

# **Plans for the Transition From College to Work by Hospitality Majors**

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## Forward

During spring term, 1988, several students from the research methods course (HRI 473), required of all graduating Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management majors, approached me for assistance in completing a class assignment that required their use of survey research methods. Two of the students, Missy Gaiona and Terri Cardwell, had earlier participated in an Institute project on career expectations and wanted to employ a similar survey for the class. After several discussions and a literature search, a survey was designed that incorporated several themes from the Institute survey and several new topics.

In exchange for the Institute's assistance, Ms. Gaiona and Ms. Cardwell agreed to share the raw data from the surveys. After finishing the statistical analyses that could be completed in the time allowed for their class, the data were turned over to the Institute for further analyses. Keeping within the spirit of a student project, Ms. Angela Broadus, a senior in Psychology/Anthropology, was asked to complete the analyses and prepare a revision of the class paper to include any new information.

This paper represents the diligent work of several seniors who exceeded their usual class requirements, and provides additional insights into the early career choices of a specific major within the University. General follow-up information, obtained by the Career Development and Placement Services office, does not reveal detailed information on job selection and career expectations. While the results of this study cannot necessarily be generalized to a larger population, the findings augment our understanding of issues pertinent to HRIM majors. Of particular interest in this report are the differences found between men and women in salary and career expectations and the mix of characteristics that influence the selection of one job over another.

Missy Gaiona, Terry Cardwell and Angela Broadus are commended for their hard work in pursuing their quest for knowledge. I believe this experience will serve to enhance their careers. I hope that other students can learn from their example and find the enthusiasm and commitment to undertake their own research projects. The Institute would certainly entertain proposals to work with students from any major on career related topics.

Phil Gardner, Ph.D.  
Research Administrator



## Introduction

Those first tentative steps that mark the transition from college to entry level work experience are crucial to both the student and the employer. If initial work expectations and actual job experiences do not match, employers will face problems of increased employee turnover and job dissatisfaction. Available literature has shown that early career expectations were usually unmet, leading to early job dissatisfaction (Benson and Chariss, 1976; Raelin, 1980; Schreier, 1984; and Taylor, 1987). Taylor (1987) found that a student's initial job selection often failed to meet their expectations, leading to a 50% or higher turnover rate within the first three years of employment. Schreier (1984) also reported that realized job satisfaction (actual on the job experiences) was 69% lower than the level of satisfaction expected at the time of graduation.

These findings portend a nightmare for personnel managers in competitive industries. An organization's ability to attract quality employees may hinge on its ability to minimize the discrepancy between a new employee's pre-employment expectations and actual job experiences. McCleary and Weaver (1988) and Knutson (1987) have identified the hospitality industry as a sector of the economy where attracting and retaining quality employees is a growing problem. These researchers call for a better understanding of student expectations on the part of employers.

Several studies have focused on what students look for in a job and the factors critical to job selection (Hopkins, 1986; Ondrack, 1987; Schreir, 1987; and Walz, Gardner and Chao, 1989). Schreir (1987) found that the most important factor in job choice was opportunity for advancement. Using an hierarchical job attributes approach, Hopkins in his survey of college seniors learned that self-actualization and security needs (interest and self-satisfaction, opportunity to use skills, opportunity for personal development and an adequate salary) were given highest importance.

Following up with his sample after 18 months, Hopkins found relative stability in the ranking of job attributes though there was a slight increase in the preference for compensation and benefits. When graduates were asked whether their jobs provided satisfying job attributes, the response showed a decline in the ratings for most provided attributes which corresponds to Maslow's theory that contends satisfied needs decline in importance (Maslow, 1970). Hopkins concluded that people intentionally seek out employment opportunities that best match the attributes they prefer.

McCleary's and Weaver's (1988) study of hospitality majors focused on salary and fringe benefit expectations. Knutson (1987) built upon McCleary's and Weaver's work by examining a more inclusive list of sixteen job attributes. Five attributes appeared consistently at the top of the list: interesting work, growth and promotion, good working conditions, increasing responsibility, and good training programs. All these attributes would fall into Hopkins' self-actualization group. In a follow-up study several years later, Knutson (1989) found the rating pattern to be essentially unchanged, though growth and promotion replaced interesting work as the most important job attribute.

The absence of security factors such as salary and benefits was surprising in light of other transition studies that found salary to be an important factor in job selection. Walz, Gardner and Chao (1989) for example, observed the waxing and waning of the importance of salary in the job selection process until the end when salary established itself as a linchpin to the decision. Knutson in her study of hospitality alumni observed that respondents were satisfied with their salary. Why salary did not appear stronger in her early

studies may be explained through Hopkins' results that suggest survival needs (e.g. salary) come into play during the actual job decision.

This study has been designed to capture job decision strategies at the time when hospitality students would be making their job decision. The study closely parallels the work of Knutson for comparison purposes. This study also was initiated to fulfill requirements for a required course (HRI 473) in Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Management at Michigan State University.

The specific objectives of this study were to examine: (1) the salary expectations of graduating seniors; (2) the factors that contributed to the selection of job over another; and (3) the lifestyle conflicts expected in the graduates' early career.

## **Methods**

### **Sample**

To obtain a valid sample of hospitality seniors, all members of the MSU spring and summer graduating classes of 1988 were surveyed. The survey was administered in a single session, as all participants attended the same required class in spring term 1988.

### **Survey**

The survey instrument was adapted from a questionnaire developed by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute for use in its career expectations study. In the first section, participants were questioned about their current career plans covering the following areas: (1) their post-graduation employment plans; (2) their job offers; (3) their pay expectations during their first year on the job; and (4) their planned length of tenure with their first employer.

In the second section, participants were asked to rate the importance of a list of characteristics that potential employees consider when choosing a job. Characteristics were rated on a Likert scale where a rating of "1" designated the item was "not at all important" and a rating of "5" meant the item was "very important" to the respondent. The third section explored job search strategies. Such questions as: "When did you begin your job search?" and "What HRI related work experiences have you had since you were sixteen?" were posed. The last section covered lifestyle-work conflicts and the social characteristics of the respondents, including gender and grade point average.

### **Response**

Seventy (70) hospitality seniors were surveyed and all surveys were returned. A few surveys contained occasional missing data but there appeared to be no biases in the response pattern. All respondents were included in the analysis.

## **Results**

Forty-seven percent (47%) of the respondents were male and 51% were female with one missing response to the gender query. Approximately 71% of the students planned to graduate in June, 1988, and the other 29% in August of the same year. Only about 7% planned to go on to graduate school.



## Plans for After Graduation

Of the 70 students surveyed, 50 had received job offers by May. The average number of offers was approximately 2.4. Forty-three (86%) of those with job offers reported they had already accepted an offer. The respondents generally started their job searches approximately three and a half months prior to the survey which was conducted in early May. Women tended to start their search before men (five months versus three months); but this difference was not significant.

**Job Offers.** It was hypothesized that the length of the job search, gender, and grade point average would influence whether or not a senior had a job offer. Because all hospitality majors are required to have obtained 800 hours of internship or work experience during their program, related work experience was not expected to influence the job offer. The statistical T-test procedure was used to measure the significance of the difference between the means of groups in each set of independent variables. The dependent variable was defined as a dichotomous variable: either the respondent had received a job offer (1) or had not received a job offer (0).

Those respondents with job offers at the time of the survey had started their job search an average of 5 to 6 months earlier, between November and December, while those without job offers had only initiated their job search in March (1.5 months earlier). The starting time of the job search made a significant difference ( $p < .002$ ) in whether a student had a job offer.

Gender did not appear to be a significant factor in whether or not a job offer had been extended. A slightly higher proportion of women (75%), however, had job offers at the time of the survey than men (67%).

Grade point average also appeared to be an important factor. The average grade point of those with job offers was approximately 3.1 while the average grade point of those without job offers was approximately 2.8. Those respondents with higher grade point averages were more likely to have jobs before those with lower grade point averages ( $p < .05$ ). When comparing job offers to different types of work experiences, those students who reported participating in internships were more likely to have multiple job offers than students who were involved in other types of work related experiences.

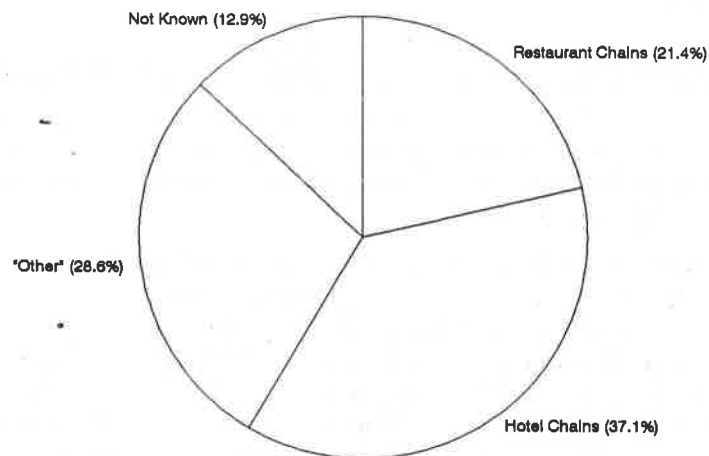
A profile of a student likely to have a job offer before graduation would be an individual who began the search in November or December of the senior year, had a grade point average above 3.0; and participated in an internship program.

**Tenure in first position.** Hospitality graduates expected to work for their first employer approximately three to four years. This tenure is longer than most graduates report they will work for their first employer (Walz, Gardner, Chao, 1988). Length of tenure reported here was slightly shorter than Knutson (1989) found, though the general conclusion of high turnover within five years is consistent. A longer period of initial tenure may be necessary for hospitality graduates to gain experience in all phases of the industry. Men expected to work longer for their first employer than did women ( $p < .10$ ).

## Career Paths

Hospitality seniors indicated they were likely to be headed in one of three directions: restaurant chains, hotel chains, and an "other" category. The "other" category included such occupations as the family business, club management, institutional management, and independent hotels or restaurants. The distribution of the students according to these paths is illustrated in the accompanying chart. This pattern was similar to that found by McCleary and Weaver (1988) and Knutson (1987).

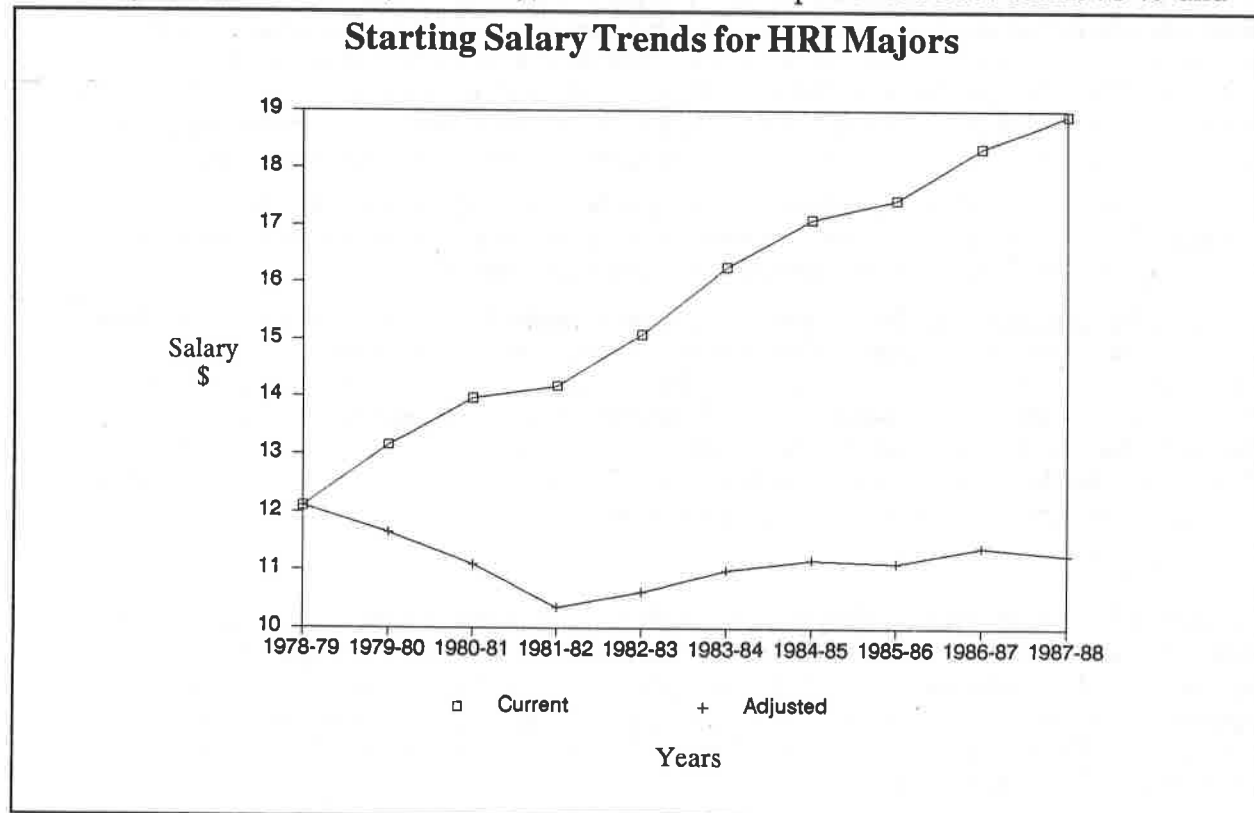
## Distribution of Graduates by Career Path



By gender, the distribution of students across career paths revealed that men were fairly evenly distributed. Women, on the other hand, were more likely to pursue a position in the hotel area, followed by the "other" group. Women were least likely to accept jobs in restaurant and food services organizations.

### Salary Expectations

**Background.** Starting salaries, obtained from Career Development and Placement Services for the period of 1978-79 to 1987-88, have shown a steady increase, climbing from an average of \$12,108 (current) in 1978-79 to an average of \$18,912 (current) in 1987-88. When adjusted for inflation, however, annual increases experienced between 1978-79 and





1981-82 failed to keep pace with inflation. Adjusted salaries reached their lowest point in 1981-82 with an average of \$10,350. Since that time salaries have generally been increasing at a pace slightly ahead of inflation. The graph on the preceding page displays the recent trend in starting salaries in both current and adjusted dollars.

Starting salaries were further examined for differences between men and women and across grade point categories. The table below provides starting salary data, separated according to gender. One interesting pattern was found in the response pattern (n). Ten

Starting Salary According to Gender									
YEAR	SEX				SEX				Difference in Real Salary
	Female		Male		Female		Male		
	Current Salary		Current Salary		Real Salary		Real Salary		
	N	Average	N	Average	N	Average	N	Average	
1978-79	23	\$11,707	73	\$12,234	23	\$11,707	73	\$12,234	\$527
1979-80	39	\$12,539	88	\$13,441	39	\$11,097	88	\$11,895	\$798
1980-81	29	\$13,359	54	\$14,296	29	\$10,603	54	\$11,346	\$743
1981-82	33	\$13,598	45	\$14,606	33	\$9,925	45	\$10,662	\$737
1982-83	31	\$14,707	58	\$15,277	31	\$10,357	58	\$10,759	\$402
1983-84	42	\$16,051	50	\$16,455	42	\$10,845	50	\$11,118	\$273
1984-85	51	\$17,131	48	\$17,054	51	\$11,197	48	\$11,147	(\$50)
1985-86	51	\$16,971	46	\$17,970	51	\$10,809	46	\$11,446	\$637
1986-87	48	\$18,098	43	\$18,623	48	\$11,241	43	\$11,567	\$326
1987-88	31	\$19,024	25	\$18,773	31	\$11,324	25	\$11,174	(\$150)

years ago the number of men responding was nearly three times the number of women; by 1983-84, the numbers were nearly equal; and since 1984-85, more women have responded. This demographic pattern tends to indicate (1) that more women have entered the hotel, restaurant and institutional management field, and (2) that women generally have a higher response to surveys than men.

Women generally have not fared as well in terms of starting salaries. A comparison of current starting salaries found that women have been from \$500 to \$1,000 lower, on average, annually than men, except for two years, 1984-85 and 1987-88. If the overall average was compared, women would appear to have fared better; yet this anomaly was a result of the distribution of responses. More women reported higher salaries in recent years while more men reported lower salaries in earlier years.

When salaries were adjusted for inflation, the distribution anomaly disappeared. Men hold an adjusted salary advantage of approximately \$500. The only year that women received noticeably higher salaries than men was the most recent, 1987-88, with an adjusted average \$150 higher than men.

A rather consistent pattern emerged when comparing salaries across four grade point average groups (< 2.5, 2.51-3.0, 3.01-3.5, > 3.51). Except for two years, the highest grade point group reported the highest average starting salaries. Only in 1979-80 and 1981-82 did lower grade point average groups receive higher salaries. Below 3.5, salary averages did not

appear to vary noticeably nor produce any consistent patterns. This table provides a breakdown of starting salary averages by year of graduation.

### Starting Salary According to Grade Point Average

YEAR	GPA				GPA			
	<2.5		2.5-3.0		3.0-3.5		>3.5	
	Current Salary		Current Salary		Current Salary		Current Salary	
	N	Average	N	Average	N	Average	N	Average
1978-79	23	\$11,959	48	\$12,008	21	\$12,314	4	\$13,075
1979-80	44	\$13,271	54	\$13,221	21	\$13,231	8	\$12,019
1980-81	16	\$13,568	35	\$13,799	28	\$14,158	4	\$15,725
1981-82	15	\$15,111	35	\$13,587	20	\$14,643	8	\$13,865
1982-83	21	\$14,827	44	\$14,979	20	\$14,979	4	\$18,000
1983-84	18	\$16,188	45	\$16,198	26	\$16,177	3	\$18,667
1984-85	9	\$16,717	53	\$16,654	32	\$17,616	5	\$19,100
1985-86	13	\$16,485	47	\$17,469	34	\$17,676	3	\$18,600
1986-87	10	\$17,630	51	\$18,661	24	\$17,813	6	\$19,000
1987-88	4	\$18,925	26	\$19,067	21	\$18,648	5	\$19,200

YEAR	GPA				GPA			
	<2.5		2.5-3.0		3.0-3.5		>3.5	
	Adjusted Salary		Adjusted Salary		Adjusted Salary		Adjusted Salary	
	N	Average	N	Average	N	Average	N	Average
1978-79	23	\$11,959	48	\$12,008	21	\$12,314	4	\$13,075
1979-80	44	\$11,744	54	\$11,700	21	\$11,709	8	\$10,636
1980-81	16	\$10,768	35	\$10,952	28	\$11,236	4	\$12,480
1981-82	15	\$11,030	35	\$9,918	20	\$10,688	8	\$10,120
1982-83	21	\$10,441	44	\$10,548	20	\$10,549	4	\$12,676
1983-84	18	\$10,938	45	\$10,945	26	\$10,930	3	\$12,613
1984-85	9	\$10,926	53	\$10,885	32	\$11,513	5	\$12,484
1985-86	13	\$10,500	47	\$11,126	34	\$11,259	3	\$11,847
1986-87	10	\$10,950	51	\$11,591	24	\$11,064	6	\$11,801
1987-88	4	\$11,265	26	\$11,350	21	\$11,100	5	\$11,429

Current Class. How does the salary information obtained for this project sample compare to the general trends observed over the last ten years? Direct comparisons may not be appropriate, as not everyone who participated in this study responded to the Career

Development and Placement Services Follow-up Report.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the salary information obtained from this study provides additional insight into what factors may influence the level of starting salary being received by these graduates.

Information on each respondent's expected earnings for the first year in the hospitality industry was obtained in one of three ways. Respondents who had already accepted a job offer were asked to simply report the actual amount of their negotiated salary. Those respondents who had pending offers but had not yet accepted a job were asked to supply the amount of the offer they were most likely to receive. Finally, those respondents without pending offers were asked to estimate the salary they expect to receive in their first year of full-time employment after graduation.

### Average Starting Salaries by Groups

Actual Mean Salary	Pending Mean Salary	Estimated Mean Salary
\$20888.10	\$20500.00	\$21447.37
(n = 41)	(n = 5)	(n = 19)

For those who still did not have an offer, the apparent tendency was to overestimate what they expected to earn. Further salary comparisons were made by grade point average, gender and future job categories. Because of the small number of observations in some categories, comparisons may be problematic.

Students with higher grade point averages (above 3.0) received higher salaries than all the other groups. When estimating, however, high grade point average students tended to underestimate their first year's salary potential while those with lower grade point averages tended to overestimate their future earnings. The difference in estimated and actual salaries ranged from \$1,000 to \$1,700 for those overestimating and from \$1,300 to \$3,000 for those who underestimated.

<u>Grade Point Average</u>	<u>Actual Mean Salary</u>	<u>Pending Mean Salary</u>	<u>Estimated Mean Salary</u>
3.5-4.0	\$22512.50 (n = 4)		\$19000.00 (n = 1)
3.1-3.4	\$20974.00 (n = 18)	\$19500.00 (n = 2)	\$19666.67 (n = 3)
2.6-3.0	\$20522.00 (n = 15)	\$21166.67 (n = 0)	\$22227.27 (n = 11)
2.0-2.5	\$20250.00 (n = 4)		\$21250.00 (n = 4)

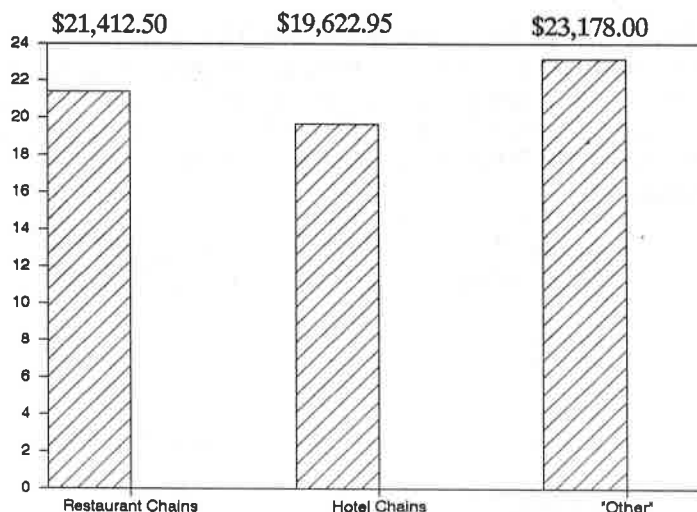
<sup>1</sup>Only spring 88 graduates would have been surveyed for the 1987-88 follow-up study. The August, 1988 graduates would have been included in the 1988-89 follow-up study. The 1987-88 salary information represents graduates of summer, fall and winter, as well as spring, terms. With only a small number of spring graduates in the follow-up study, the two groups may not be directly comparable.

In the cases where job offers were accepted, men received slightly higher salaries than women, though the difference was not statistically significant. The differences for the pending and estimated groups were much larger. While women's estimated salaries was comparable to the salary actually being received by women, men who were estimating their salary were estimated salaries considerably higher than the actual salary average being received by men.

<u>Gender</u>	<u>Actual Mean Salary</u>	<u>Pending Mean Salary</u>	<u>Estimated Mean Salary</u>
Male	\$21,038.53 (n = 19)	\$23,000.00 (n = 2)	\$22,550.00 (n = 10)
Female	\$20,758.18 (n = 22)	\$18,833.33 (n = 3)	\$20,222.22 (n = 9)

According to the accompanying chart, starting salaries differ across the three career tracks. Only actual salary figures were used in this analysis. Starting salaries were highest in the "other" category and lowest for hotel chains. A breakdown of the "other" category found one extremely high salary for club management. If this figure is not used in the calculation, the "other" starting salary average would be \$22,087, or comparable to restaurant chains.

**Starting Salary by Career Path**



To complete the salary analysis, the starting salaries were compared when gender and career path were both taken into consideration. Men were receiving offers from both restaurant and hotel chains that were approximately \$1,700 higher than women. Women received offers of approximately \$660 more than men in the "other" category.

### **What Influenced the Selection of a Job?**

What factors do students consider when selecting a job? In her study, Knutson (1987) focused on sixteen specific job and company attributes that might influence the decision. Other research has found that at the time of actually selecting one job over another, other factors, such as partner's job prospects, family, and location can play an important role in the decision (e.g. Walz, Gardner and Chao, 1989 and Wallston, Foster and Berger, 1978).

To account for the myriad of factors that could influence a decision, a list of forty-three (43) items was compiled from available research and factors that arose in our own job selection process. These 43 items were grouped into three general categories: personal considerations, professional considerations, and benefits. Each respondent was asked to rate each factor on a scale where "1" was designated "not very important" and "5" was designated "very important."

Factor analysis was used to reduce the number of variables to a smaller group of constructs or latent variables within each category. The factor analyses produced twelve (12) latent factors. The following table presents the overall means for each factor. The highest rated factors were Company Stability, which included variables dealing with company image, company stability, and training programs; Job Development, which included learning new skills, exercising leadership, and job duties; and Growth that included company growth, advancement opportunities, and contact with colleagues and supervisors. The least important factor was Extended Leave, which included military leave, maternity leave and child care availability.

### Factors that Influenced the Selection of a Job

Variables	Overall Mean	Males' Mean	Females' Mean	Restaurant Mean	Hotel Mean	Other Mean
Personal Factors	3.343	3.05	3.63 *	3.36	3.46	3.19
Work Schedule	3.441	3.33	3.54	3.17	3.32	3.69
Family	3.709	3.56	3.84 *	3.33	3.73	3.79
Salary						
Professional Factors						
Company Stability	4.201	4.16	4.23	4.22	4.46	3.98
Job Development	4.148	4.22 *	4.08	3.71	4.28	4.27
Future Growth (Company and Industrial)	4.098	4.12	4.07	3.97	4.32	4.03
Company Policies	3.333	3.02	3.56 *	3.31	3.31	3.43
Work Environment	3.986	3.91	4.06	3.98	4.09	4.02
Benefits						
Extra Benefits	3.628	3.43	3.82 *	3.60	3.60	3.53
Basic Benefits	3.784	3.67	3.90	3.88	3.74	3.72
Extended Leave	2.539	2.31	2.73	2.69	2.32	2.71
Other Perks	3.470	3.50	3.46	3.68	3.44	3.26

\*Significant at the .05 level.

#### VARIABLES THAT LOADED ON LATENT FACTORS:

Work Schedule: Two Consecutive Days Off, Five Day Work Weeks, Personal Leave

Family: Relationships, Family Ties, Location

Salary: Salary Level, Leisure Activities

Company Stability: Company Image, Training Program, Company Stability

Job Development: Learn New Skills, Exercise Leadership, Job Duties

Future Growth: Company Growth, Advancement Opportunities, Contact With Superiors, Contact With Colleagues

Company Policies: Mission Statement, Equal Opportunity, Job Sharing

Work Environment: Work Climate, Company Size, Relocation Policies

Extra Benefits: Sick Leave, Worker's Compensation, Employee Discount, Stock Purchase Plan, Compensation Time

Basic Benefits: Vacation, Health and Dental Insurance, Life Insurance, Short/Long Term Disability, Pension Plan

Extended Leave: Military Leave, Maternity Leave, Child Care Availability

Other Perks: Educational Reimbursement, Recreational Facilities, Club and Sport Leagues



The differences in factor ratings were examined by gender and career paths. No significant differences were found among ratings among career paths. Those entering restaurant chains generally rated most of the factors lower than the other groups placing more emphasis on the benefit factors. Those seeking employment with organizations in the "other" category tended to emphasize Family factors as well as Salary and Job Development. For those opting to go with motel/hotel employers, the reasons were primarily focused on professional factors: Company Stability, Job Development, Future Growth, and Work Environment.

Several significant differences were found between men and women. Women rated Work Schedule, Salary, Company Policies, and Extra Benefits significantly higher than men. For only one factor, Job Development, did men express a significantly higher rating than women. Overall, women rated Company Stability highest while men emphasized Job Development. Women rated the need for extended absences the lowest, suggesting that at this stage in their career, they have not addressed potential family responsibilities. These ratings were very similar to those found on similar characteristics by Knutson (1987).

With this type of rating, a number of factors can be rated as important. In actuality, the decision may hinge on only a few key job characteristics or factors. To determine which factors were critical to the decision, respondents were asked to review the list of forty-three characteristics and then rank their first, second, and third most important factor influencing their selection of a position. The top three factors were weighted (first = 5x; second = 3x; and third = 1x) and then, these values were added together to obtain the following list of top ten factors most likely to influence a job-selection decision. The factors, listed in order from highest importance score to lowest score were:

<u>Top Ten Factors Overall</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1. Location	106
2. Advancement Opportunities	65
3. Training Program	62
4. Salary	57
5. Family Ties	46
5. Company Image	32
7. Relationships	28
8. Health and Dental Insurance	25
9. Company Growth	18
10. Vacation/Work Climate	16

Clearly, location had a strong role to play in the decision to accept a job, appearing on nearly everyone's list. Closely grouped, the next three factors were advancement opportunities, training program, and salary. Except for location, this ranking was similar to Knutson's ranking (1987). Knutson had found location to be more neutral in the early stages of employment considerations. Graduating students tend to enter the job search process with location a neutral item; in fact, they are often encouraged to remain flexible on location to enhance their employment opportunities. Certainly working in Orlando is more appealing than Cleveland -- this is one way location can enter the picture. However, location often sneaks up when a student realizes that there may well be a separation from family and a partner -- location is no longer neutral.

The emergence of family and relationships as considerations in the decision would suggest that the final decision was not based entirely on job related attributes. Salary remained a consistent factor in the decision though, as in Knutson's study, salary was not ranked at the top.



When controlling for gender, it was discovered that the characteristics important to men were different than those factors women chose to emphasize. Women were concerned about location, family, and training before advancement opportunities. Men placed more emphasis on advancement and salary before location, training, and health benefits. Salary did not even appear on the list of top five factors for women. Women may be trading salary for other job characteristics.

<u>Males (n = 33)</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1. Advancement Opportunities	38
2. Salary	37
3. Location	32
4. Training Program	27
5. Health and Dental Insurance	19

<u>Females (n = 36)</u>	<u>Weighted Score</u>
1. Location	45
2. Training Program	35
3. Family Ties	29
4. Company Image	25
5. Advancement Opportunities	22

The top five factors in importance also differed according to the career paths the student selected. Positions with restaurants and hotel chains were particularly appealing because of their training programs. Hotel positions tended to attract those more interested in professional development, while in the restaurant and "other" groups, family characteristics played a more important role.

<u>Restaurant Chain (n = 15)</u>	<u>Point Totals</u>
1. Training Program	21
2. Location	17
3. Family Ties	14
4. Relationships/Salary	13/13

<u>Hotel Chain (n = 26)</u>	<u>Point Totals</u>
1. Training Program	45
2. Advancement Opportunities	44
3. Company Image	23
4. Location	20
5. Company Growth/Maternity Leave	11

<u>"Other" Employment (n = 20)</u>	<u>Point Totals</u>
1. Location	22
2. Family Ties	18
3. Salary	16
4. Health and Dental Insurance	11
5. Advancement Opportunities/Vacation	9/9

When the interaction affects for gender and career path were examined, several observations were worth noting. Women who entered the hotel path weighted position characteristics very similarly to men, placing both advancement opportunities and training

programs at the top of their list. Women generally differed from men in their emphasis on location in family, and personal relationships.

### Work-Life Conflicts

Respondents in the final survey exercise considered their job in a day-to-day context. The respondents were asked whether their work would conflict with other aspects of their lives. A score of three (3) indicated that their job was of equal importance to each rated facet of their lives. A score below "3" would suggest that their job was more important while a score above "3" would indicate that their job was not as important as that aspect of their lives.

Overall, graduating students perceived that their lives were in balance: that work was of equal importance to most facets of their lives. The exceptions were religion and community service. These facets were less important than their job while family, happiness, and health were more important than their jobs.

When comparing men and women, two significant differences were found. Women placed ethics as more important than their jobs while men were more likely to consider them equal. Women also valued their free time. Comparisons by career path also found few differences. The only significant difference was found for restaurant respondents who rated ethical standards lower than the other two groups. The low community service ratings for hotel and restaurant groups were surprising, considering these institutions are often involved in community service.

#### Means for Importance of Job to Other Life Facets

	Overall	Males	Female	Other	Restaurant	Hotel
Religion	2.50	2.33	2.67	2.40	2.33	2.58
Family	4.01	4.00	4.06	4.05	3.93	3.96
Ethical Standards	3.70	3.36 *	4.00	3.75	3.27 *	3.96
Home Participation	3.28	3.33	3.24	3.28	3.33	3.12
Social Activities	3.14	3.06	3.22	3.25	3.20	2.96
Community Service	2.87	2.91	2.86	3.20	2.60	2.73
Free Time	3.48	3.41 **	3.58	3.42	3.13	3.65
Happiness	4.15	4.22	4.09	4.05	4.07	4.16
Vacation	3.49	3.58	3.43	3.67	3.40	3.32
Health	4.32	4.38	4.28	4.32	4.40	4.12

\*  $p < .02$

\*\*  $p < .10$

## Conclusion

This study has drawn an interesting picture of a group of students who are in transition from college to permanent employment. These findings were consistent with results obtained by McCleary and Weaver and Knutson. This report does extend our understanding of hospitality majors, especially women, by providing additional details on what occurs during the time when job offers are decided. The results cast some light upon the difference between men and women in starting salaries and identified location and personal factors in the decision to accept one job over another.

The salary differences between men and women should come as no surprise though the magnitude of the differences between men and women was surprising. Men entering into hotel and restaurant chains received substantially higher salaries than women going into the same positions. The main reason that the overall difference did not appear too large was because women received higher salaries from "other" employers.

Some observers may attribute the salary difference to labor market discrimination. Certainly discrimination plays a part. The salaries of women may be discounted for expected future job disruptions and less attachment to the labor force. Some evidence of this emerged in women's responses to their expected job tenure; women indicated they expected to work fewer years for their first employer than men. Most of the women interviewed in this study, however, displayed rather strong attachments to the labor force, and were willing to make personal sacrifices to get their careers successfully off the ground.

Rather than discounting women's salaries, men may be receiving higher offers primarily based on the characteristics displayed in the interview. Knutson points to the generational differences between recruiters, who may hold traditional values, and students. The reasons men selected a job were very traditional; e.g., promotion opportunities, job duties and salary. Emphasis may be placed on these factors in interviews and they may have played well against the employer's expectations. The result may be higher salaries.

Women bring a broader set of concerns into the job selection process. To obtain a job that incorporates family, location and personal relationships, a woman may trade away some salary. Another likely explanation may be that women have not learned to leverage these characteristics in their salary negotiations.

For career advisors these results provide some insights that can be used in counseling students. Different occupational paths within the field of hotel, restaurant, and institutional management attract different personalities. The primary reason for joining a hotel or restaurant chain was the training program. These students wanted to obtain broad training in every aspect of the business and a large chain could provide an appropriate environment. Other students desired specific positions or had a preference for a particular location that influenced their options. Understanding factors motivating a student's decision would ensure a better match between an employer and a student rather than applying broad generalizations.

Recruiters from hospitality organizations can also learn from these findings. Together with Knutson's findings, the gender and career path differences in job characteristics are clear. These distinctions when applied to recruiting programs can lead to identifying appropriate students and assist in retaining them once they are with the organization. Recruiters need to be aware that location is an important job attribute, though it may enter the decision late. Recruiters should not be tardy in bringing location to the forefront of the discussion or be prepared to deal with last minute rejections of offers. Employers are responsible for structuring a fair salary scale for all employees, irrespective of gender.

Employers need to examine their salary offers to see if they may be inadvertently discriminating against women.

The final piece of advice to students can be stated simply: start the job search early. The longer one takes to prepare and become actively involved in a job search, the better one's opportunities at graduation. Start the search in the fall, even if graduation is not until spring or summer. By interviewing from October through February, a student has better opportunities for contacting more employers. Job hunting is hard work and takes time.

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The Collegiate Employment Research Institute was established by Michigan's Legislature in 1984. The Institute is charged with the task of examining issues on career development and employment for college graduates. Various projects are underway, including the study covered in this report, to provide information to educators and counselors for program development. If you have any questions on this study or any Institute project, please contact the Institute directly.

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