be acceptable.

Requirements for middle-level management were relatively higher, with *three years* of experience accounting for 50% of the requirements for years of relevant industry experience and *five years* of experience accounting for (37.5%). The minimum requirement at this level was *two years*. Since these selected advertisements were intended for managerial candidates, some words such as “supervisory” or “management” were also referenced in the description requirements related to years of experience:

- *Previous management or supervisory experience in hotel reservations.*
- *Ideally 2 years’ previous management experience in a same position.*
- *Building industry or trade background in a supervisory role.*
- *A minimum of 12 months’ experience in a Food and Beverage Supervisory position.*
- *A minimum of 3 years’ experience in a Supervisory capacity in a Hotel Front Office Department or similar role within a hotel environment.*

At senior-management level, one advertisement required a minimum of *eight years* for the General Manager’s position:

- *You must have a minimum of 8 years industry experience in a similar capacity.*

The differences in requirements for years of experience are significant. Not surprisingly, senior-level management positions stipulated more industry experience than positions at entry-level or middle-level.

4.6 Supplementary certificates

Supplementary certificates were also required by hotel recruiters, but not stated in advertisements for senior-level management positions. The requirements for supplementary certificates primarily included five subcategories of requirements: *LCQ certificates*, *first aid certificates*, *food safety and hygiene certificates*, *HACCP*, and *NZ driving licences*. The explanations of each requirement subcategory relating to certificates are provided in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 Explanations of certificates

Certificates	Explanations
LCQ Certificate	Licence Controller Qualification, a qualification that proves a person knows the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act (2012) and the host responsibility requirements as a duty manager of licenced premises.
First Aid Certificate	A certification that teaches people to identify and eliminate hazards, assess casualties, and provide help in life-threatening situations.
Food Safety and Hygiene	A certification that involves food control plans, hazards and poor food safety identification, and causes of cross-contamination identification, etc. The Auckland Council (NZ) requires people who work in outlets such as cafes, restaurants and takeaways to be trained in food handling and hygiene.
HACCP	HACCP refers to hazard analysis of critical control points, a programme developed by the United States Food and Drug Administration in the early 1990s for the purpose of eliminating the contamination of food as it is produced, processed, and distributed to consumers.
NZ Driving Licence	A licence to prove that drivers have the skills and experience to drive safely on roads.

Table 4.13 on the following page presents the results of the specific supplementary certificate requirements for entry-level and middle-level management candidates.

Table 4.13 Supplementary certificate requirements (comparative)

Certificates	Entry-level		Certificates	Middle -level	
	Freq	% of Certificates		Freq	% of Certificates
LCQ Certificates	34	73.9%	NZ Driving Licences	6	40.0%
First Aid Certificates	6	13.4%	LCQ Certificates	4	26.7%
NZ Driving Licences	5	10.9%	Food Safety and Hygiene	3	20%
Food Safety and Hygiene	1	2.2%	First Aid Certificates	1	6.7%
			HACCP	1	6.7%

As presented in Table 4.13, the requirements for supplementary certifications were different based on different management levels. For the entry-level management, *LCQ certificates* were the most frequently required, comprising 73.9% of all entry-level supplementary certificate requirements. First aid certificates were the second most frequently required, accounting for 13.4%. *NZ driving licences* were the third most frequently required at 10.9%. The requirement for *food safety and hygiene certificates* occurred only once. By contrast, for middle-level management, *NZ driving licences* were the first most frequently mentioned, constituting 40.0% of the requirements for certificates, followed by *LCQ certificates* at 26.7%. *Food safety and hygiene certificates* were ranked third, comprising 20% of the requirements for certificates. The frequency of *first aid certificates* and *HACCP certificates* occurred equally frequently, accounting for 6.7% of certificate requirements. Additionally, *LCQ certificates* had to be “current,” and *NZ driving licences* had to be “full” and “clean,” as evidenced by the following advertisement quotes:

- *Hold current LCQ, preferred.*
- *A full, clean NZ driving licence.*
- *A current LCQ qualification and first aid certificate are advantageous.*

Requirements for supplementary certificates did not occur in the two advertisements for senior-level management positions. Therefore, possible certification requirements for senior-level managers needs further investigation.

4.7 Summary

The requirements of New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees fall into five major categories.

- *Soft skills:* All the advertisements (100%) collected online clearly stated requirements for soft skills. This high frequency demonstrates the high value placed on management candidates' soft skills. Communication skills and customer service skills were among the top three requirements for *all* levels of management. However, many specific requirements differed according to management levels. Differences existed between the entry-level group and the middle-level group; for example, the requirement for *creativity and innovation* ranked higher (5th) in terms of importance for middle-level managers than it did in terms of importance for entry-level managers where it was rated much lower (18th).
- *Hard skills:* Of the entire sample of job advertisements, 52 of them (125: 41.6%) mentioned requirements for hard skills. Hard skills were required more frequently for senior-level managers (100%) and middle-level managers (73.1%) than for entry-level managers (17.5%). With the exception of the General Manager and Hotel Manager roles, which required knowledge and skills covering almost all the aspects of a hotel, it is hard to generalise the common *role-specific skills* that each candidate needs to be equipped with because these requirements varied according to different jobs titles and management levels. Also, different management levels differentiated the degree of the requirements for similar hard skills. The requirements for *computer knowledge and skills* were clearly stated in the advertisements. A good command of Microsoft applications ranked as the most important skill in this area for both entry-level (45.2%) and

middle-level managers (44.8%).

- *Educational qualifications:* Educational qualifications requirements were infrequent, occurring in only 28.9% of all advertisements for entry-level, and 30.8% of all advertisements for middle-level. Generally, the requirements for candidates' educational qualifications were not high. The most frequent requirement was for a *bachelor's degree*, and the least frequent was *no degree* or *other*, indicating an unspecified qualification. Some requirements for educational qualifications were vague and lacked explicit information about the level of qualifications or specific major required. However, results showed that a degree in hospitality management is still advantageous when there is a qualification requirement.
- *Years of experience:* The differences of requirements for years of experience were significant among the three management level groups. The minimum requirement for a general manager (senior-level) was *eight years* of industry experience. For entry-level managers, the requirements ranged from no experience as with *recent graduates* to *three years* of experience, with a minimum of *one year* of experience required most frequently (63.5%) For middle-level managers, requirements ranged from *two years* to *five years* of experience, with a minimum *three years* being the most frequent (50%).
- *Supplementary certificates:* Requirements for supplementary certification did not occur in the two senior-level management advertisements in this study. However, for the other two management level groups, certificate requirements mainly focused on *LCQ certificates*, *NZ driving licences*, *first aid certificates*, and *food safety and hygiene certificates*. The requirement for *HACCP* certification occurred only once.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to identify the requirements for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. Chapter 4 presented the key findings according to the five main categories of requirements that emerged from the data: soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates. This chapter discusses the major findings for each of these categories through comparing and contrasting the findings with the theories in the existing academic literature.

5.2 Soft skills

The importance of generic (soft) skills in the hospitality industry has been discussed extensively in previous studies (e.g., Zopiatis, 2007; Kamau & Waudo, 2012; Sisson & Adams, 2013; Cox, 2015). As such, it is not surprising that requirements of soft skills for all entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level managerial candidates were found to be clearly stated in all of the online job advertisements collected. These explicit and frequent requirements indicate that soft skills are extremely important for managerial candidates.

Previous studies have focused on what soft skills are needed for a hospitality student to be successful upon graduation. In a recent New Zealand study, Cox (2015) suggested that the top five soft skills valued by the industry were passion, creativity, good work ethic, interpersonal skills, and personality. Kamau and Waudo (2012) indicated that conflict resolution skills, self-initiative, and understanding the level of service expected by international guests were important. Results of this study are consistent with results from previous research, as many of the soft skills discussed in these previous studies were found to be required for managerial candidates by four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand. However, this study specifically targeted requirements for managerial hospitality candidates, and the specific required soft skills were found to vary widely

based on the different management levels.

5.2.1 Senior-level management

As there were only two advertisements for senior-level management candidates, the information about required soft skills for senior-level managers was limited. Therefore, the current findings are not indicative enough. Based on the limited textual information, required soft skills for senior roles were in the areas of customer service, communication skills, teamwork, innovation, leadership, and personality.

Further interpretation of textual data revealed that the requirement for customer service skills is not only related to excellent customer service delivery, but also to creating a customer service culture within the hotel. The creation of service culture cannot be achieved by a single manager, regardless of how professional that manager is; however, managers should act as good leaders through providing effective training, motivation, and encouragement to achieve customer service goals (VanDuinkerken & Kaspar, 2015). It can thus be inferred that senior managers should firstly be experts in excellent customer service delivery, and secondly be good leaders who understand how to train staff and motivate them to be dedicated, to be cohesive, and to realise common goals. The requirement for leadership skills mentioned in previous literature, in essence, is reflected in the results of this study where descriptions such as *be a good team builder* and *great leadership skills with an open-door policy* were found in job advertisements. Good managers should know how to bring people together, especially talented people (Schneider, 2006), and this can be interpreted as being *a good team builder*. *Great leadership skills with an open-door policy* can be interpreted as welcoming different opinions and suggestions, rather than being arbitrary. This may indicate a preferred leadership style and the identification of specific leadership styles in hospitality needs further research. From the limited information, the focus of the requirements for senior-level roles appears to be on the skills and abilities to lead a team.

5.2.2 Middle-level management vs. entry-level management

As presented in Chapter 4, section 4.2, 20 soft skills were frequently mentioned as requirements for middle-level managers in 26 job advertisements, whereas 23 soft skills were frequently mentioned as requirements for entry-level managers in 97 job advertisements. Many of the soft skills required for these managerial candidates, such as communications skills, personal grooming, customer service skills, personality, problem-solving, and decision-making, were also discussed in previous research focusing on hospitality graduates (Tesone & Ricci, 2012; Kamau & Waudo, 2012; Cox, 2015). That is, there are many similarities in terms of the required soft skills for graduates found in previous literature and the required soft skills for managers found in this study. However, unlike the current findings, previous research did not rank the skills to examine their importance or rank them in order of importance to represent their level of value in the industry.

In this study, specific soft skills were found to be ranked differently, or valued differently, based on managerial level. Table 5.1 re-presents the top five skills required for middle-level and entry-level managers as revealed through this study.

Table 5.1 Top five soft skills required for hospitality managers (ranked by frequency)

Rank	Entry-level management	Middle –level management
1	Customer service skills	Communication skills
2	Communication skills	Demonstrating leadership
3	Attitude/Personality	Relationship with customers
4	Flexibility with rosters	Flexibility with rosters
5	Demonstrating leadership	Creativity and innovation

Communication skills ranked as the most highly valued requirement for middle-level managers, whereas it ranked second in terms of importance for entry-level managers. For middle-level managers, communication skills requirements were frequently related to language ability, with plenty of references to excellent English (oral and writing skills)

appearing in the job advertisements. This confirms the findings of Blue and Harun (2003), who noted that language ability is becoming increasingly important to guarantee effective cross-cultural communication between hospitality staff and customers. In addition, middle-level management job advertisements contained references to the ability to confidently and effectively communicate with all stakeholders. The emphasis on this aspect of communication skills can be partially explained by the role of the middle-level manager as a bridge to ensure effective communication between the other levels of management (Rudman, 2017).

In contrast, customer service skills, rather than communication skills, was the most important requirement for entry-level managers, whereas for middle-level managers, customer service was not nearly as important, ranking third. The difference in the level of importance of this requirement between the two management levels can be explained by different focuses and different areas of responsibility. Data showed that entry-level managers are required to deliver service of an exceptional standard to customers. However, middle-level managers are required not only to deliver high-quality service, but also to develop, maintain, and retain positive relationships with customers. As suggested by Rudman (2017), entry-level managers spend more time on the front line; that is, entry-level managers have more opportunities and more direct contact with customers than middle-level managers do. Therefore, requirements for the entry-level manager's exceptional standards of customer service can explain why customer service skills are ranked higher in terms of importance for entry-level managers. Though customer service skills are ranked slightly lower in terms of importance for middle-level managers, they are still in the top five requirements. The emphasis on developing and retaining positive relationships with customers referenced in job advertisements for middle-level management roles is supported by Ryals (2005), who noted effective customer relationship management through well-developed activities can bring significant profits to hotels in the long term. A further indication for middle-level managers is that they should be able to create effective activities to manage customer relationships, and further to make hotels profitable.

In prior studies, not all researchers found leadership skills to be a requirement for hospitality graduates. In this study, however, leadership skills were one of the top five requirements for both middle-level and entry-level managers. This is consistent with Ineson's (2011) view that strong leadership skills are the basis for effective management and sound decision-making, which in turn contributes to business success. Similarly, creativity was considered as another important requirement which leads hospitality businesses to success (Johanson, Ghiselli, Shea, & Roberts, 2011). This study also found creativity to be an important requirement, as it was ranked as the third most important soft skill for middle-level managers. The third most important soft skill requirement for entry-level managers was a positive attitude and personality. This also agrees with previous research, particularly that of Phelan and Mills (2011), which highlighted the importance of positive personality and attitude for an individual's chances of career advancement. It is thus presumed that having a positive attitude and personality is important for entry-level managers and beneficial to their career development.

One interesting finding is that the degree of requirement for flexibility with rosters was the same for both middle-level and entry-level managers, being ranked as the fourth most important soft skill. Specifically, managers are required to cover overtime needs and work a flexible roster which may include shift work, weekends, and public holidays. Cox (2015) emphasised the importance of flexibility in being successful in the hospitality industry. However, the "flexibility" Cox discussed related more to being open-minded and resilient enough to take challenges and grasp opportunities, not specifically to being flexible with rosters. One of the features of the hospitality industry is unsocial working hours, as hospitality workers have complained about the imbalance between the working hours and personal life for a long time (Walsh & Taylor, 2007; Davidson, McPhail, & Barry, 2011). The emphasis on the flexibility with rosters indicates that sacrificing personal life in favour of career, to a certain extent, is unavoidable for managers. This seems an unusual requirement, as managers should be focusing on management roles rather than on filling in for missing staff (Rudman, 2017). Therefore, this requirement suggests that hospitality workers deemed "managers" are perhaps given this title to encourage applications for work that essentially involve shift management or even duty management – that is, they

are responsible for shifts, not for projects or provisional department meetings.

In addition to the top five soft skills, teamwork, time management skills, decision-making skills, organisational skills, staff training and development, attention to detail, personal grooming, and self-motivation/independence were other requirements highly valued in managerial candidates. Therefore, for those aspiring to management roles, strong leadership skills, confident and effective communication skills, creativity and innovation, and customer relationship management skills are significant and required by New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. Additionally, managerial hospitality candidates should have a positive personality and attitude and be well-prepared, psychologically, for sacrificing personal life to a certain extent.

5.3 Hard skills

While previous studies have frequently placed emphasis on soft skill requirements in the hospitality industry, the requirement of hard skills, such as sales and marketing skills, (Kamau & Waudu, 2012), basic hospitality technical skills (Zopiatis, 2007), and cost control knowledge (Nelson & Dopson, 2001) has been discussed less frequently. Cox's (2015) New Zealand study identified only three required hard skills: basic technical skills, business acumen, and system knowledge. These studies generally focused on the requirements for being a successful hospitality graduate.

This study highlights the hard skills requirements for managerial hospitality candidates, the group with a wider range, which includes not only potential graduates taking a degree in hospitality management, but also people having worked in the industry for a while and pursuing career advancement. The findings revealed two subcategories of required hard skills: computer knowledge and skills and role-specific skills. Computer knowledge and skills can be categorised into two areas of knowledge. One is the knowledge of Microsoft applications such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook; the other is the knowledge of operation systems such as Opera, Micros, Delphi MPE, and Fidelio, which is similar to the system knowledge mentioned by Cox (2015). Other required hard skills mentioned

in previous literature and also found in the results this study include skills such as business acumen, cost control knowledge, and sales and marketing skills. However, the requirements for these hard skills are not general requirements for all managerial candidates; rather, they differ according to different job titles. For example, general handyman skills are required for maintenance managers, while knowledge of managing websites is required for marketing managers. The degree of particular hard skill requirements was found to vary according to management level as well. Senior-level managers are required to have a good command of comprehensive skills and knowledge in all aspects of hotel management. The professional knowledge and skills that middle-level and senior-level managers acquire should be solid, comprehensive, strong, and in-depth. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the frequency of requirements for hard skills in job advertisements was higher for senior-level (100%) and middle-level managers (73.1%) than for entry-level managers (17.5%). That is, the emphasis on mastery of hard skills increases with management level.

In the current study, the requirements for hard skills were found to be based on specific roles; managers with higher levels are required to have better mastery of hard skills. These findings indicate that hotels emphasise requirements for hard skills, which is at odds with Baum's (2002) argument that hard skills are currently not highly valued by the hospitality industry. Also, compared to the three necessary hard skills identified by Cox (2015), the hard skills identified in this study are more role-specific and diverse. One possible explanation for this result might be that this study targeted requirements for managerial hospitality candidates, whereas previous research focused on the general requirements for hospitality graduates. Unlike graduates, one of the important roles of managers is to train and develop employees, which is also a key activity of the human resources management function (Rudman, 2017). Effective staff training can be a good approach to cultivating potential leaders; therefore, managers should make sure they master professional knowledge and skills first in order to better train their staff (Donner, Gridley, Ulreich, & Bluth, 2017). In this sense, the specific requirement of mastering hard skills is necessary for managerial candidates.

To those aspiring to management roles, mastery of hard skills is important and valued. The degree of requirement for hard skills increases with management levels; especially for senior-level and middle-level managers. Their professional knowledge and skills should be solid, comprehensive, strong, and in-depth. To achieve this, candidates may need to enrich their industry experience, because professional knowledge and skills can be enhanced by rich working experience accumulated over the years (Moreo, et al., 2017).

5.4 Educational qualifications

The role of hospitality degrees has been discussed in previous studies (e.g., Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Harper et al., 2005; Harkison et al., 2011); however, few studies have systematically measured the specific educational qualifications requirements for managerial candidates in New Zealand hotels. This study revealed the highest requirement for a managerial candidate's educational qualifications to be a bachelor's degree, and no degree was also acceptable. Some requirements for educational qualifications were vaguely stated without explicit information about the level of qualification required. Generally, the requirements for candidates' educational qualifications in New Zealand's hotels are not high. These findings to some extent support the argument that a hospitality degree is not highly valued by the hospitality industry (Harkison et al., 2011).

The information related to educational qualifications requirements delivered through the textual data in advertisements was limited. More can be reflected in terms of specific requirements for educational qualifications, but not in terms of aspects such as benefits of having a degree. However, results did reveal one advantage to having a hospitality degree – despite the low demand for educational qualifications in general, when there is a preference for a qualification, the hospitality management major is preferred, and therefore advantageous. That is, hospitality management students have a competitive advantage in being hired when competing with candidates with qualifications in other subjects. This finding may indicate that the knowledge and skills acquired from hospitality management programmes are indeed acknowledged by hotels.

5.5 Years of experience

Previous studies have not systematically examined the typical length of industry experience required for the entry-level and middle-level management candidates. The current study found the typical request for years of experience ranged from no experience to three years for entry-level management and from two to five years for middle-level management. Several studies have examined the length of time taken to become a GM. In an Australian study, Ladkin (2002) suggested the time taken to become a hotel GM was about 12 years, compared to approximately 11 years in New Zealand (Steele, 2003), and around 10 years in Scotland (Harper et al., 2005). In accordance with the previous results, this study also found the requirement of industry experience for senior-level managers (General Manager and Hotel Manager) was the highest: the minimum request for years of experience was eight years.

The differences in the requirement for years of experience for different managerial levels are clear-cut. This result may be explained by the fact that hotels present one of the more structured employment segments in terms of a developmental hierarchy (Ladkin & Kichuk, 2017); the typical career path to a senior manager position starts with supervisory and junior management roles and progresses through middle-level management before reaching a senior-management role like that of a GM (Steele, 2003). Another possible explanation of the relationship between years of experience and management positions might be found in the implications discussed in section 5.3. The professional knowledge and skills that middle-level and senior-level managers acquire should be solid, comprehensive, strong, and in-depth. Rich working experience accumulated in the real world over the years enhances a manager's proficiency in knowledge and skills (Moreo, et al., 2017). Also, senior managers normally have ample work experience in different departments or in different hotels after many years, which helps them more efficiently solve problems and innovate at work (Nicely, 2017).

Years of industry experience therefore represent the professionalism acquired from rich experience in an industry. Those who expect but are unable to reach management

positions soon after graduation (Harkison, 2004a) do not need to feel disappointed, because even two or three years of industry experience needs to be gained, little by little, for a solid foundation in entry-level management, without shortcuts; needless to say, senior-level management requires eight years in general, at least.

5.6 Supplementary certificates

In a North American study, the top three certificates most preferred by hotel managers as requirements for graduates were the Guest Service Professional, Alcohol Awareness, and ServSafe Food Safety certificates (Moreo et al., 2017). The findings of the current study, which targeted requirements for managerial hospitality candidates in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels, were slightly different. In this study, LCQ certificates, first aid certificates, and NZ driving licences were found to be the top three certificates preferred for entry-level managers, whereas NZ driving licences, LCQ certificates, and food safety and hygiene certificates were found to be the top three certificates preferred for middle-level managers.

LCQ certificates and Alcohol Awareness certificates both refer to prescribed qualifications that prove a person has mastered the knowledge of alcohol (Licence Controller Qualification, 2017; National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, 2017). ServSafe Food Safety and food safety and hygiene certificates are both prescribed qualifications that prove a person has mastered the knowledge of food handling and safety issues identification (ServSafe, 2017; NZQA, 2017). These findings seem to suggest certification of knowledge on alcohol and food safety are common, possibly indicating that certification for alcohol and food safety knowledge is necessary for managerial hospitality candidates.

A possible explanation for the requirement of first aid certification in managerial hospitality candidates may be related to the importance of emergency treatment in hotels and the functions of managers. Hotels not only offer accommodation and food services, but also security services, and first aid plays a vital role in saving human lives if it is

delivered at the right and appropriate time (Emir & Kuş, 2015). Therefore, first aid skills and knowledge should be delivered to hotel staff through appropriate training, and one of the functions of managers is to train staff (Rudman, 2017). A manager with a first aid certificate can be qualified and professional to impart the knowledge and skills to employees. Another finding was the requirement of NZ driving licences for managerial candidates. A possible explanation for this requirement might be that driving licences can ensure managers' abilities to move between hotels for work-related purposes easily and flexibly.

Senior-level management advertisements did not contain any requirements for certification. This is an area that needs further investigation. However, from the current study, it can be inferred that having NZ driving licences, LCQ certificates, and first aid certificates can be advantageous for hotel management candidates, and perhaps even necessary.

5.7 Summary

The possession of soft skills is highly valued by the hospitality industry in terms of the requirements for hospitality students (Baum, 2002; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Zopiatis, 2007; Cox, 2015). Similarly, the mastery of soft skills is found to be the most valued requirement for managerial hospitality candidates. Strong leadership skills, confident and effective communication skills, creativity and innovation, together with customer relationship management skills are sought after by recruiters in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. The emphasis on specific soft skills varies based on different management levels; for example, communication skills was rated highest in terms of importance for middle-level managers, whereas customer service skills ranked highest for entry-level managers, and the highest requirement for senior-level managers focused on leadership. It is assumed that these differences indicate the relationship between the role-specific responsibilities and required soft skills which need to be further identified. Consistent with Cox's (2015) finding that passion is one of the most industry-valued soft skills for hospitality students to have, this study also indicates that managerial hospitality

candidates also need a positive personality and attitude, as it increases the chances of career development (Phelan & Mills, 2011). Additionally, as indicated by this study, managerial hospitality candidates should be psychologically well-prepared for sacrificing their personal life to a certain extent.

The strong emphasis on soft skills does not mean that hard skills are to be neglected. This study has revealed that the mastery of hard skills is indeed important and valued by New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels, despite arguments to the contrary that hard skills are currently not highly valued by the hospitality industry (Baum, 2002; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Cox, 2015). The degree of requirement for hard skills increases with management levels, especially for senior-level and middle-level managers, and their professional knowledge and skills should be solid, comprehensive, strong, and in-depth. These high requirements suggest candidates need to develop and improve these skills through accumulated industry experience.

Generally, requirements for educational qualifications for managerial candidates in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels were not high, which to some extent supports the argument that a hospitality degree is not highly valued by industry (Harkison et al., 2011). However, the knowledge and skills acquired from hospitality management programmes were found to be acknowledged by hotels. That is, taking a degree in hospitality management increases the possibility of being hired when competing with job hunters with other majors.

Previous studies have determined the length of time taken to become a GM ranges from 10 years to 12 years (Ladkin, 2002; Steele, 2003; Harper *et al.*, 2005). Similarly, this study found that the minimum requirement for years of experience for senior-level managers was eight years. It can be reflected that years of working experience is an objective standard, and it can only be accumulated through years of real-world experience. Therefore, it is necessary for managerial hospitality candidates to continually acquire industry experience if they want to work in management roles.

Similar to the case in North America where Alcohol Awareness and ServSafe Food Safety certificates were preferred in hotel managers (Moreo et al., 2017), this study found managers with LCQ certificates as well as food safety and hygiene certificates are preferred, and that these certifications may even be necessary in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. This finding indicates the need for managerial hospitality candidates to acquire alcohol and food safety knowledge. Additionally, obtaining NZ driving licences and first aid certificates was also found to be advantageous for managerial hospitality candidates.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overall conclusion to this research. Firstly, it discusses the main findings of this study in relation to the research aim. Secondly, it reviews the theoretical and practical implications of the results. Finally, it discusses limitations of this study and concludes by offering recommendations for future research.

6.2 Research objective and main findings

This study collected 125 online job advertisements for managerial candidates posted by 41 four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand. By analysing the job descriptions and applicant requirements in the job advertisements, this study has been able to fill a knowledge gap in the literature relating to the specific requirements of entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. Requirements for managerial hospitality candidates are concentrated in five categories: soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates.

In terms of soft skills, strong leadership skills, confident and effective communication skills, creativity and innovation, together with customer relationship management skills are significant and highly valued by New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels. Additionally, managerial hospitality candidates should have a positive personality and attitude, and they should be prepared to sacrifice their personal life to a certain extent.

Managerial hospitality candidates need a good command of hard skills, which are also important and valued. The degree of requirement for hard skills increases with management levels. For senior-level and middle-level managers, professional knowledge and skills should be solid, comprehensive, strong, and in-depth. To achieve this, candidates need to continually develop and improve these skills through accumulating

real-world industry experience. For graduates aspiring to senior management roles, it is important that they understand reaching management level soon after graduation is unrealistic. Years of working experience is an objective standard in this industry, and it only can be accumulated year by year. Therefore, managerial hospitality candidates should acquire industry experience continuously if they want to land a management role.

Although the requirements for candidates' educational qualifications in New Zealand's hotels were not high in general, taking a degree in hospitality management still increases the possibility of being hired when competing against rivals with other majors. It is also advantageous or even necessary for managerial hospitality candidates to have obtained NZ driving licences, LCQ certificates, and first aid certificates when applying for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management positions at New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels.

6.3 Theoretical implications

This study aimed to identify the requirements of New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees. The most important contribution of this study is that the results provide potential managerial hospitality candidates with a lens through which to understand the specific requirements of managers from the perspective of four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand. Prior studies mainly focused on requirements for being a successful hospitality graduate from the perspectives of graduates, employers, and higher education institutions (Baum, 2002; (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Zopiatis, 2007; Tesone & Ricci, 2012; Cox, 2015). However, this study particularly allocated its focus to New Zealand's four- and five- star hotels and identified the specific requirements for prospective managers in a systematic manner.

The requirements for managerial hospitality candidates involve five areas, including soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates. Additionally, this study revealed differences in requirement emphasis among entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level managers. For example, leadership is the

emphasised requirement for senior-level managers, communication skills are the most important requirement for middle-level managers, and excellent customer service skills are most essential for entry-level managers. Therefore, this study also fills the gap in the existing literature about the specific requirements for three different management levels in a hotel environment.

This research is the first to identify requirements for managerial hospitality candidates in New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels by analysing online job advertisements. The data collected from the advertisements revealed insights into the necessity of mastering certain skills for managers. For example, the requirements for managers' mastery of hard skills were emphasised and valued by the four- and five-star hotels, and the degree of requirement for mastering hard skills increases with management levels. These findings are in contrast to the argument in existing literature that hard skills are valued less than soft skills by the hospitality industry (e.g., Baum, 2002; Cox, 2015), and this study's findings extend and enrich the understanding of the importance of hard skills.

In general, this study contributes to the current literature regarding the perspectives of New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels on what a candidate should be equipped with to be considered as a prospective manager.

6.4 Practical implications

The findings of this study provide practical implications for hospitality education providers and hospitality students.

For hospitality education providers

- 1) Hospitality education providers are advised to emphasise students' development of soft skills. As indicated by this study, soft skills, such as communication skills, teamwork, leadership, and creativity, are highly valued in managerial hospitality candidates by four- and five-star hotels. To help students better develop these skills, hospitality education providers could make some changes to their education

programmes. For example, the integration of behavioural development in hospitality higher-education curricula is advisable (Cox, 2015). Behavioural development can be achieved through learning activities in which students can explore behavioural characteristics of soft skills such as leadership or teamwork (Cox, 2015), and these activities, in turn, can help students better understand leadership or teamwork. Additionally, the highly sought after passionate personality and “can do” attitude revealed in the findings is a reflection of the need for having a *love* for hospitality and for making progress in work (see Cox, 2015). Hence, educators need to create teaching and learning environments that cultivate students’ *love* for hospitality.

- 2) Hospitality education providers are also advised to value the importance of hard skills. This study’s results suggest that the mastery of hard skills, such as accounting skills, financial knowledge, or system knowledge, is valued and important for managers. Thus, hospitality education providers are advised to offer courses in hard skills such as, for example, how to operate the Opera system. As financial knowledge or skills were frequently required for middle-level and senior-level managers, it is recommended that programmes related to finance or accounting are provided and perhaps even made mandatory.
- 3) Hospitality education providers could help students acquire supplementary certificates. For example, an LCQ certificate is preferred, and in some cases, even necessary when a candidate applies for a management role. Therefore, it is suggested that hospitality education providers offer access to acquiring this certificate or guidance during students’ learning processes.

For hospitality students

- 1) Hospitality students should objectively measure the value of degrees. Although no obvious evidence was found to prove the argument of Harper et al. (2005) stating that qualified managers progress to senior-level roles faster than the unqualified, the knowledge and skills acquired from hospitality management programmes is indeed acknowledged by hotels. The specific requirements and the degree of requirement

for senior-level and middle-level managers all reflect that it takes time for an individual to achieve high standards needed for higher positions. Thus, it is unfair to consider qualifications useless solely because the qualified do not necessarily reach senior-level management quickly. Rich industry experience needs to be gained, little by little, without shortcuts.

- 2) Hospitality students should pay attention to the development of their soft skills. As indicated by this study, for example, communication skills are highly valued as a requirement for all three management level groups. Therefore, students could develop their communication skills through various activities, such as basic classroom discussion participation, social practice activities, or part-time jobs offering customer contact experience. International students desirous of working in New Zealand and whose first language is not English should set out to improve their English oral and writing skills. Other soft skills such as teamwork, problem-solving ability, or creativity should also be consciously developed by hospitality students.
- 3) Hospitality students could obtain supplementary certificates and acquire hard skills to be more competitive. As indicated in this study, the strong emphasis on soft skills for managers does not mean hotels disregard hard skills. The degree of requirement for hard skills increases with management level. Hospitality students could develop hard skills through courses provided by education programmes or accumulated experience from part-time jobs or internships. Also, having NZ driving licences, LCQ certificates, and first aid certificates can be advantageous when hospitality students apply for management positions.
- 4) Hospitality students need to develop a positive personality and attitude. As suggested by Phelan and Mills (2011), an individual with a positive personality and attitude has more chances of career advancement. Having a positive personality and attitude refers not only to being passionate about and dedicated to the work, but also to being well-prepared, psychologically, to sacrifice personal life to a certain extent for their career.

6.5 Limitations

The research strategy and methods selected were considered appropriate for this study; however, certain limitations still exist. Firstly, data were collected from online job advertisements from 1 June 2017 to 31 July 2017. Not all the four-star (four-star plus) and five-star hotels posted job advertisements online during the data collection period. Therefore, the data were limited to the number of available advertisements, and the final sample was small, especially with the number of advertisements for senior-level managers being only two. The limited data collection time determines the number of available advertisements, which can also give rise to the possibility of information being missed. Secondly, the information available from textual data in the job advertisements was limited; in turn, the interpretation of the textual data was restricted. Thirdly, the study adopted qualitative content analysis and was conducted by a single researcher, so the researcher's personal interpretations may have affected the coding process. As different perspectives of researchers may affect results (Fossey et al., 2002), the reliability of this study may have been influenced.

6.6 Recommendations for future research

The requirements of New Zealand's four- and five-star hotels for entry-level, middle-level, and senior-level management employees are centred around five categories: soft skills, hard skills, educational qualifications, years of experience, and supplementary certificates. Soft skills are found to be the most valued for managerial hospitality candidates, and the specific requirements for soft skills vary based on different management levels, but the importance of passion as a requirement for management entry to hospitality has been highlighted and requires further research. This study only identified the differences due to the limited information conveyed by the advertisements; further research could therefore go deeper to explore the reasons for the differences. This may be achieved by combining another method of data collection to provide more indicative information, and interviews might be suggested. The revelation of reasons can more comprehensively indicate the relationship between the managers' responsibilities and

required soft skills. Also, this study found that hard skills are indeed valued in hotel management candidates by four- and five-star hotels in New Zealand, which is different from most arguments that hard skills are currently not highly valued by the hospitality industry (Baum, 2002; Raybould & Wilkins, 2005; Cox, 2015;). Therefore, more research could be conducted to measure whether or not hard skills are necessary for managers. Additionally, it is recommended that future study enlarge the research sample by extending the data collection time to collect more information related to requirements for managers.

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Appendix

125 four-star (four-star plus) and five-star hotels in New Zealand

	Business	City	Region	Category	Grade
1.	Amora Hotel Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
2.	Art Deco Masonic Hotel	Napier	Hawkes Bay	Hotel	4 Star
3.	Ascot Park Hotel	Invercargill	Southland	Hotel	4 Star
4.	Auckland City Hotel - Hobson Street	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
5.	Beachfront Hotel Hokitika - Ocean View	Hokitika	West Coast	Hotel	4 Star
6.	Bolton Hotel	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	5 Star
7.	Chateau Marlborough	Blenheim	Marlborough	Hotel	5 Star
8.	Chateau Tongariro Hotel	Whakapapa Village	Ruapehu	Hotel	4 Star
9.	CityLife Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
10.	CityLife Wellington	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star Plus
11.	Commodore Airport Hotel Ltd	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star Plus
12.	Copthorne Hotel & Resort Hokianga	Hokianga	Northland	Hotel	4 Star
13.	Copthorne Hotel & Resort Queenstown Lakefront	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star
14.	Copthorne Hotel and Apartments	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star
15.	Copthorne Hotel Auckland City	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
16.	Copthorne Hotel Oriental Bay	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star Plus
17.	Copthorne Hotel Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star

18.	Cophthorne Hotel Solway Park Wairarapa	Masterton	Wairarapa	Hotel	4 Star Plus
19.	Crowne Plaza Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
20.	Crowne Plaza Queenstown	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star Plus
21.	Distinction Dunedin Hotel	Dunedin	Dunedin	Hotel	4 Star Plus
22.	Distinction Hamilton Hotel & Conference Centre	Hamilton	Waikato	Hotel	4 Star
23.	Distinction Luxmore Hotel	Te Anau	Fiordland	Hotel	4 Star
24.	Distinction Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star
25.	Distinction Te Anau Hotel & Villas	Te Anau	Fiordland	Hotel	4 Star
26.	DoubleTree by Hilton Queenstown	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star Plus
27.	Edgewater	Wanaka	Wanaka	Hotel	4 Star Plus
28.	Emerald Hotel	Gisborne	Eastland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
29.	Grand Mercure Nelson Monaco	Nelson	Nelson	Hotel	4 Star Plus
30.	Grand Mercure Puka Park Resort	Pauanui	Coromandel	Hotel	4 Star Plus
31.	Grand Millennium Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
32.	Heartland Hotel Auckland Airport	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
33.	Heritage Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
34.	Heritage Christchurch	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star Plus
35.	Heritage Hanmer Springs	Hanmer Springs	Hurunui	Hotel	4 Star Plus
36.	Heritage Queenstown	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star Plus
37.	Hillside Property Holding Limited	Hamilton	Waikato	Hotel	4 Star
38.	Hilton Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	5 Star
39.	Hilton Lake Taupo	Taupo	Taupo	Hotel	5 Star
40.	Hilton Queenstown Resort and Spa	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	5 Star
41.	Holiday Inn Auckland Airport	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star

42.	Holiday Inn Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star Plus
43.	Hotel Montreal	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	5 Star
44.	Hotel On Devonport	Tauranga	Bay of Plenty	Hotel	4 Star
45.	Hotel QT Museum Wellington	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	5 Star
46.	Hotel St Clair	Dunedin	Dunedin	Hotel	4 Star
47.	Hotel St Moritz (M Gallery Hotel)	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	5 Star
48.	Ibis Auckland Ellerslie	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
49.	InterContinental Wellington	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	5 Star
50.	James Cook Hotel Grand Chancellor	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star Plus
51.	Jet Park Airport Hotel & Conference Centre	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
52.	Jet Park Hotel Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star
53.	Lake Hawea Hotel	Wanaka	Wanaka	Hotel	4 Star
54.	Mercure Hotel Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
55.	Mercure Leisure Lodge Dunedin	Dunedin	Dunedin	Hotel	4 Star
56.	Mercure Queenstown Resort	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star
57.	Millbrook Resort	Arrowtown	Queenstown	Hotel	5 Star
58.	Millennium Hotel - Queenstown	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star Plus
59.	Millennium Hotel - Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star Plus
60.	Millennium Hotel Manuels Taupo	Taupo	Taupo	Hotel	4 Star Plus
61.	Mount Richmond Hotel & Conference Centre	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
62.	Novotel Auckland Airport	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
63.	Novotel Auckland Ellerslie	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
64.	Novotel Christchurch Cathedral Square	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star Plus
65.	Novotel Queenstown Lakeside	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star

66.	Novotel Rotorua Lakeside	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star Plus
67.	Novotel Tainui Hamilton	Hamilton	Waikato	Hotel	4 Star Plus
68.	Novotel Wellington	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star Plus
69.	Park Hotel Lambton Quay	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star
70.	Pavilions Hotel Christchurch	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star
71.	Peppers Carrington Resort	Kaitia	Northland	Hotel	4 Star
72.	Peppers Clearwater Resort Christchurch	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star Plus
73.	Picton Beachcomber Inn	Picton	Marlborough	Hotel	4 Star
74.	Pitches Store	Ophir	Central Otago	Hotel	4 Star Plus
75.	Powderhorn Chateau	Ohakune	Ruapehu	Hotel	4 Star
76.	Princes Gate Hotel	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star Plus
77.	Pullman Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	5 Star
78.	Punakaiki Resort	Punakaiki	West Coast	Hotel	4 Star
79.	Quality Hotel Elms	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star
80.	Quality Hotel Parnell Limited	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
81.	Quality Hotel Plymouth International	New Plymouth	Taranaki	Hotel	4 Star
82.	Quality Hotel Wellington	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star Plus
83.	Quality Inn Nelson	Nelson	Nelson	Hotel	4 Star
84.	Regent of Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star Plus
85.	Rendezvous Hotel - Christchurch	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star Plus
86.	Rutherford Hotel Nelson	Nelson	Nelson	Hotel	4 Star Plus
87.	Rydges Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
88.	Rydges Latimer Christchurch	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star Plus
89.	Rydges Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star

90.	Rydges Wellington	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star Plus
91.	Scenic Hotel Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
92.	Scenic Hotel Bay of Islands	Paihia	Northland	Hotel	4 Star
93.	Scenic Hotel Dunedin City	Dunedin	Dunedin	Hotel	4 Star Plus
94.	Scenic Hotel Franz Josef Glacier	Franz Josef Glacier	West Coast	Hotel	4 Star
95.	Scenic Hotel Marlborough	Blenheim	Marlborough	Hotel	4 Star Plus
96.	Scenic Hotel Southern Cross	Dunedin	Dunedin	Hotel	4 Star Plus
97.	Scenic Hotel Te Pania	Napier	Hawkes Bay	Hotel	4 Star
98.	Scenic Suites Queenstown	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	4 Star
99.	Skycity Grand Hotel	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	5 Star
100.	Skycity Hotel	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
101.	Sofitel Auckland Viaduct Harbour	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	5 Star
102.	Sofitel Queenstown Hotel and Spa	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	5 Star
103.	Stamford Plaza Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	5 Star
104.	Sudima Hotel Auckland Airport	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
105.	Sudima Hotel Christchurch Airport	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	4 Star Plus
106.	Sudima Hotel Lake Rotorua	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star
107.	Suncourt Hotel & Conference Centre	Taupo	Taupo	Hotel	4 Star
108.	Te Waonui Forest Retreat	Franz Josef Glacier	West Coast	Hotel	5 Star
109.	The Crown Hotel	Napier	Hawkes Bay	Hotel	4 Star Plus
110.	The Duke of Marlborough Hotel	Russell	Northland	Hotel	4 Star
111.	The George Hotel	Christchurch	Christchurch	Hotel	5 Star
112.	The Hermitage Hotel	Mt Cook	Mackenzie	Hotel	4 Star Plus
113.	The Langham, Auckland	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	5 Star

114.	The Quadrant	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
115.	The Spencer on Byron Hotel	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star Plus
116.	The Spire Hotel	Queenstown	Queenstown	Hotel	5 Star
117.	The Surrey Hotel	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
118.	Trailways Hotel Nelson	Nelson	Nelson	Hotel	4 Star Plus
119.	Travelodge Wellington	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star
120.	Tuakau Hotel / Palms on George Ltd	Tuakau	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
121.	VR Rotorua Lake Resort	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star
122.	Waiora Lakeside Spa Resort	Rotorua	Rotorua	Hotel	4 Star Plus
123.	Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre	Auckland	Auckland	Hotel	4 Star
124.	Wairakei Resort	Taupo	Taupo	Hotel	4 Star
125.	West Plaza Hotel	Wellington	Wellington	Hotel	4 Star