

What leads to higher paying jobs in **Hotel Management**: **Gender, qualifications or mobility?**

O que conduz a empregos mais bem pagos na **Gestão Hoteleira**: **Género, qualificação ou mobilidade?**

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Abstract | This research explored the correlation between gender, formal education, credentials, mobility, and general managers' salaries in the Canadian hotel industry. The analysis confirmed that men are 3.85 times more likely to earn a salary greater than \$90,000 than are female general managers. Managers with more frequent moves to obtain better positions were 1.3 times more likely to have a salary greater than \$90,000. Completion of formal education programs or industry credentials was not correlated with such high salary levels. Research findings agree with previous literature that gender and mobility are important factors in achieving higher salary levels. However, the hypotheses related to credentials and education did not confirm the findings of previous research. This result may be due to the fact that education and credentials are related to career progression at lower levels of management or salary. This study fills a gap in the literature concerning career progression and salaries of general managers in the Canadian hotel industry.

Keywords | Gender, salary, hotel, management, careers.

Resumo | Esta investigação explorou a relação entre género, educação formal, credenciais, mobilidade e os salários dos gerentes gerais na indústria canadense hotel. A análise confirmou que, nos cargos de gestão, os homens têm 3,85 vezes mais hipóteses de ter um salário maior que \$90.000 do que são as mulheres. Os gerentes com movimentos mais frequentes para obter melhores posições foram 1,3 vezes mais propensos a ter um salário maior que \$90.000. A finalização de programas de educação formal, ou credenciais da indústria, não apresentou correlação com níveis tão altos de salário. Os resultados da pesquisa vão de encontro à literatura, em que o género e a mobilidade são fatores importantes para atingir os níveis salariais mais elevados. No entanto, as hipóteses relacionadas com credenciais e educação não confirmam os resultados de investigações anteriores. Este resultado pode ser devido ao facto de que a educação e as credenciais estão relacionados com a progressão na carreira nos escalões inferiores da administração ou de salário. Este estudo preenche uma lacuna na literatura sobre a progressão de carreira e salários dos gerentes gerais na indústria hoteleira canadense.

Palavras-chave | Género, salário, hotelaria, gestão, carreiras.

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1. Introduction

The hotel industry is an important part of the Canadian economy. Canadian statistics indicate that there are 8,538 properties in Canada, employing 290,000 people, and generating over \$17 billion in revenue (Hotel Association of Canada, 2012). The hotel properties in this research were primarily small and medium-sized entities (SMEs) with 41% employing fewer than 50 employees and 95% having fewer than 300 employees.

The position at the top of the hotel career ladder is hotel general manager (GM). Many factors can affect career progression and it can require 19 years to attain the position of hotel general manager in a large full-service hotel (Kim, Chun & Petrick, 2009). Luxury general manager pay in North America was calculated at \$257,000 USD in New York City including bonus (Hazelton, 2012). Factors that impact career progression include education, mentorship, and frequent moves to obtain a better position (mobility) (Harper, Brown & Wilson, 2005; Newman, Moncarz & Kay, 2014).

This research was undertaken to identify the major factors that impact hotel career progression in Canada. This information will enable educational institutions, professional associations, and human resource directors to better assist those wishing to progress to the position of general manager. The factors identified for this research were formal education, professional credentials, and mobility. Also, gender was analyzed to see if women at the same position were earning the same salary as men. Salary was used as the measure of success.

2. Hotel general manager career

The position of hotel general manager is usually achieved in a very linear fashion over a relatively long time span compared to other industries. The typical career path includes the sequence of

starting in a front line position and then working up to supervisor, then to department head in a variety of departments, before reaching the position of hotel general manager. "Thus on average to progress from new graduate to functions manager might take some six years or so, where in other industries graduates are appointed as managers automatically or within a much shorter period of time after graduation" (Mkono, 2009, p. 865). Kim, Chun & Petrick (2009) found it can take up to 19 years to reach the position of hotel general manager in a super deluxe property and earn an annual salary of US \$110,000 to \$150,000.

The performance of a hotel general manager is often evaluated by financial metrics such as profits or revenues. The salary of a hotel general manager is usually tied directly to the performance of the hotel in the form of bonuses. If the hotel meets or exceeds the projected revenues, the general manager can receive up to 25% of their base salary in the form of a bonus (Burns, 2010).

3. Impact of gender on hotel manager careers and salaries

The hotel industry employs a large number of women and gender segregation, both vertical and horizontal, has been found to exist. Woods and Veihland (2000) found that departments dominated by female workers included sales, personnel, catering and housekeeping. Ng and Pine (2003) also found horizontal segregation in hotels as women dominated positions in the personnel, training, conferences and banquet departments. None of these are recognized as career track positions leading to general manager. Barriers that prevent women from reaching the executive positions have been identified as family and household responsibilities and are the result of a lack of active leadership development (Boone, Veller, Nikoaeve, Keith, Kefgen & Houran, 2013). Also, the "Good Old Boys" network was

found by Clevenger & Singh (2013) in the U.S. hospitality industry to dictate general attitudes towards male dominated networking groups and a resulting imbalance promoting more men than women to management.

Research on hotel general managers of super deluxe hotels indicate that food and beverage, sales and marketing, and rooms experience “was very useful for eventual promotion to the rank of GM” (Kim, Chun, & Petrick, 2009, p. 104). Vertical segregation has been found by Blayney & Blotnick (2013) with only 19.93% of women found to be in executive positions in international hotel associations. McKenzie-Gentry (2007) found only 3% of women managers in hotels in Belize. Research in the hospitality industry in Spain found significant occupational segregation in hotels greater than that found in restaurants, but it decreased as educational level increased (Campos-Soria, Marchante-Mera & Ropero-Garcia, 2011).

The occupational segregation of women in the industry is an explanation for the wage gap between men and women. Research in Spain and Turkey has found the wage disparity related directly to the lower paying jobs that are dominated by women (Campos-Soria, Ortega-Aguaza & Ropero-Garcia, 2009; Okumus, Sariisik & Naipaul, 2010). Thrane (2007) found that men’s wages were 20% higher than those of women employees in the tourism industry in Norway. Santos & Varejao (2007) found 55% of the wage gap in the Portugal tourism industry was due to gender discrimination. These studies related to tourism employees in general and were not targeted to hotel managers. Burgess (2003) did research specifically on positions in the financial management areas in hotels and found that those with higher status and higher pay were more likely to be men. A survey conducted by Hotel Management, a hotel magazine published in the United States, found 15% of male general managers earned a salary in the \$90,000 to \$134,000 range, but only 5% of women managers fell into that range (Ricca, 2012). However, the male general managers had more experience than the women did, which could account for the salary

difference. There is a lack of research on possible wage gaps in hotels in North America and certainly in Canada.

Another explanation for gender-based differences in wages is the human capital theory which postulates education and experience gives greater skills and knowledge and makes that person more valuable to the organization (Barros & Santos, 2009). This means that women with the same experience and education/qualifications in the same position should receive equal wages. This theory was considered in this research as formal education and qualifications were also analyzed.

Based on this literature the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: Gender has an influence on salary levels. Men are likely to earn higher salaries than women.

4. Formal education

Since the 1970’s formal education in Canada for the hospitality and tourism industry has grown rapidly. During the late 1960’s 22 community colleges were established in the heavily populated province of Ontario and a core program for tourism and hospitality education was created. More programs became established across Canada as forecasts of labour shortages were published by Tourism Canada (a federal government department) (MacLaurin, 2008). In 1999 there were 67 two-year diploma programs and 12 four-year degree programs in hospitality and tourism. By 2004 there were 71 two-year programs and 17 four-year degree programs and many college programs were articulated into the university degree programs (Reid, 2004 as cited by MacLaurin, 2008). As the programs grew in number they also became more specialized. Due to the very nature of its large tourism base, British Columbia developed a number of adventure tourism college programs and currently has the largest number of tourism programs in

Canada (See Table 1 for more details). Graduate level degree programs are now available such as the MBA in Hospitality and Tourism Management available at Guelph University in Ontario and the PhD program at the University of Calgary in Alberta. The more specialized hotel management degrees are found outside of Canada at Cornell University, School of Hotel Administration located in Ithaca, New York, which also offers a Master of Management in Hospitality and a PhD in Hotel Administration. Internationally known hotel schools include Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne in Switzerland which was founded in 1893 and boasts being the first hotel school. According to the Lausanne website the total fee for the four-year degree is over \$175,000 CDN, plus an additional \$50,000 CDN for accommodation, textbooks, and health insurance (Ecole Hoteliere Lausanne). This indicates that higher education in hotel management can encompass a substantial investment in both time and money.

A relationship is presumed to exist between education and career progression in that the higher the level of education, the faster and further the career progression. Harper, Brown and Wilson (2005) found formal qualifications allowed managers to “fast track” to general manager positions and that “today’s role of a hotel general manager encourage a greater business than operational perspective and consequently demanded a higher level of technical

and business skills” (p. 56). Ladkin (2002) found vocational education to the master’s level led to more rapid career advancement for hotel general managers in Australia.

Based on this literature the following hypothesis was developed:

H2: Completion of formal education (university and/or community college) results in greater likelihood of earning a higher salary.

5. Certification and credentials

Credentials in the hotel industry include those from professional associations such as the Certified Hotel Manager (CHA) that is awarded by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI). There are also an array of other certificates offered that follow the career path to hotel manager such as Certified Restaurant Server which is a front line position, to Certified Hospitality Supervisor to Department Head certifications such as Certified Food and Beverage Executive. To achieve the certificate and be able to use the designation, two to three years of industry experience is required combined with being a general manager. There is also a written exam requirement consisting of 200 multiple choice questions.

Table 1 | Number of tourism and hospitality programs by province and territory as listed by CICIC & www.canadian-universities.net (2015)

Province/territory	Number of programs – includes colleges and universities
Alberta	31 programs (6 university programs, 20 colleges)
British Columbia	176 programs (58 university programs, 118 college programs)
Newfoundland and Labrador	7 programs (1 university program, 6 college programs)
Ontario	118 programs (106 colleges, 12 universities)
Quebec	15 programs (12 university programs, 3 colleges)
Saskatchewan	10 programs
Yukon	6 programs
PEI	2 programs (1 college, 1 university)
New Brunswick	3 programs (1 college (2 programs), 1 university)
Nova Scotia	4 programs (1 college (3 campuses, 2 programs), 2 universities)

Source: Canadian Information Center for International Credentials found at www.cicic.ca/postsecondary-programs.canada and www.canadian-universities.net.

The exam covers six key competency areas including financial management, sales and marketing, leadership management, human resources management, room management, and food and beverage management (American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute). In Canada, the credential available is the Certified Hotel General Manager (CHGM) which is offered by *emerit.ca*, a division of the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC). It requires a minimum of five years' experience in the hospitality industry with a minimum of 3 years as a hotel general manager (*emerit.ca*). A written exam is also required which is based on National Occupational Standards of Canada as described by Employment and Social Development Canada, a department of the Government of Canada.

There is research on credentials and their importance in professions. The Institute of Management Accountants found accountants with the Certified Management Accountant certification earn 38% more in salary than non-CMA's (Lawson, 2012). However, there is a paucity of research linking credentials to career progression in the hotel industry. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: Having a credential in the field results in greater likelihood of earning a higher salary.

6. Mobility

Each hotel varies in size, target markets, and operational sophistication. Managing a hotel property places one into a large variety of situations and includes making decisions to satisfy many stakeholders such as employees, owners, and customers. Moving frequently from property to property is encouraged as a means of gaining greater and deeper experiences and is regarded as a good training ground for handling complex situations. Harper, Brown and Wilson (2005) found hotel managers in Scotland had a mean of five career moves in 14 years. Ladkin and

Juwaheer (2000) found that mobility was one of the most important personal strategies used in career building by managers in Mauritius. Also, Ladkin (2002) again found that relocation to gain knowledge and experience was used by hotel managers in Australia. In the Greek hotel industry mobility, training, and willingness to be adaptable, were the top career strategies (Akrivos, Ladkin & Reklitis, 2007).

Also, there are challenges associated with internal promotions within the same hotel property and these contribute to property mobility as a career strategy. Promotion within the same department can create trust issues as a "peer" now becomes the "manager". Issues in the treatment of the new boss may occur and are identified as "promotion penalties" by Brodt & Dionisi (2011). Moving from the role of colleague to the role of supervisor can be quite challenging. Therefore, external mobility can make the transition into management easier. Those hotel companies that have a large number of properties enable external moves to occur efficiently within the same organization. Many hotel companies have large numbers of properties located in many countries. For examples, InterContinental Hotels Group has over 4,600 hotels in almost 100 countries (InterContinental Hotel Group). Hotel management training programs incorporate external moves as part of the learning experience. The pattern of frequent mobility appears to contribute to promotion.

Based on this literature the following hypothesis was developed:

H4: The greater the number of moves taken to become promoted, the greater the likelihood of earning higher salary.

The following table summarizes the findings from the studies in the literature review that support the hypotheses. It should be noted that research on the impact of credentials on wages in the hotel industry is very sparse and are mainly related to professional credentials such as those for accountants, real estate appraisers and financial advisors.

Table 2 | Summary of findings to support hypotheses

	Findings
Hypothesis 1: Gender has an influence on salary levels. Men are likely to earn higher salaries than women	
Burgess (2003)	In the financial management areas of hotels, those with higher status and pay were more likely to be men.
McKenzie-Gentry (2007)	Only 3% of hotel managers in Belize were women.
Thrane (2007)	Men's wages were 20% higher than those of women in tourism industry in Norway.
Santos & Varejao (2007)	55% of the wage gap in the Portugal tourism industry was due to gender discrimination.
Campos-Soria, Ortega-Aguaza & Ropero-Garcia (2009)	Segregation of women in the tourism industry in Spain lead to wage disparity and lower paying jobs.
Ricca (2012)	15% of male general managers earned a salary in the \$90,000 to \$134,000 USD range but only 15% of women managers fell into that range
Clever & Singh (2013)	"Good Old Boys" network resulted in an imbalance promoting more men than women to management.
Okumus, Sariisik & Naipaul (2010)	Lower paying jobs are dominated by women in the tourism industry in Turkey.
Hypothesis 2: Completion of formal education (university and/or community college) results in greater likelihood of earning a higher salary	
Ladkin (2002)	In Australia, vocational education led to more rapid career advancement.
Harper, Brown & Wilson (2005)	Formal qualifications allowed managers to "fast track" to general manager positions.
Hypothesis 3: Having a credential in the field results in greater likelihood of earning a higher salary	
Lawson (2012)	Certification for accountants resulted in a 38% higher salary.
Hypothesis 4: The greater number of moves taken to become promoted, the greater the likelihood of earning a higher salary	
Ladkin & Juwaheer (2000)	Mobility was one of the most important personal strategies used in career building by managers in Mauritius.
Ladkin (2002)	Relocation was used by hotel managers in Australia to gain knowledge and experience.
Akrivos, Ladkin & Reklitis (2007)	Mobility was one of the top three career strategies used by hotel managers in Greece.
Brodt & Dionisi (2011)	"Promotion penalties" that occur due to internal promotion may lead to more external moves to make the transition to management easier.

Source: Own construction.

7. Methodology

A theoretical model was developed from the literature review incorporating the four hypotheses as noted. The theoretical model illustrating each of the four hypotheses tested appears in figure 1.

An online survey was created to explore the role of gender, formal education, credentials and mobility in the career progression of Canadian hotel managers. A list of emails of hotel managers was obtained from provincial and territorial hotel association web sites across Canada. Some associations assisted by promoting the survey link in their newsletters or on their websites. For other provinces hotel managers' emails were obtained from the hotel website and

each manager was personally invited to participate in the study. The total number of hotel managers invited to respond was approximately 500. The research was approved by the university research ethics board for Mount Saint Vincent University. A balanced sample of 60 usable surveys, 30 for males and 30 for females, was obtained, resulting in a response rate of 12%. The sample was sufficient for an exploratory analysis of the theoretical model with a margin of error not exceeding plus/minus 13%, 19 out of 20 times.

A single step direct entry binary logistic regression was used to test the hypotheses. A salary level of \$90,000 was chosen as the breaking point for salary levels for each of the hypotheses tested. Sal-

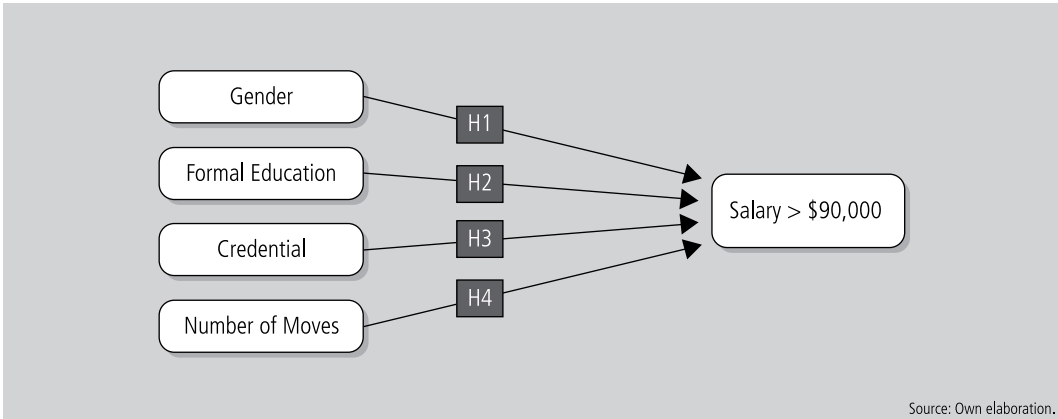


Figure 1 | Theoretical model of the four hypotheses and their correlation to salary levels over \$90,000.

ary levels over \$90,000 were considered high level salaries for the analyses. The response variable was salary exceeding \$90,000. Dummy-coded predictor variables were gender (male), formal education (community college and/or university diploma), and relevant credential in the field. Mobility, measured as number of moves, was also a predictor variable.

$$\text{Salary} > \$90,000 \text{ (ODDS)} = f(\text{Gender, Moves, FormalEd, Credential})$$

Bivariate correlations were run prior to conducting the analysis to identify potential problems with multicollinearity. The resulting analysis revealed no statistically significant correlations between the predictor variables. Hosmer and Lemeshow Chi-Square was used to ensure that the assumption of a linear model was not violated. MacFadden's R2 was calculated to determine how much better the theoretical model predicted higher salaries over the constant-only base model. Cross-classification of cases was used to determine how accurately the model predicted salary levels. As a multivariate technique, the accuracy of logistic regression can be limited by sample size. Fifty-five managers were included in the final analysis based on response to predictor and response variables. With four predictors and one dependent variable the ratio of cases to variables was

11:1, exceeding the 10:1 criterion recommended for multivariate research and eliminating concerns about a sparse sample constraint.

8. Results and Discussion

A test of the full regression model against an intercept-only model was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 12.159, df = 4, p = .016$). Formal education and earning a relevant credential were not statistically significant in predicting the higher salary level. Times moved ($p = .018$) and male gender ($.036$) were the only statistically significant predictor variables in the analysis. The constant was also statistically significant ($p = .018$). The odds ratio demonstrated that men were 3.8 times more likely than women to earn a salary greater than \$90,000. The 95% confidence interval around the predictor ranged from 1.09 to 13.58. This means that the odds of earning such a salary range from 1.09 to 13.58 times for male managers. The number of times managers moved to get a promotion was also a significant factor in obtaining a higher salary. The odds ratio indicated that having moved increased the likelihood of the higher salary by 1.3 times, ranging from 1.048 to 1.65 times.

The resulting regression equation was:

Salary > \$90,000 (ODDS) = f (number of moves, male gender) where Salary > \$90,000 (ODDS) = $-2.078 + 0.273$ (number of moves) + 1.347 (male gender).

These results indicate that the gender does not increase odds for women, resulting in the following equations for female managers when male gender is equal to 0:

Salary > \$90,000 (ODDS) = f (number of moves) where

Salary > \$90,000 (ODDS) = $-2.078 + 0.273$ (number of moves).

The probability of receiving a salary greater than \$90,000 with increased mobility (number of moves) was .57. The probability of receiving a salary greater than \$90,000 when the manager is male was .79. The regression analysis correctly classified 57.7% of those earning \$90,000 or less and 79.3% of those earning over \$90,000, for a hit rate of 69.1%. The Hosmer and Lemeshow χ^2 was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.943$, $df = 7$, $p = .963$) indicating that the data fit with a linear model. McFadden's R^2 indicated that the resulting regression equation explained 81% of the variance in salaries greater than \$90,000. The resulting regression analysis is shown in Table 2.

The first hypothesis stated that gender has an influence on salary levels, and in particular, that men are more likely to earn higher salaries. The regres-

sion confirmed this resulting in rejection of the Null Hypothesis. The analysis confirmed that male GMs are 3.85 times more likely than female GMs to earn a salary greater than \$90,000. This finding concurs with Thrane (2007) who found that in the tourism industry in Norway men's wages were 20% higher than those of women. Also, Santos and Varejao (2007) found that 55% of the wage gap in the tourism industry in Portugal was due to gender discrimination. One possible explanation for gender-based differences in wages is found in the Human Capital Theory, which postulates that men and women may have different levels of industry experience leading to a wage gap (Barros & Santos, 2009).

The second hypothesis stated that completion of formal education (university and/or community college) results in greater likelihood of earning a higher salary. The regression did not confirm this hypothesis and formal education was not statistically significant. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis could not be rejected. Completion of formal education in a post-secondary institution did not predict salaries greater than \$90,000 for general managers. This finding is contrary to that in the literature. Harper, Brown and Wilson (2005) found that formal qualifications allowed managers to climb more quickly up the career ladder. It is possible that formal education impacts the career path, but not necessarily salaries at the top of the management ladder.

There is a gap in the literature exploring the correlation between credentials and career performance in the hotel industry. The third hypothesis posited

Table 3 | Logistic Regression Predicting the Likelihood of Earning a Salary in Excess of \$90,000 based on Formal Education, Gender, Credentials, and Number of Moves for Promotion*

Predictor	B	Wald χ^2 (df=1)	Sig.	Exp (B) (ODDS)	95% Confidence Interval Exp (B) (ODDS)	
					Lower	Upper
Times moved	2.73	5.599	0.018 **	1.314	1.048	1.647
Gender (male)	1.347	4.391	0.036 **	3.847	1.090	13.581
Credential	-.304	.216	0.642	0.738	.205	2.656
Formal education	.816	1.287	0.257	2.261	.552	9.254
Constant	-2.078	5.598	0.018 **	0.125		

* Sample size = 55

** $p < .05$

Source: Own construction.

that having a credential in the field results in greater likelihood of earning a higher salary. However, this hypothesis was not proven by the analysis. Instead, the Null Hypothesis could not be rejected. Having a relevant credential did not predict receiving a salary greater than \$90,000. Further research is needed to explore this correlation.

The last hypothesis stated that the greater the number of moves taken to become promoted, the greater the likelihood of earning a higher salary. This assumption was borne out by the analysis. General managers who had moved more frequently to pursue new opportunities were 1.3 times more likely to have salaries greater than \$90,000. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis was rejected. This finding agrees with Akrivos, Ladkin & Reklites (2007), who found that in the Greek hotel industry, mobility, training, and adaptability were the top career strategies. Brodt and Dionisi (2011) noted that managers promoted within the same property were often faced with obstacles to their ability to manage subordinates, who used to be peers, a barrier they referred to as "promotion penalties". It is clear that mobility between properties is a good strategy for promotion because it allows managers to enter a new environment where they are less likely to face such barriers while also learning from new experiences. Perhaps willingness to move more frequently results in quicker career progression and higher salary levels that carry throughout a manager's career, resulting in a higher salary at the general manager level.

9. Conclusion and recommendations

The research provides a glimpse into the roles of gender, formal education, credentials, and mobility, in the hotel industry in Canada, and their impact on the salaries of general managers. This research helps to fill a gap in the literature regarding the Canadian hotel industry.

This research examined differences between men and women regarding the top salaries paid in the hotel industry. The analysis also examined how well formal education and completion of a credential in the field contributed to achieving such high salary levels. The results of the analysis were intriguing.

Gender continues to be a factor in pay level, confirming previous research in the field while also agreeing with anecdotal evidence that men do earn more than women and that they are more likely to earn top salaries.

The value of formal education and credentials were suspect in this analysis. Neither factor had a significant impact on achieving top dollar in the field. However, this does not mean that education and credentials have no value. It is possible that many managers had other work experience that was valuable. Perhaps they completed post-secondary studies or professional credentials after they entered managerial positions. It is also possible that other factors, including gender, cloud these measures as predictors of higher pay.

Number of moves (mobility) has long been considered a key factor in climbing the corporate ladder in hotels. Highly motivated staff members who wish to become managers are expected to be highly mobile geographically. Typically, employees move from smaller properties to larger ones, resulting in higher salary levels as they move from property to property. This research confirmed the importance of mobility as a means to gain promotion in the industry.

This research has some limitations which should be considered when applying the research results. First, the sample was of limited size. While the sample size was sufficient for the statistical method, consisting of 30 men and 30 women, it is not large enough to be empirically robust. Also, this research focused only on hotel general managers and salary levels above \$90,000. It did not consider the hypotheses related to all salary levels, department heads, supervisors, or other positions with the hotel environment. However, the results are interesting and they provide an intriguing exploratory analysis.

These results can be taken further in future studies involving larger samples and a broader empirical focus.

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