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## Education and Opportunity as Influences on Career Development: Findings from a Preliminary Study in Eastern Australian Tourism

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### Abstract

The new agenda for careers in the current employment environment has received much attention in general management literature. Underpinning this 'new career' is an increased individual responsibility for career and professional development. This article reports on a preliminary study of managers in the tourism industry aiming to collect information on their career development strategies as they adapt to these changed employment conditions. The study also explores the role of education in the development of these careers. Opportunities provided by the industry appear to have played a major role in career development of senior managers in tourism while education is becoming increasingly important for those hoping to embark on a tourism career.

**Keywords:** Career Development; careers; tourism, tourism education; human resource management.

### Introduction

Careers in tourism are relatively new phenomena. Although jobs in the tourism and hospitality industry have traditionally been plentiful, the concept of developing these jobs into careers, and even undertaking specific tourism studies to enhance this development, is a relatively new trend. It is therefore understandable that little information is available on career development in the tourism industry. The research discussed in this article attempts to address this dearth of information and reports on a study exploring the major issues impacting on the career development of tourism industry managers in Eastern Australia. Specifically the study was designed to collect the career stories of senior and middle managers currently working in the tourism industry in an attempt to uncover the strategies underpinning their careers. The study also aimed to highlight the role of formal and informal education and training pertaining to such careers, and to explore other issues influencing careers in the industry.

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Although many definitions of a career can be found in the literature, the career concept is dynamic and evolves as organisational practice and individual expectations change. Definitions such as: 'a career is a sequence of positions held by a person during his or her lifetime' (Robbins et al., 2000: 417), 'a career is a series of jobs arranged over time' (Riley and Ladkin, 1994: 225), and 'a career is the pattern of work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life' (Greenhaus, 1987: 6), do not account for the external influences affecting career progress, such as social and family responsibilities, and neglect the subjective aspects of an individual's career. It is more useful for this study to think of a career as a dynamic process in which individuals gather information on their own likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, and on the world of work; develop realistic career goals; develop and implement strategies to achieve these goals; and obtain feedback to promote career decision making (Greenhaus and Callanan, 1994). Within this more integrated approach to career management, it is hoped results from this preliminary study will provide some insight into current practice so further research can be conducted to better prepare not only those working in the industry, but also those hoping to embark on a career in tourism. Information on tourism careers will also assist those involved in policy development and those involved in educating the tourism professionals of the future.

## **The 'New Career' Construct**

Traditionally, career paths emphasised upward movement in an organisation and the basis of much career theory centred on this concept (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). This type of bureaucratic career centred on the concept of a profession and involved the acceptance of qualifications, regular incremental advancement and a degree of certainty concerning prospects.

One of the earliest career theories to emerge was Super's career stage theory that espoused individuals typically move through distinct career stages during the course of their lives. These are commonly referred to as establishment, advancement, maintenance and withdrawal (Super, 1957). The establishment stage occurs at the onset of the career. The advancement stage is a period of moving from job to job, both inside and outside the organisation. Maintenance occurs when individuals have reached the limits of advancement and concentrate on the jobs they are doing. Finally, individuals go through the withdrawal stage as they approach retirement. Needs and expectations change as individuals move through each career stage. Underpinning this traditional model is the concept that careers primarily develop within a single organisation, are linear and vertical.

Another example of early research is the theory of career anchors. In a ten year study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 1960s, Schein (1978) developed five career anchors to be used to identify and predict individual behaviour within organisations. These anchors included five value traits that individuals emphasised in their career decision-making: autonomy and independence; technical/functional competence; managerial competence; security and stability; and creativity. Schein would later add three more anchors: lifestyle; service/dedication to a cause; and entrepreneurial challenge (Yarnall, 1998). Schein suggested that most people within a few years of entering employment, soon establish a dominant career anchor which will play a significant part in future career choices and decisions (Stewart and Knowles, 1999).

However, despite the contribution of the stage theory and career anchors, the current career environment now presents the individual with challenges and alternatives that were not typical at the time of this earlier research. Recent trends have seen structures becoming increasingly flat in nature and organisations becoming more global, with a tendency towards downsizing (Robbins et al, 2000). As a result of these organisational trends, careers can no longer be defined within the one company, and new career constructs have emerged that reflect the dissolution of organisational and industrial boundaries. These alternative career concepts have emerged under various labels: 'protean careers' (Hall and Moss, 1998; Hall, 1996), because careers change shape to accommodate the individual's personal and work circumstances; 'contingent working' (Pfeffer, 1994); and 'virtual organisations' (Hedberg et al., 1997). In addition, as a result of these trends, individuals rarely experience an uninterrupted ascent up the corporate ladder as described by the organisational or bureaucratic career.

Instead, many individuals undertake career paths that are not necessarily continuous and that go beyond the boundaries of a single organisation (DeFillippi and Arthur, 1994).

The boundaryless career (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Weick, 1996) is a popular concept in the current career literature and is defined as not bounded or tied to a single organisation. The boundaryless career is opposite to the organisational career – “careers conceived to unfold in a single employment setting” (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996: 5) and refers to career moves made by a person across organisational, sectoral, or industrial boundaries.

Boundaryless careers do not follow the stereotypical arrow path of continuous career advancement. Rather, career workers spiral or cycle from opportunity to opportunity for a variety of reasons, many of which would appear as mis-steps in the traditional model of career advancement. Individuals make “lateral, diagonal, or apparent downward shifts” to escape bad work environments, to find personal fulfilment, to build new skills, to travel, to accommodate a spouse, to raise a child, or to put more “bread on the table” (Arthur et al., 1999: 33).

The ‘*new career*’ construct (Arthur et al, 1999) embraces not only the notion of the boundaryless career but also changes in the psychological contract (Rousseau, 1995) implicit in the relationship between the employer and employee. This psychological contract, traditionally guided the expectations of both parties. Within the philosophy of the *new career*, these expectations, based on the ‘career for life’ expectation, have changed. This research provides some insight into how managers in the tourism industry are adapting to this *new career* construct.

So within the framework of the current career environment what constitutes a successful career? Based on Judge et al (1995), career success is defined as the positive psychological outcomes or achievements one has accumulated as a result of experiences over the span of working life. There are two main categories of career success – objective and subjective. Objective career success is assessed by extrinsic measures such as job title, salary or promotion (Lau and Shaffer, 1999), and focuses on the externally distinguishable feature of the career concept, such as job histories, sequences of roles, status acquisition and work transition, and tends to value paid and public work over other types of employment (Parker, 2002; Nabi, 2001). The subjective dimension presents a more holistic approach including personal values and the motivation to work, foci for new learning and the breadth of relationships that support the careerist (Nabi, 2001).

A failing of traditional career theory is that it has neglected the complexities of social and cultural factors (Collin and Young, 1986). Careers do not operate in isolation. Individuals are influenced by the social, ethnic and gender categories to which they belong, and the concept of a career is closely linked to a person’s individual identity and range of experiences as they move through their working life (Riley and Ladkin 1994).

Trends such as: increased numbers of women in the workforce and the consequent changes in the roles of men and women in the family; smaller family sizes; changing family structures; and other new and emerging social adjustments; have seen, and will see, changes in how individuals see their careers unfolding (Arthur et al, 1999). Such trends render the standard bureaucratic model, which forms the basis of career theory, not universally applicable (Ladkin and Riley, 1996). What guidance can, therefore, be provided to those embarking on a career and, more importantly for this research, a career in tourism?

The multidisciplinary dimension of tourism coupled with the relative youth of the Australian tourism industry has meant that career paths have only recently begun to be clearly defined or developed (Hall, 1998). Yet it is already evident that many traits and characteristics of careers in tourism and hospitality lend themselves to variations on the traditional bureaucratic career model.

## **The Tourism Career**

Any discussion on tourism careers should begin with an examination of how tourism employment is defined. A frustration for researchers in the tourism discipline is the multitude of definitions provided for tourism (Tribe, 1997; Weaver and Oppermann, 2000; Hall, 2003). In 1987 the Australian House of Representatives Select Committee on Tourism observed that the problem of definition is 'not just a statistical problem, but one which reflected the high degree of fragmentation that exists in the industry and the diversity of the prime interests of the components of the industry' (cited in Hall, 2003:3). It follows that defining tourism employment is, therefore, equally difficult (Riley et al, 2002).

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, tourism comprises: retail trade; accommodation, cafes and restaurants; transport and storage; and cultural and recreational services (ABS, 2003). A slightly different list is provided by Weaver and Lawton (2002) and includes travel agencies, transportation, accommodation, tour operators and merchandise retailers. However, to get a clearer picture of tourism employment, a more comprehensive list of tourism sectors would include: transport, travel agencies, tour operators, conventions and meetings, tour guides, food services, attractions, festivals, sport, culture and heritage, wine tourism, indigenous tourism, retail, environment management, health and spa tourism and government agencies (Leiper, 2004; Douglas et al, 2001; Richardson and Fluker, 2004; Pearce et al, 1998). However, are all workers in these sectors, tourism employees? An attraction such as the Australian War Memorial, probably Australia's most visited attraction, employs historians, curators, education specialists and more.

To further complicate this task of definition, some account needs to be taken of the 'multiplier effect'. The multiplier is an economic concept used to define the impact of monetary expenditure on the wider economic system and the direction of this effect on output, income and employment (Losekoot and Wood, 2001; Tribe, 1999). The multiplier is often used for estimating the economic benefits of tourism activity including direct and indirect employment creation (see Tribe, 2005: 266-271). Identifying a sample frame of tourism employees is clearly problematic and hinders the research process.

Although little research investigating the career development of managers in the tourism industry is available, considerable attention has been given to career paths of hotel managers (Baum and Nickson, 1998; Nebel et al., 1994; Ladkin and Laws, 2000; Ladkin and Riley, 1994, 1996; Ladkin and Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin 2002). The focus given to careers in hotel management, rather than in tourism in general, may be due to the difficulty in defining tourism and issues of tourism employment. In contrast, hotel management is a clear career choice and can easily be defined and measured. It is common to see managers progress through the ranks of the industry and to clearly conceptualise career stages.

While career mobility is a focus in much of the literature on hotel management, other studies have focused on education and training as they pertain to patterns of job responsibility that managers have passed through, from their first job in the hotel industry to general manager (Kelliher and Johnson, 1987; Plunket and Berger, 1984; Rutherford and Schill, 1984).

Education and training also appears to be the focus of much discussion in tourism and tourism related industries. Many employers in the industry do not demand that their staff have formal training. Hall (1998) noted that until the entry of the National Tourism Industry Training Committee (NTITC), the forerunner of Tourism Training Australia (TTA), the industry had never successfully recognised its training needs. Poor attitudes to training existed in the industry at large and the Department of Employment, Education and Training (1998) noted that 'much of the industry appears to regard expenditure on training as an operating cost to be minimised rather than an investment to be optimised' (cited in Hall, 1998: 27). Research conducted by Jameson (2000) in 1999 revealed that only 28 per cent of tourism industry firms had a training plan and 19 percent had a training budget. Despite this lack of commitment to training, the less formal forms of education such as in-house or on-the-job training should not be devalued. This type of training provides an important vehicle to

acquiring and maintaining the necessary skills for increasing employability (Harris and Jago, 1999; Billet, 2002).

Although industry and organisational training programmes appear problematic, more recently we have seen an increase in the number and quality of tertiary education facilities offering tourism studies - see Weaver and Lawton (2002: 9) for a comprehensive list. This is partly due to the encouragement from government, industry and labour unions for the adoption of formal training and qualifications (Hall, 1998) and in recognition of the industry's need for highly skilled workers. In addition, tourism and hospitality courses became particularly popular with school leavers embarking on tertiary study and this demand also fuelled the increasing supply of such courses. However, tourism employers often recruit non-tourism graduates who demonstrate the generic skills required for a vocation in tourism (Dale and Robinson, 2001). This issue is at the centre of an on-going debate regarding the content of tourism courses. While this paper does not attempt to enter this debate, some insight into the influence of education on career development may prove useful to those with an interest in curriculum design.

Careers and career development is clearly in a state of transition. Implicit in this transition is the move towards individual responsibility for, and involvement in, the planning and decision-making relating to career goals. It is also clear that both recruitment practices and career development in the tourism industry embrace a diverse range of skill requirements and educational qualifications. These issues challenge those developing careers in the industry, those preparing to embark on such careers and all involved in human resource management. The research project described below explores the career development strategies employed by managers in the tourism industry in Eastern Australia and the influence of formal education on these managers' careers.

## **Methodology and Data**

A qualitative approach was employed in this research project as it allowed respondents to provide information-rich responses to influences on their career development and an opportunity for them to tell their 'career story'. This type of data is now used extensively in career research and one approach to obtaining a more holistic view of careers is to adopt a narrative approach that enables the identification of patterns in a retrospective study (Collin, 1998; Bailey, 1996; Ladkin, 1999). A research procedure that produced descriptive data, presenting the respondents' own words, and their views and experiences, was necessary to allow real life situations to unfold. This qualitative data was supplemented by the collection of some numeric information for variables that would be likely to influence the findings, such as years of experience and number of jobs moves.

Career analysis in the broad tradition of life history (Creswell, 1998) is used as a research methodology for this particular study. Career analysis relies on the collection of work history data using the memory recall method. For more information on this methodology see Ladkin (1999 and 2002). The development and use of career analysis suggests two types of data collection: either longitudinally or via memory recall (Dex, 1991). Work history data can be collected both qualitatively and quantitatively. The collection of life and work history data is an established methodology for the social sciences (Ladkin, 1999) and falls within the umbrella term of 'life writing' along with life stories, autobiographies, journals, diaries, portraits, profiles, memoirs and case studies (Smith, 1994). These work biographies can then be analysed at the individual level, or on an aggregate level to illustrate patterns and trends. (Riley et al, 2002). The aim of the career analysis was to expose patterns and trends in career development which would enable the industry, its current and future employees, and educators to understand some of the influences on individuals in their pursuit of their career ambitions in the tourism industry.

As the aim of the study was the collection of information to assist in understanding human behaviour in the organisational context, it was not expected or desired that the results would be generalised or transferred to the wider population. Careers are only one aspect of an individual's life. Family, demographics, cultural backgrounds and individual motivations all impact on career stories. At best,

the results of this type of research would provide a framework and guidelines to underpin further research. This point has been the focus of criticisms of the life history method as ‘it provides no wider link to theoretical understanding, it is time consuming, it has little power of generalisability and the results are often vague’ (Ladkin, 1999: 39). Such criticism is often addressed not only at life histories but also at the wider social science research methodologies (Plummer, 1983). Nevertheless, it is generally accepted that this type of research, and the use of in-depth qualitative work, is necessary to highlight relevant themes and issues, and to prepare the ground for more extensive research and analysis. This type of study, despite its critics, is needed to improve our understanding of human resource issues in the tourism industry.

As discussed above, no clear sample frame of tourism employees is easily identified. However, based on the list of tourism sectors mentioned previously (Leiper, 2004; Douglas et al, 2001; Richardson and Fluker, 2004; Pearce et al, 1998), a *purposive* sampling technique, that involved the researcher making a decision about those most appropriate for inclusion in the study, was used by the researcher (see Jennings, 2001). This sample comprised a cross-section of organisations representing four of the major tourism sectors including: the attractions sector, the meeting and event management sector, the state government tourism offices, and the transport sector. It was acknowledged that the size of the employing organisation might affect the results of the study, as large organisations generally offer a hierarchical structure with distinct layers that managers may progress through. Therefore, four small (less than 20 employees), four medium (more than 20 but less than 200 employees) and four large (more than 200 employees) organisations were selected for the study.

A concern with this type of purposive sampling technique is the lack of assurance of representativeness of the population as a whole. However, the mix of private and public sector organisations of varying size was deemed to provide diversity and relevance to this particular project. It is important to reiterate that the objective of this research project was to increase understanding of the ‘tourism career’ phenomena, rather than to create theories and suggest transferability of results to the wider population. A whole of Australia study was not feasible due to available resources, so two Australian States were included in the study. A sample of 12 organisations was selected within these two criteria. Twenty-three employees in these organisations were selected for the research. Twelve of the participants were employed at senior management level (chief executive officers or general managers) and eleven in middle management. More information on the sample is provided in *Table 1: Summary of sample*.

Description	Senior Managers	Middle Managers
Employment level	12	11
<b>Education</b>		
PhD or equivalent	3	0
Masters degree	3	2
Bachelors degree	4	6
TAFE certificate	1	3
High school certificate	1	0
Years of experience	11-33 years	4-35 years
Female	3	7
Male	9	4
<b>Tourism Sector</b>		
Events	4	4
Attractions	4	3
Government	2	2
Transport	2	2

**Table 1: Summary of sample**

Data was collected using a brief questionnaire that detailed curriculum vitae information such as each job title held over their career, length of time in each position and types of duties undertaken. The questionnaire was sent to participants prior to the interview and was collected at the interview. The one-to-one interview used open-ended questions to obtain the opinions, attitudes, values and beliefs of employees about careers in the tourism industry. Specific questions were designed around the participant's career path, career development techniques, and the education, skills, and knowledge impacting on their career development.

The 12 senior managers were selected as they held positions of Director or CEO and the middle managers were selected randomly. Participants received a letter inviting them to take part in the study. The interviews, approximately one hour each, were designed to elicit information on the major influences on career progression. One middle manager, after agreeing to participate in the research, became ill and subsequently left employment. As the research project was well underway at this time, it was decided to run the study with one less participant at the middle management level. Therefore a total of 23 managers participated in the study. As tourism is a multi-disciplinary field, it should be noted that all managers at the time of the interview were employed in the tourism industry, but many brought with them experience from other sectors of employment.

The mode of questioning in the interviews for each target group was quite different. For the senior managers a historical perspective was adopted asking them to recall the impact of the various influences on their careers. The middle managers were asked to provide similar historical data and in addition to provide information on influences they expected to impact on their future career development. All participants were given the opportunity to provide their own career narrative and influences were self-identified.

The results were analysed using basic numeric comparisons of the quantitative data and content analysis of the qualitative data. As the data was collected using open-ended questions, it was essential to assign data to pre-defined categories. These categories were based on the aims of the project and fell within the categories of career development strategies, education and training, and other career influences. Patterns and trends were identified from each of these broad descriptive codes.

## **Findings**

### **Strategies for career development**

Career opportunities for eight of the twelve senior managers had arisen by chance: being in the right spot at the right time had been the primary driver for professional development. Two senior managers had progressed through their career by carefully planning their career moves. The other two reported strategies of a mixed approach. The acquisition of particular skills is often strategically planned: identifying particular weaknesses, and acquiring training and education to develop strengths in particular areas, increases the chance of career development opportunities arising.

Career development strategies also tended to change throughout the process:

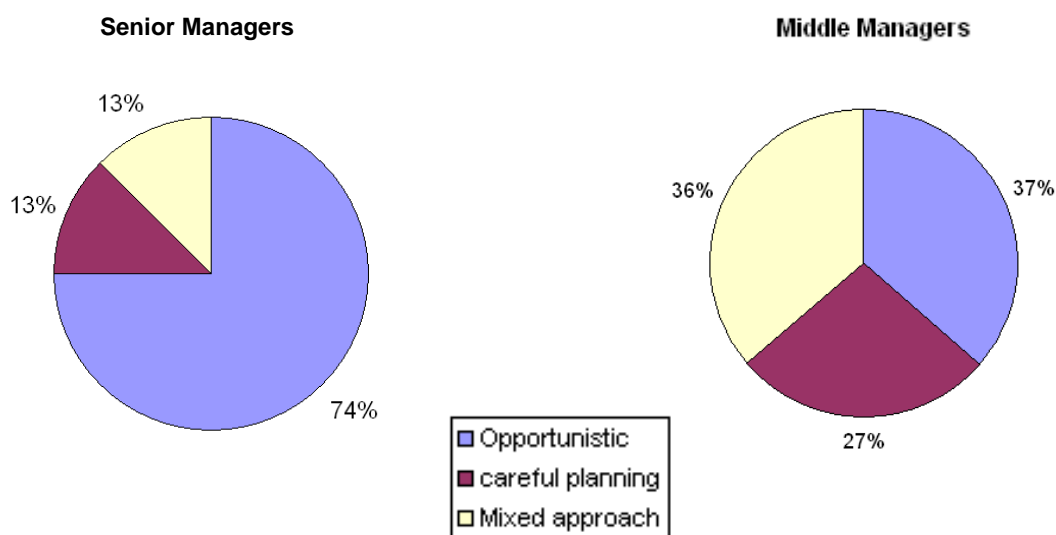
“Early on in my career I think I took advantage of opportunities as they arose although I thought carefully about whether I took them or waited for another opportunity. Later in my career it was definitely more strategic – I planned carefully where I would move and took training in the area I thought would benefit my direction.”

“Once chance got me here, I am now planning strategically where I will go.”

These strategies may differ from tourism sector to sector. An interesting comment, from a respondent in the events sector, suggested event managers are employed to manage a particular major event and once the event is over, employment ceases:

“When you are an event manager you become unemployed and you move around the country because that is what you have to do to get a job – I think more opportunistic than strategic.”

Although the results differed for middle managers, similar themes and comments emerged. Four middle managers expected opportunistic moves while three thought they would need to plan future career moves. Another four expected a mix of strategies would be used for career development and one was unsure of how future career opportunities would arise. These different expectations were attributed to the structure and culture of the employing organisations. Middle managers also commented that although jobs may arise opportunistically, some strategic planning in skill development was important to maximise the impact of opportunistic careers. Opportunities for acquiring experience, acting in higher or different positions to help develop a multi-skilled approach, were also reported as important in career development. *Figure 1* provides a comparison of senior and middle manager career development strategies.



**Figure 1: Comparison of Senior and Middle Managers' career development strategies**

Much of the discussion of opportunistic careers focused on mobility issues. All senior managers had found that to take advantage of opportunities they were often required to change geographical location, change organisation and even leave the industry for a period of time. These managers suggested that opportunities involving mobility were often complicated by: partner and family considerations, a willingness to relocate and intrinsic motivators.

### The role of formal education in career progression

Four senior managers believed that formal education had been crucial for their career development. However, education did not influence the career development of half the senior managers and two more were not sure what role their formal education had played in their career development: “You come to a point where I think experience counts more than formal education.” Information on the educational qualifications of the participants is listed in Table 1.

Interestingly, the influence of education on career development is obviously changing. Participants commented on an overwhelming belief that while education may not have been vital for those already in senior management, this perception was now no longer valid. For current tourism employees and

those who envision a career in tourism, the role of tertiary qualifications and even post-graduate work is becoming increasingly important.

“I look at what qualifications people have and I do look for tertiary qualifications because it tells me a lot about what they are able to do.”

“Tertiary qualifications certainly open doors.”

Middle managers endorsed the influence of education on tourism careers. Seven believed that their formal education had been and would continue to be a major influence in their career development.

“I did a Bachelor of Business in Tourism and Travel Management and that is how I got my foot in the door.”

“Absolutely vital for my area....my higher degree has made me feel more confident and has shown my supervisors that I am dedicated to my career.”

The remaining four were unsure of how important education would be to their career.

Although, the participants generally agreed on the influence of education on careers, the focus of this education was diverse and a variety of areas of study were deemed important for tourism careers. This endorses much of the debate in the literature over the last decade relating to tourism curricula and programmes. As mentioned, this paper does not aim to add to this debate, but it is useful to note that senior managers agreed that the skills and maturity that are generally acquired through academic study are as vital as the specialist skills and knowledge acquired in the various degree programmes.

“I think what education does is help to reinforce some of the person’s belief in their own ability, their own management skills, organisation skills etc.”

A summary of the areas of study suggested by the respondents is included in *Table 2* below:

Areas of Study
Marketing
Business
Tourism
Museum Management
Psychology
Finance
Sales
Management
Education
Communication
Event Management
Human relationships

**Table 2: Educational study areas**

## Other findings

A passion for the job was a theme that frequently emerged from this research project. It is often not the motivation for higher pay or a more prestigious position that influence careers for this particular sample, but more, a love of the job and even the geographical location of a particular position.

“If someone offered me 10-15 thousand more to work in another industry I would not bother – I think this would apply to 95% of people working in this organisation.”

Twenty of the twenty-three participants believed that the tourism industry is perceived as a positive and rewarding work environment, providing excellent employment opportunities and financial rewards. “There is a bit of sex appeal to the industry – tourism has great appeal.”

## Discussion

The major influences on career progression from this sample appeared to be:

- Taking advantage of career opportunities either inside or outside the organisation or industry as they arise;
- A willingness to remain geographically, organisationally and industrially mobile;
- Undertaking tertiary study.

One of the findings from this research project was the more opportunistic, rather than strategic approach, to career development. *Luck* underpins much of the discussion relating to careers in the tourism industry. Overwhelmingly, taking advantage of opportunities as they arise has developed the careers of these participants: being in the right place at the right time has been paramount for many employees trying to establish their career.

Clearly, if employees are developing their careers using a more ad hoc, opportunistic strategy they are unable to envisage a clear career path. This appears to be in line with much of the discussion relating to *new careers* and has serious implications for manpower planning and human resource management. If further research reinforces these findings, it has implications for not only those in the industry but also educationalists, as they prepare students for these dynamic and uncertain career constructs. The findings also suggests that participants perhaps are not planning careers based on the theory of career anchors as suggested by Schein (1978), but rather developing careers that spiral or cycle from opportunity to opportunity (Arthur, 1994).

The results of this study indicate that higher education is becoming increasingly important for employees in the tourism industry. However, the area of study was not tightly constrained. Participants in the study endorsed the value of higher education for employees, but suggested the acquisition of more generalised skills and knowledge, rather than a narrow specialisation.

The findings of this study suggest a close link between career development strategies and education. Those who reported carefully planning their career moves emphasised the strategic development of particular skills and qualifications as integral to their long term plans. Those who reported using a mix of both careful planning and opportunity to develop their careers suggested that opportunities had arisen as a direct result of their plans to advance their education and training.

## Conclusion

This study highlights some important HR issues for the tourism industry: tourism organisations need to acknowledge the issues of personal and professional development to maintain the flow of highly skilled workers into the industry.

“There's a war on for talent with everybody looking for the same people; retaining and hiring good people is a major challenge and there's tremendous opportunity for us to improve that with retention tools, career development tools and recruiting tools” (Rosen, 2000: 263).

However, to entice and retain high-quality managers, the industry would need to encourage the development of a career path that is more diverse and dynamic. New recruits need to envision a professional career rather than an opportunistic employment regime.

Careers are a combination of human ability, ambition and the opportunities available to the individual. It is therefore, necessary to take care in universally applying the principles of career development and traditional career path modelling, as many issues mentioned above are dependent on the individual. According to the *new career* concepts, less attention should be paid to the 'old fashioned' understanding of the perfect career which is defined by traditions and institutions. Rather, careers should be personally specified paths that overcome organisational, occupational and geographical restrictions and boundaries. Those wishing to embark on a career in tourism need access to information relating to career development strategies and programmes. They need to know what industry accepted educational qualifications will equip them for such a career, and they should understand the diversity and dynamic nature of tourism careers. As studies of emerging career attitudes and career development programmes are still lacking, this information is not yet in the public forum. It is obvious that there is a need for in-depth studies of tourism careers if the industry hopes to meet its need for highly skilled human resources. The study under discussion provides a useful framework on which additional research in this area could be developed.

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