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**Significance of Academic Qualifications to Job Placements in
the Kenya Hotel Industry**

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Abstract

Purpose: In Kenya's growing hospitality sector, academic qualifications are widely promoted as essential for professional entry and advancement within hotel establishment's. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between academic qualifications and the job placements in hotels in Kenya.

Materials and Methods: The study used a quantitative approach. Questionnaires were distributed to employees in the hotel sector where a total of 336 responses were received. The data was used to analyze patterns, relationships, using means, standard deviations, Anova and regression.

Findings: Findings of the study indicate that gender in the hotel industry is balanced. The average age was 26-35 years. Majority of hotel employees are diploma and bachelor degree holders. It is clear that higher academic qualifications were linked to faster job placement and potentially more senior roles within the hotel industry.

Unique contributions to theory, practice and Policy: For practice this would enhance the credibility of hospitality education in Kenya, improving job placement rates, and ensuring that

academic qualifications translate into meaningful career opportunities. A focused evaluation of curriculum relevance, industry partnerships, and quality assurance mechanisms is needed to bridge the gap between education and employment in the hotel industry. Addressing this issue is critical for enhancing the credibility of hospitality education in Kenya, improving job placement rates, and ensuring that academic qualifications translate into meaningful career opportunities. A focused evaluation of curriculum relevance, industry partnerships, and quality assurance mechanisms is needed to bridge the gap between education and employment in the hotel industry. Employers in the hotel business can benefit greatly from the study's conclusions as they establish efficient hiring and selection procedures. Employers can find the best individuals for particular work roles by taking into account the educational requirements that match the necessary skill set and job duties, and by understanding the importance of academic qualifications.

Keywords: *Qualifications, Job Placements, Hotel*

INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic hospitality landscape, the hotel industry demands a workforce that is not only service-oriented but also professionally equipped to meet evolving guest expectations, operational standards, and global benchmarks. Academic qualifications have emerged as a critical determinant in shaping job placements, influencing both entry-level recruitment and career progression within hotel establishments (Baum, 2019, WTTC, 2023). The hotel industry is people-oriented and labor-focused, therefore the competency management idea is very relevant to this sector. Employees will be more satisfied with their jobs if they can complete tasks with complete competence. The hotel will then see favorable results as a result. Experienced and educated workers are crucial in the tourist and hospitality industries. The hotel will provide higher-quality services because to these competencies (Talawanich & Wattanacharoensil, 2021). Furthermore, Baum, (2019) indicates that each hotel must choose a qualified and skilled staff member in order to compete in the market. Sangaran & Selvanayagam, (2021) notes that the client currently travels for both work and pleasure and anticipate receiving good service that suits their preferences. Although the industry is classified as a service sector, it needs workers to meet customer demands and guarantee seamless operations for hotel guests.

Employee education is important in the hotel industry since it reflects the hotel's positioning, strategy, and critical handling of guests. The balance between industrial experience and academic credentials may cause the company to reconsider their decision to hire applicants for the placement. It has long been believed that a person's educational attainment greatly predicts how well they would perform at work. In the labor market, university graduates have always been in high demand. The employer would decide whether to give more weight to industry experience, academic credentials, or a combination of the two. This could provide information about their preferences, goals, and difficulties with regard to first-level personnel' industrial experience and academic credentials Stoffberg, Ferreira, & Twum-Darko, (2023), (Kravariti, Voutsina, Tasoulis, Dibia, & Johnson, 2022). Formal education and specialized training in hospitality management, culinary arts, and related disciplines play a pivotal role in aligning graduates with industry requirements, enhancing employability, and contributing to institutional excellence (Okumus, Altinay, & Chathoth, 2020). Employers increasingly prioritize candidates with accredited qualifications, citing improved service quality, operational efficiency, and compliance with international standards such as ISO 21001 and ISO 9001:2015 (UNWTO, 2022).

The Youth in Kenya are heavily employed in the hospitality sector, particularly in entry-level positions in hotels and tour and travel agencies. Because most women work in low-paying jobs and very few in managerial positions, gender equity is lacking. Additionally, there are many uncontracted informal jobs that lead to a lack of social safety. Employers have also mentioned areas like digital systems for the hospitality industry and culinary abilities as examples of the mismatch between graduate skills and industry demands (Danish Trade Union Development Agency, 2024). In order to connect training and the needs of the hospitality industry, the Zizi Afrique Foundation, (2022) has advocated for better governance and financial allocation. Additionally, there needs to be a mechanism of tracking graduate employment outcomes.

Tourism Research Insititute, (2023) inidcates tha job creation in the hospitality industry has significantly increased, particularly in urban regions like Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa. Particularly noticeable is the expansion in lodging establishments, food and beverage outlets, and travel agencies. An increasing trend is the move towards green occupations in

sustainability and ecotourism, which has necessitated the development of skills in conservation as well as other areas like digitization and customer experience creation.

Underpinning Theory

Human Capital Theory

Human capital is defined by Gary Backer (1964) as a tangible means of production. Human capital can be acquired through various means, including education, training, migration, and health. Organizations invest in human capital through education which implies that employees acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities in a variety of ways. Businesses employ human capital because they view people as an asset and anticipate that their investment through practicing skills and Knowledge acquired will provide value in the future through the organization meeting their goals., For the employees, a person invests in their education or training with the hope that the skills and knowledge they acquire will help them advance in their careers through the jobs they acquire.

Furthermore, World Economic Forum, (2023) contended that the idea of human capital is viewed as an asset that needs to be developed and combined with multifaceted technology. However, Boudreau & Ramstad, (2007) states that by putting more emphasis on the bottom line rather than top-down management, the human capital paradigm shifts from an activity-based one with focus on a particular measurement, input focus or getting ready for a routine task, while the result-based one focuses on the overall performance and results, including business impact, cost-benefit analysis, output focus, and performance effectiveness.

People in the labour market bring varying degrees of education, knowledge, skills, and capacities to the workplace, along with their expectations. According to Almendarez, (2010), a person with greater education and training can contribute more useful productive effort than someone with less education and training. An organization depends on the generally acknowledged benefits of human capital theory to improve organisational performance. According to the "human capital theory," a person's level of education and training affects their pay; the more knowledge, skill, and talent they possess, the more likely they are to land a better job.

Problem Statement

When workers have the chance to obtain chances that are appropriate for their credentials and can earn a respectable living from it, an industry is appealing and expands. This suggests that the viability of the industry and employee satisfaction are influenced by equitable pay, fulfilling employment, and alignment with individual talents (Seubert, Hopfgartner, & Glaser, 2021). Even though Kenya is known across the world for having appealing tourism resources that enhances its potential for tourism, the industry still confronts difficulties in matching employee skills to the constantly shifting needs of the sector. Due to a mismatch between their talents and the chances offered by the tourism sector, graduates of tourism and hospitality programs find it difficult to land the jobs they are qualified for (Kathurima, Imbaya, & Kiage, 2023). The concern need to be resolved in order for the industry to continue offering high-quality services and to encourage more young people to pursue professions in hospitality and tourism. This will increase youth employment and raise service standards, which will ensure the industry's long-term viability.

Objective of the Study

To assess the relationship between job placement and academic qualification of hotel staff.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic Qualifications

No résumé is complete without academic credentials, which the prospective employer will review. Having an academic degree is essential in today's environment. Additionally, it shows that a person has a solid foundation in learning. An individual was tested as part of the academic qualification, and in order to receive a decent grade, they must work more and learn more. They pass with flying colors if they are good, or the opposite is true. In a sense, having strong academic credentials can help an employee land a good job (Adamovic, 2020), (Teixeira da Silva, Dobranszki, & Al-Khatib, 2020).

Effective workers are the foundation of great hospitality companies. When staff members demonstrate the right abilities at the right times during service, efficiency is attained. Staff members who demonstrate the right skills at the right times during service are more efficient (Selmi & Kamoun, 2025). It is expected that employees acquire skills through training to deliver the anticipated performance, (Varra, Scioni, Grassini, & Giusti, 2021) elucidates that the competencies to deliver quality service depends on the acquired skills during training, and It has been thought important for employees in hotel industry to have generic, technical and professional skills in order to work effectively. Furthermore the skills and knowledge related to their jobs provide competence and ability to perform the task allocated to them. Lack of professionalism through the training will compromise the competitiveness of the Industry as a whole at all levels of the industry. This is due to the fact that competent employees are self-assured, driven, and efficient at their work. Authors (Wu, Wang, & Ling, (2021), (Solnet, et al., 2019) have indicated that work teams are important participants in service delivery, and their demeanor and attitude have the power to either please or irritate clients. Employees must be capable of meeting client expectations because they are a component of the product and are in charge of guests' happiness or discontent.

Valdivieso, Tapia, Endara, Ramia, & Azanza, (2021) suggest that the hospitality sector is changing to give customers better experiences and services. The initial point of contact between guests and hotels is the hotel staff. To meet the expectations of their patrons, hotels must hire qualified employees with the necessary abilities. A key factor in the hotel industry's success is the efficient use of human resources. Since human resource management determines whether a hotel succeeds or fails, the hospitality and tourism sectors must think about how best to allocate resources to tasks. Ahmad & Manzoor, (2017) also emphasizes that a well-trained individual is eligible for a higher degree of empowerment and is able to make better decisions regarding their assignment. The attributes pertain to the information, abilities, and ideas that help a hotel survive and grow. In order to boost production while equipping workers with professional knowledge and seasoned skills, staff training is crucial in many ways. One important tool for putting human resource principles and policies into effect is training and development. To build and retain high-quality clients in a tourist destination, the hospitality sector needs professionalism. To enhance the abilities of employees at all levels, hotels must also provide professional and further training (Liasidou, Afxentiou, & Malkawi, 2024). In order to have professional staff in the hotel and tourism industry who can offer guests high-quality service, Anderson & Sanga, (2019) highlight that education institutions in the hospitality sector are crucial in training and developing human resources. Tasks should be assigned to the right skilled staff, who can be further supported by the hotel's positive work environment. It is crucial to remember that access to high-quality education serves as a basis for upcoming professional training and hotel industry employment.

Institutions such as Kenya Utalii College, TVET-accredited hospitality schools, and university programs offer structured training in hotel management, culinary arts, and tourism. However, a persistent gap exists between academic credentials and actual job placements, raising concerns about the relevance, practical orientation, and industry alignment of these qualifications (TVETA, 2023).

Job Placements

Assigning tasks to human resources is known as human resource allocation. Many corporate domains, including the transportation, healthcare, hospitality, and tourism industries, have acknowledged the significance of human resource allocation. Allocating human resources successfully is ascribed to effective human resource management, which is a crucial component in raising employee happiness and the organization's profit.

The process of placing a candidate involves matching or comparing their qualifications with the job requirements and assigning the job to them to do. It becomes essential for a business to assign workers accurately based on their fields of competence. On the other hand, employee placement is a process that has a decent possibility of success in terms of the extent of the employee's authority (Bohne, 2021). Placement is the process of matching an individual with the appropriate employment; the number and caliber of jobs will depend on how well an employee fits into their role. Employee placement involves more than just assigning them to locations; it also involves comparing and matching their qualifications with the demands of a job or position (Chang & Eberhardt, 2020). Further, Chen & Wu, (2020) proposes that the distribution of tasks among employees is mostly based on their individual skill sets. Appropriate human resource allocation is crucial in the hotel industry, where efficiency and customer happiness are the top priorities. Decisions for the distribution of human resources are typically based on the institutional manager's experience. The process of tasks and human resource abilities must be assessed and taken into consideration simultaneously because they are significant and intricate difficulties. It is best to assign the resource with the specialized expertise needed for the assignment. He goes on to say that one of the most common issues in the service sector, specifically in tourism and hospitality management, is the distribution of hotel employees. Employees with the necessary abilities should be assigned to tasks without being overworked. Prioritizing competency standards for each person before hiring them is essential to producing human resources with the necessary skills to complete the job (Anggraeni, 2020).

Many graduates face challenges securing employment despite holding formal qualifications, while hotel employers often prioritize candidates with hands-on experience or informal training. This disconnect suggests a misalignment between curriculum content and operational expectations, particularly in areas such as guest service, kitchen operations, and front office management. Furthermore, limited collaboration between training institutions and hotel employers, inconsistent integration of quality frameworks like ISO 21001:2018, and inadequate tracking of graduate outcomes hinder the effectiveness of academic pathways (Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, 2021). A hotel has several different departments, and each one has distinct needs in terms of skills or credentials. Those in front-line positions, such those in the F&B or front desk departments, must serve clients in person, although those in the kitchen or accounting departments are exempt from this requirement. The disparities in competences or credentials that are best suited for hotel personnel in each division must be examined in order to achieve exceptional task performances.

Although the hotel industry places a high value on industry experience and academic credentials when hiring and promoting entry-level staff, little study has been done on

employers' opinions regarding the best mix of these criteria. Furthermore, previous research has tended to focus on the skills of graduates in the hospitality industry, leaving a knowledge gap about employers' perspectives (Saaadin & Ikmal, 2023).

There is a general perception that graduates lack industry readiness, Stemele & Sucheran, (2021) contend that in addition to the skills mismatch, graduates encounter other challenges in finding and keeping jobs in the industry, such as fierce competition and pay concerns. After completing their courses, many graduates in the tourism and hospitality sectors do not work in the field they studied for. They frequently leave to other industries, which results to the manpower shortage in the field. Kalobo, (2025) exposes the employability dilemma in South Africa, where graduates in tourism and events management are not monitored to find out if they found suitable jobs. It has been noted that there is hiring of people without formal training frequently results in operational inefficiencies and impedes graduates' ability to advance in their careers. Job placements have also been significantly impacted by technological advancements. New employee expectations have forced the industry to modify its hiring practices. Therefore, in order for graduates to meet the new industry expectations, new skill sets are needed (Mkwizu, 2025). The unemployment rate for graduates and diploma holders in Kenya is rising. The primary causes cited are degree graduates' inability to satisfy industry standards and a skills mismatch. The increase in master's degree placement suggests that there may be more opportunities for employment with higher education (KIPPR, 2018).

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Summary Statistics by Age

Age Category	Time to Job (Mean)	Qualification (Mean)	Department (Mean)	Aspires to Study More (Mean)	Current Position (Mean)	Orgs Worked (Mean)	Gender (1=Male)	Experience (Mean)
18–25	1.64 (1.06)	2.50 (1.97)	3.67 (1.58)	1.98 (0.15)	1.05 (0.22)	1.05 (0.22)	1.30 (0.46)	1.36 (0.82)
26–35	2.01 (1.05)	2.51 (1.87)	4.02 (1.56)	1.98 (0.13)	1.20 (0.40)	1.13 (0.36)	1.52 (0.50)	2.59 (1.23)
35–45	2.56 (1.05)	1.80 (1.23)	3.80 (1.52)	1.99 (0.11)	1.41 (0.50)	1.40 (0.59)	1.53 (0.50)	3.28 (1.38)
45–55	2.85 (0.91)	1.74 (1.13)	3.96 (1.85)	1.96 (0.19)	1.44 (0.51)	1.48 (0.75)	1.56 (0.51)	3.63 (1.50)
Over 55	4.00 (0.00)	5.50 (0.71)	4.50 (2.12)	2.00 (0.00)	1.50 (0.71)	3.00 (0.00)	1.50 (0.71)	5.00 (0.00)
Total	2.18 (1.10)	2.29 (1.74)	3.92 (1.58)	1.98 (0.13)	1.25 (0.43)	1.23 (0.49)	1.50 (0.50)	2.70 (1.40)

Younger respondents (18–25) had the shortest average time to secure a job after graduation (mean = 1.64), while older age groups, particularly those over 55, reported significantly longer wait times (mean = 4.00).

As expected, educational qualification is highest among the oldest respondents, with those over 55 having the highest mean qualification score (5.5), suggesting they hold bachelor's or

master's degrees. However, younger respondents also show high aspirations to further their education, with nearly all groups scoring close to 2 (indicating "Yes").

Across all age groups, the average number of hotel organizations worked remains under 1.5, indicating relatively low mobility. Meanwhile, work experience increases steadily with age, as expected.

In terms of gender balance, all age groups are fairly evenly distributed, though slightly more females are present in the younger brackets.

Table 2: Summary Statistics by Experience

Qualification	Time to Job (Mean)	Age Category	Gender (1=Male)	Dept	Aspires to Study More	Current Position	Orgs Worked	Experience (Mean)
Master's Degree	2.19 (1.15)	2.34 (0.83)	1.53 (0.50)	4.03 (1.53)	1.98 (0.14)	1.27 (0.44)	1.17 (0.44)	2.69 (1.41)
Bachelor's Degree	2.26 (1.07)	2.34 (0.76)	1.50 (0.50)	3.84 (1.57)	1.99 (0.10)	1.24 (0.43)	1.28 (0.53)	2.86 (1.44)
Higher National Diploma	1.85 (1.14)	2.38 (0.87)	1.38 (0.51)	3.46 (1.76)	2.00 (0.00)	1.31 (0.48)	1.38 (0.65)	2.62 (1.39)
Diploma	1.00 (—)	3.00 (—)	2.00 (—)	6.00 (—)	2.00 (—)	2.00 (—)	2.00 (—)	2.00 (—)
Certificate	2.70 (0.82)	2.26 (1.01)	1.57 (0.51)	3.96 (1.72)	1.96 (0.21)	1.09 (0.29)	1.22 (0.52)	2.57 (1.47)
Other	1.76 (0.99)	1.98 (0.69)	1.34 (0.48)	3.85 (1.61)	1.98 (0.16)	1.29 (0.46)	1.22 (0.47)	2.46 (1.23)
Total	2.18 (1.10)	2.29 (0.81)	1.50 (0.50)	3.92 (1.57)	1.98 (0.13)	1.25 (0.43)	1.23 (0.49)	2.70 (1.40)

Values in parentheses are standard deviations; missing SDs indicate single responses.

Those with bachelor's degrees had a slightly longer average job search time (2.26) compared to master's holders (2.19) and those with other qualifications (1.76). Interestingly, certificate holders reported the longest job search on average (2.70), suggesting that higher education may shorten the time to employment.

In terms of age and experience, all groups hovered around the mid-to-late twenties age range and had moderate levels of experience, generally between 2.5 to 2.8 years. Notably, higher national diploma holders and those with "Other" qualifications tended to be younger and slightly more male-dominated, as indicated by lower gender means. Aspiration to further education remained high across all groups, particularly among those with lower academic levels, like diplomas and certificates, reflecting potential upward academic mobility.

Table 3: Frequency Tabulation of Current Position against Time to Job and Qualification

Current Job Level	Time to First Job	Masters	Bachelors	HND	Diploma	Certificate	Other	Total
Operations	0–6 Months	47	28	4	0	2	16	97
	6–12 Months	18	16	2	0	6	7	49
	One Year	29	28	1	0	12	4	74
	Over One Year	16	8	2	0	1	2	29
	Total	110	80	9	0	21	29	249
Supervisory	0–6 Months	14	8	3	1	0	7	33
	6–12 Months	6	4	1	0	0	1	12
	One Year	11	7	0	0	0	3	21
	Over One Year	9	6	0	2	0	1	18
	Total	40	25	4	3	0	12	84

Across the entire sample, a large majority (249 out of 333 respondents) work in operational roles, with only 84 in supervisory positions, with the proportion of respondents in supervisory roles increasing with higher qualifications, with the majority of supervisors clustered at bachelor's and master's degree holders.

Master's degree holders stand out clearly, with 40 out of 150 of them in supervisory positions, the highest among all groups. Notably, most of them (61 out of 150) found their first job in under a year. Bachelor's degree holders follow a similar pattern, though with a smaller share in supervisory roles, i.e., 25 out of 105. Their job search duration is also quite favorable, with the largest group finding jobs within 6–12 months or one year. In contrast, respondents with diplomas and certificates are almost exclusively in operational roles, indicating a strong link between qualification level and access to higher positions. For instance, all 21 certificate holders in operational roles report longer job searches, falling in the one-year category.

In summary, this analysis suggests that higher academic qualifications are associated with faster job placement and better access to supervisory roles in the hotel industry. The data strongly supports the idea that investing in education can improve early career outcomes and promotion prospects.



Figure 1: Average Time to Job by Qualification and Gender

This graph shows there's very little gender difference for most qualifications. Each bar shows the average time to get hired, where 1 means less than 6 months and 4 means over a year. It also shows that people with Diplomas and Higher National Diplomas got jobs the fastest, while

those with Bachelor's and Master's took slightly longer, but still fall within a year. Certificate holders report the longest wait period, showing a link between qualifications and time to job duration.

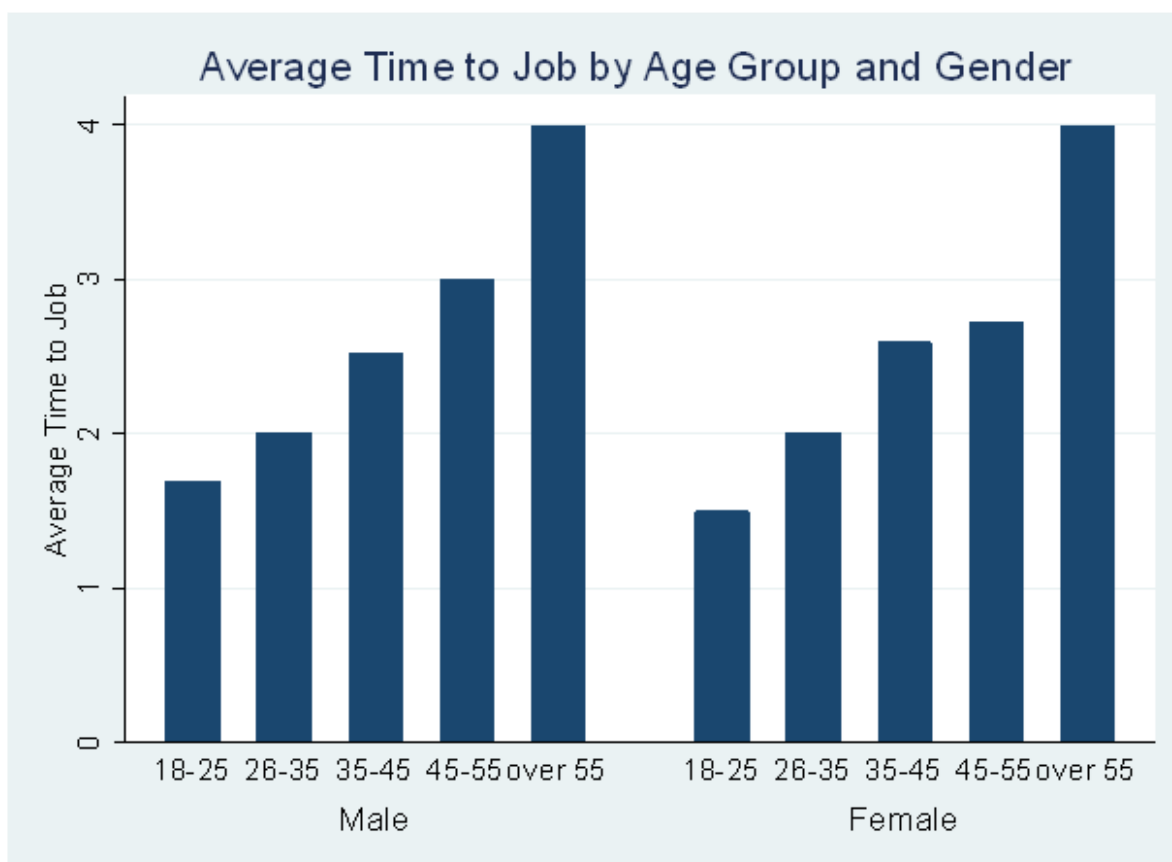


Figure 2: Average Time to Job by Age Group and Gender

The graph indicated shorter waiting times for younger individuals as opposed to older persons in the industry, with no large significant differences by gender. This may indicate growth in the hospitality sector and hence increased demand over time, attracting a younger workforce.

The graph below, on the other hand, is a stacked bar chart that reveals notable trends in education across age and gender. Younger cohorts (18–35) are predominantly Bachelor's and Master's degree holders, reflecting growing access to higher education. Middle-aged respondents (35–55) show more diverse qualifications, including diplomas and certificates. Gender-wise, education levels are fairly consistent, although younger females display slightly more variation in qualifications. A sharp outlier is visible in the over-55 female group, where one respondent appears to hold a diploma.

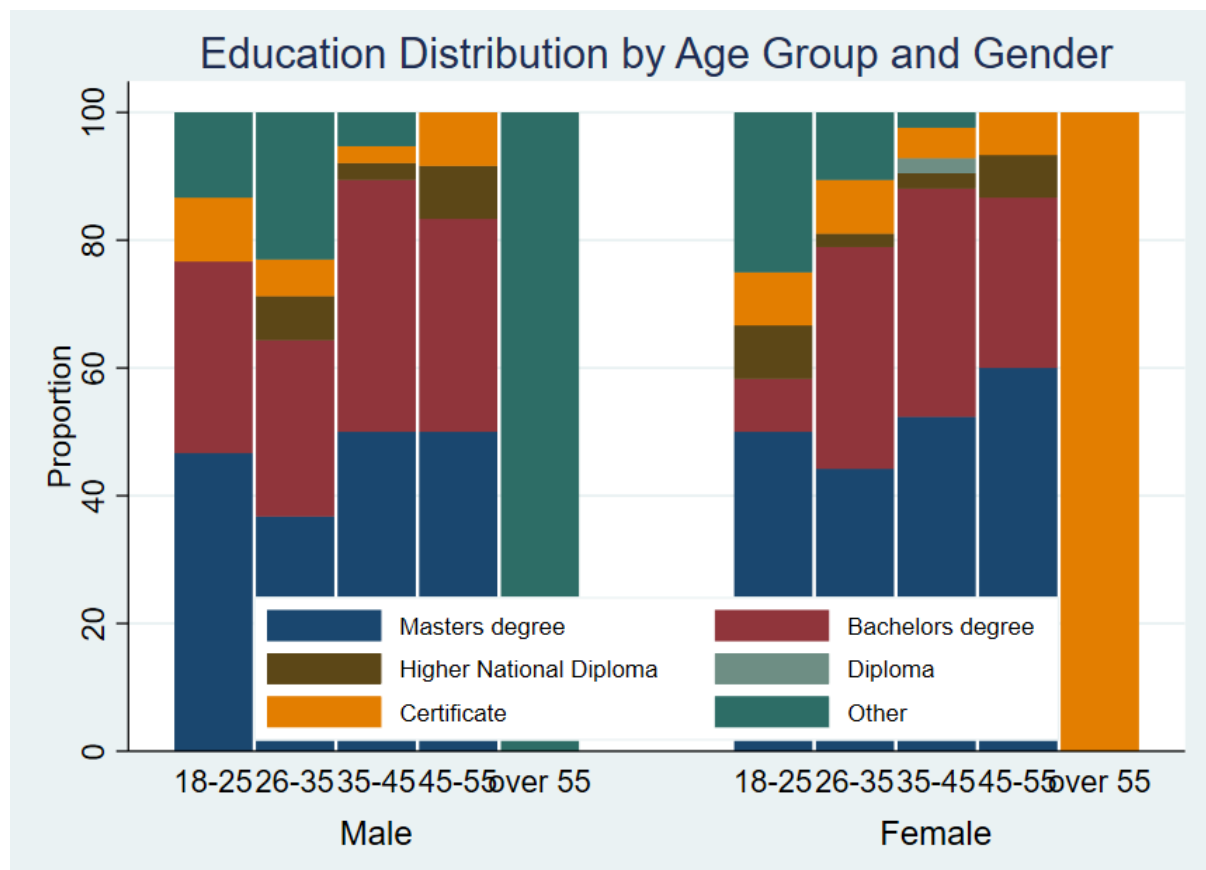


Figure 3: Education Distribution by Age Group and Gender

Correlation of Key Variables

Table 4: Correlation of Key Variables

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) edu	1.000						
(2) time_to_job	-0.067	1.000					
(3) age_cat	-	0.339**	1.000				
	0.126**	*					
(4) experience	-0.060	0.111**	0.442**	1.000			
			*				
(5) dept	-0.029	0.039	0.015	-0.019	1.000		
(6) orgs	0.035	0.121**	0.347**	0.279**	0.045	1.000	
			*	*			
(7) current_cat	-0.019	0.057	0.284**	0.145**	0.133*	0.142**	1.000
			*	*	*	*	

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

There is a weak negative relationship between academic qualifications and the time it takes to find a job. This means that, in general, those with higher education levels tend to find jobs slightly faster, although the effect is small. Age and experience are both negatively correlated with education, suggesting that younger staff tend to have higher qualifications, likely reflecting newer graduates entering the workforce. On the other hand, older and more experienced staff took longer to find their first job, highlighting possible industry growth and increased demand for labor. The number of organizations someone has worked for is positively

linked with both age and experience, indicating that people who've been in the industry longer are likely to have changed jobs more often. However, department assignment doesn't show any strong relationship with other variables, indicating that job departments in hotels are fairly diverse in terms of age, education, and experience.

The current job category (current_cat-supervisor/operations) is positively related to age ($r = 0.284^*$), experience ($r = 0.145^{***}$), and slightly with department and number of organizations worked, implying that older, more experienced individuals are more likely to hold supervisory roles.

Times for Job Placement by Gender

Table 5: T-Test: Time to Job by Gender

	(1) male	female	b	se	p
How long did it take you to find a job after your studies	2.16568	2.215569	-.0498884	.1208301	.679959
Observations	336				

There's no meaningful difference in the average time it takes men and women to find jobs in the hotel industry. On average, males took about 2.17 (6-12 months on the job wait scale), while females took about 2.22. This difference is very small (about -0.05) and not statistically significant since the p-value is 0.68

Time for Job Placements by Education

Analysis of Variance

Table 6: Table ANOVA: Time to Job by Education

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between groups	17.4621287	5	3.49242573	2.94	0.0131
Within groups	392.347395	330	1.1889315	—	—

Bartlett's test for equal variances: $\chi^2(4) = 4.4872$ Prob> $\chi^2 = 0.344$

The test shows there is a significant difference across qualification groups with a p-value of 0.013, which is less than 0.05. This suggests that educational background plays a role in influencing job placement speed in the hotel industry. Bartlett's test confirmed that the assumption of equal variances was not violated ($p = 0.344$), supporting the validity of the analysis.

Time for Job Placement by Academic Qualifications

Table 7: Regression: Time to Job by Academic Qualification

(1) How long did it take you to find a job after your studies.			
	b	se	p
Masters degree	0	.	.
Bachelors degree	.0750758	.1377869	.5862116
Higher National Diploma	-.3591442	.3151666	.2553055
Diploma	-1.205298	1.093986	.2713737
Certificate	.4903542	.2440623	.0453368**
Other	-.4492005	.192021	.0199144**
Observations	336		
Total	409.809524	335	1.22331201

Further regression compares job wait times across different academic qualifications, using Master's degree holders as the reference group. Two groups show statistically significant differences. Certificate holders waited significantly longer to find a job, 0.49 units more on the job wait scale compared to those with a Master's. Also, people in the "Other" qualification category found jobs faster, with a -0.45 difference, and this is also significant ($p = 0.02$). Other qualifications (like Bachelor's, HND, and Diploma) didn't show statistically significant differences in wait time compared to Master's holders. Overall, this suggests that lower academic qualifications may delay job access.

Table 8: Educational Qualifications and Job Placements

Variable	6–12 Months	One Year	Over One Year
Educational Qualification			
Bachelor's degree	0.345 (0.369)	0.349 (0.317)	−0.037 (0.398)
Higher National Diploma	0.092 (0.732)	−1.514 (1.094)	−0.399 (0.844)
Diploma	−12.981 (1114.251)	−12.819 (892.866)	−13.862 (1269.401)
Certificate	1.990 (0.854)	2.267 (0.798)	1.462 (0.949)
Other	−0.121 (0.477)	−0.703 (0.482)	−1.175 (0.662)
Experience (Years)	−0.040 (0.117)	0.295 (0.104)	0.031 (0.127)
Job Category (Ref: Operations)			
Supervisory	−0.179 (0.390)	−0.144 (0.338)	0.708 (0.375)
Constant	−0.792 (0.376)	−1.216 (0.362)	−1.200 (0.412)
Observations	333	333	333

Notes: Reference groups are Master's degree for education and 0-6 months for time to job

This multinomial logistic regression model explores how education level, work experience, and current job category (supervisory vs operations) relate to how long it takes someone to secure their first job after graduation. The outcome variable, time to job, has four categories: *0–6 months (reference)*, *6–12 months*, *1 year*, and *over 1 year*.

The results reveal statistically significant associations for individuals with Certificate-level education, who were much more likely to take 6–12 months ($coef = 1.99$, $p = 0.020$) or exactly one year ($coef = 2.27$, $p = 0.005$) to find a job compared to those with Master's degrees. This suggests that lower academic qualifications may delay job access.

Additionally, years of experience are positively associated with taking longer to get the first job, particularly in the "1 year" category ($coef = 0.29$, $p = 0.005$). This likely reflects the older respondents who took longer but eventually built more experience.

The role type, whether supervisory or operational, did not show significant effects on time to job, but previous analysis indicates that individuals with higher qualifications end up in supervisory roles.

Summary Statistics of Key Variables

Table 9: Summary Statistics for Key Variables

	(1) mean	sd	min	max
Please indicate your age	2.28869	.8122146	1	5
Please indicate your Gender	1.497024	.5007368	1	2
Which department in the hotel do you work in?	3.922619	1.57782	1	6
Please indicate your years of experience in your current position	2.419643	1.329157	1	5
What is your highest academic qualification	2.28869	1.730324	1	6
Do you have aspirations to increase your academic qualifications	1.982143	.1326296	1	2
How long did it take you to find a job after your studies	2.190476	1.106034	1	4
How many organizations in the Hotel Industry have you worked	1.22619	.491144	1	3
Observations	336			

A total of 336 respondents participated in the study. The average respondent fell into the 26–35 age category, with a mean age category score at 2.29 (on a scale of 1 = 18–25 to 5 = over 55). The gender distribution was nearly equal, with a mean score of 1.50, indicating a balanced representation of male (1) and female (2) participants. Respondents were spread across six major hotel departments, with a mean department score of 3.92, suggesting most participants worked in departments such as Housekeeping and Front Office, which fall in the mid-range of the department coding. The average years of experience in the current position was 2.42, corresponding to the 3–5 years bracket. In terms of academic attainment, the average highest qualification was coded at 2.28, implying that most respondents held a Diploma or Bachelor's degree, on a scale where 1 = Maters and 6 = Other. A large proportion of respondents expressed little interest in pursuing further academic qualifications, as shown by the low mean value of 1.02 on a binary scale (1 = No, 2 = Yes). The average time taken to secure the first job after graduation was 2.19, aligning with the 6–12 months range. Additionally, most respondents reported having worked in 1 to 3 hotel organizations, with a mean of 1.22 on a scale where 1 = 1–3 organizations and 3 = over 5 organizations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study underscores the nuanced yet meaningful role academic qualifications play in shaping job placement outcomes within the hotel industry. While the correlation between education level and time to employment is modest, statistical tests including ANOVA and regression confirm that individuals with lower qualifications, particularly certificate holders, face longer job search durations. Conversely, those with bachelors and master's degrees tend to secure employment more swiftly and are more likely to occupy supervisory roles, suggesting that higher education not only accelerates entry into the workforce but also enhances career progression prospects. Importantly, the analysis found no significant gender disparities in job placement timelines, indicating a relatively equitable hiring landscape across male and female respondents. Age and experience were positively associated with job mobility and supervisory roles, yet younger, more academically qualified individuals are entering the industry with strong aspirations for further education signaling a trend toward professionalization and upward mobility. This implies that investing in academic advancement appears to offer tangible benefits in both job access and career trajectory within the hospitality sector. Institutions and policymakers should consider these findings when designing curricula, recruitment strategies, and professional development pathways to align with industry demands and support workforce growth.

Conclusion

The study's findings show that there is a balance of gender in the hotel sector. The age range was 26–35 years old on average. Diploma and bachelor degree holders make up the majority of hotel staff. It is evident that more senior positions in the hotel business and quicker job placement were associated with greater academic levels. Higher qualifications had a shorter time to find employment, with job placements taking an average of 6 to 12 months. Additionally, individuals found it easier to get positions the more years of experience they had. Notably, there was a suggestion that the staff members had no interest in pursuing higher qualifications.

Recommendations

Potential hotel and tourism employees need to be encouraged to progress to higher qualifications as these are linked to faster job placement and access to supervisory roles. For lower qualifications such as certificate and diplomas, bridging programs can be developed holders to upgrade their qualifications so as to improve their competitiveness in the job market. For training institutions there is need to align Curriculum with industry needs by reviewing and updating hospitality curricula to reflect evolving industry standards and expectations for operational and supervisory roles. Also it is important to integrate soft skills and leadership training into academic programs to prepare graduates for managerial responsibilities.

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