

**MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE OPERATING
COMMITTEE IN INTERNATIONAL BRAND HOTELS
IN MAINLAND CHINA:
THEIR PROFILES AND ASPIRATIONS**

By

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this thesis and the work reported herein was composed by and originated entirely from me. Information derived from the published and unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and references are given in the list of sources.

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Abstract

This study aims to identify hotel executive operating committee (EOC) members' profiles that include both demographic characteristics and career paths in international brand hotels in Mainland China; and identify the relationship between profiles of hotel EOC members and their aspirations for hotel general manager (GM) position. After dealing with the missing data and outliers, 165 valid questionnaires are retained.

This study adopts career analysis technique to analyze hotel EOC members' profiles. The results identify that the hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China are middle-aged men with bachelor's degrees and an annual income lower than RMB 250,000. They have worked in the hotel industry for 14.5 years, and they took 11.5 years to become hotel EOC members. They have worked for 4.3 hotels on average; and most of them have never worked outside the hotel industry over the course of their careers.

The self-organizing-map (SOM) was adopted to cluster hotel EOC members based on their profiles. Three segments of hotel EOC members were produced via SOM: Rookie, Supportive Veteran and Generative Veteran. Rookie is younger female hotel EOC members with less hotel experience, higher level of education, and lower personal annual income. Supportive Veteran is older male hotel EOC members in supportive departments in hotels, such as Human Resources and Finance & Accounting, with more hotel experience, with a higher level

of education, and higher personal annual income. Generative Veteran is older male hotel EOC members in the revenue-generating departments, such as F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing, with more hotel experience with a lower level of education, and higher personal annual income.

An aspiration model was developed from the aspiration theory and was tested in each hotel EOC member segments. For Rookie and Supportive Veteran, their enacted aspiration depends on their desire aspiration; and their desire aspiration depends on their perceived self-GM congruence. For Generative Veteran, their enacted aspiration depends on their perceived advancement prospect.

Generative Veteran has the highest perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, desired aspiration, and enacted aspiration among hotel EOC members. Supportive Veteran has the lowest perceived advancement prospect among hotel EOC members. Rookie has the lowest perceived self-GM congruence, desired aspiration, and enacted aspiration among hotel EOC members. Statistically, Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived advancement prospect, perceived self-GM congruence, and enacted aspiration than the Rookie group; Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived advancement prospect and enacted aspiration than Supportive Veteran.

The practical contributions of this study benefit both hotel employees and hotel companies in Mainland China. For hotel employees, the findings in the career paths of hotel EOC members may benefit their individual career management. The hotel EOC members have the top positions of each functional department in the hotel so their career paths can serve as a map and timeline of career progression in each department. Based on this map and timeline, junior hotel employees may have a better idea on how to plan and manage their careers to reach the top. For hotel companies, the findings of this could enable hotel companies to better design organizational career management strategies for different hotel EOC members.

For theoretical contribution, the findings of this study indicate that although individuals have similar desires, it does not necessarily mean that they can transform their desire into action. This result indicates the importance and necessity of the dual-faced construct of aspiration, which should contain both desire and action. This research also proves the general applicability of the SOM, which can be valuable in the worldwide hospitality industry.

This study is unique in that it provides a comprehensive view of the profiles and aspirations of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China.

Keywords: Hotel EOC Member, International Brand Hotel, Mainland China, Aspiration, Career Analysis, Self-Organizing-Maps (SOM).

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research background of the study. The first section provides an overview of the international brand hotels in Mainland China, the profiles of hotel managers, and the aspirations of hotel managers. The subsequent sections provide the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and definition of terms.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 International brand hotels in Mainland China

Since the implementation of the open door policy in 1978 in Mainland China, hotel industry has experienced rapid development and is one of the fastest growing economic sectors (H. Q. Zhng, Pine, & Lam, 2005). Many international hotel brands also seize this opportunity and start hotel business in Mainland China. The first international hotel brand to operate in Mainland China was Sheraton in 1985. In subsequent years, many world-famous international brands, such as Marriott-USA, Accor-France, Hyatt-USA, Shangri-la-Hong Kong, and some mega-chains such as Starwood-USA and InterContinental Hotels-UK launched their businesses in Mainland China to capitalize on the growth.

International brand hotels provide international standard service. They dominate the high-end hotel sector in the major cities of Mainland China such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. As of 2007, 60% of five-star hotels in Mainland China are operated by international companies (Okoroafo, 2009).

1.1.2 Analyzing the profile of a hotel manager

Hotel managers are vital for a successful hotel operation; however, competent hotel managers remain in short supply in many managerial areas (Yu, 2005). Hotel managers in a hotel usually include the hotel general manager (GM) and the managers in functional departments, which are usually divided into Food & Beverage (F&B), Rooms, Sales & Marketing, Human Resources, Finance & Accounting, and Engineering. The hotel GM and heads of each functional department would form the executive operating committee (EOC) for inter-functional department communication and coordination. The members of EOC may vary a little bit from hotel to hotel, however, the members of EOC are usually the top managerial positions in each department of every hotel (Rutherford & O'Fallon, 2006). EOC meetings also serve as a training vehicle of the hotel general management (Rutherford & O'Fallon, 2006). Hotel EOC members (except the hotel GM) are potential candidates for future hotel GMs.

A hotel manager's profile has many components that usually include demographic characteristics and career paths. Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) define career path as "a planned pattern of work from entry into the work force to retirement or as involvement in a particular job, organization, occupation, or profession" (p. 540). To simplify, the career paths of a hotel manager include every work experience with working length, position, and organization as well as demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and education. Hotel managers' profiles can be examined to explain the relationships between related variables.

Career analysis is a useful research technique to examine hotel managers' profiles, which include both demographic characteristics and career paths. Career analysis can reveal different aspects of a career depending on the research design. Previous research on hotel managers usually examined three aspects such as career length, career mobility, and education influence (Ladkin, 1999a; 1999b; 2000; 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996; Li et al., 2007; Nebel et al., 1995; Ruddy, 1990). Career length is the length of time for each job in an individual's career. Career length also serves as a dependent variable and explores a range of independent variables such as educational attainment and functional department experience. Career mobility is the ability to move between jobs in the labor markets; multiple types of mobility need to be explored. Career mobility reveals the dynamics of

the labor market and provides information for career development (Ladkin & Riley, 1996). Education is assumed to have a relationship with an individual's career opportunity and progression (Ladkin, 2000).

Most previous studies on career analysis in the hospitality and tourism only focused on the career analysis of hotel GMs. Researchers have conducted career analysis studies on hotel GMs such as the United States of America (Nebel, Lee, & Vidakovic, 1995; Woods, et al., 1998), the United Kingdom (Ladkin & Riley, 1996), Mauritius (Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000), and Australia (Ladkin, 2002). Studies on other hotel managers, such as the heads of each functional department, are lacking.

Previous research on hotel GMs indicate that the majority of hotel GMs are predominantly male, in their 40s, with vocational college or higher education diploma (Ladkin, 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996; Li et al., 2007). Hotel GMs in the United States have a higher level of education, with most of them having a bachelor degree (Nebel et al., 1995; Woods et al., 1998). In the career path to the hotel GM position, most hotel GMs usually go through department head/director positions (i.e., hotel EOC members) before taking their first hotel GM position. Moreover, a large percentage of hotel GMs has F&B department experience before obtaining their first hotel GM position (Ladkin, 1999a; 2000; 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996; Nebel et al., 1995). However, Woods, Rutherford, Schmidgall, and Sciarini (1998) point out that the importance of career

path to reach the hotel GM position in the United States through the F&B department has diminished. In more recent hotel GM career studies, the Sales & Marketing experience appears to be an important route toward the hotel GM position in recent years in Mainland China (Li et al., 2007).

1.1.3 Career-related aspirations

An individual's career is like a life journey; one can take the beaten path or explore the way on his/ her own terms (Baruch, 2004). In the Western, market-oriented economy, career development can be viewed as the activities by both individuals and organizations (Schein, 1978). Individual career development activity is an employee-centered, self-directed activity. Organizational career development activity is an organization-centered corporate succession planning activity (Hall, 1986). In the past, employees' career paths were mainly directed by their organization to achieve the organization's objectives. Employees usually followed the organization's arrangement of positions for vertical or horizontal movement. However, changes have occurred in the last two decades. Employees have become more involved in developing their own career paths instead of expecting their organizations to develop their careers for them (Hall & Mirvis, 1996; Hall, 2002). For example, about 60% of job

moves of hotel managers in Australia are self-initiated, and only about 40% of job moves are company initiated (Ladkin, 2002).

In Mainland China before 1978, an individual's career path was controlled by the Chinese government. An individual's job was assigned by the government, and position advancement was based on seniority (H. Q. Zhang et al., 2005; L. Zhang, Cai, & Liu, 2002; W. Zhang, Hu, & Pope, 2002). Therefore, an employee then need not care about his/her own career development as he/she could hardly do anything about it. However, significant changes have occurred since China embarked on the economic reform program (Tu, Forret, & Sullivan, 2006). In the current market-oriented economy, Chinese people find jobs and develop their careers autonomously (Wong & Slater, 2002).

Previous studies in both the West and China indicate that individuals have become more involved in developing their own careers instead of expecting their organizations to develop their careers for them. Individual decisions dominate the career path movement and direction. Career-related aspirations are important psychological factors that influence career advancement (Goffee & Scase, 1992; Hede & Ralston, 1993; Mael, Waldman, & Mulqueen, 2001). Therefore, understanding psychological variables such as career-related aspirations deserves more attention in career studies and may facilitate hotel human resources management (HRM).

Tharenou and Terry (1998) define aspiration as a dual-faceted construct that contains both attitudinal and behavioral components. Desired aspiration represents the attitudinal component of aspiration, the extent of the desire for a higher position. Enacted aspiration represents the behavioral component of aspiration, the extent of the actual actions initiated to pursue the position. Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) identify a positive relationship between desired aspiration and enacted aspiration. The more intense the desired aspiration to achieve a senior management position, the more actions the individual will initiate to attain a higher managerial position.

Few studies specifically explore the hotel manager's aspirations. Beck and La Lopa adopt Schein's Career Anchor Inventory (1978) and determine that hotel EOC members in marketing functional area have high scores on the technical anchor. This finding suggests that hotel EOC members in the marketing functional area are more focused on the technical competence of their own disciplines than those in general management, and that they would rather remain in the current marketing discipline than move to positions laterally within the hotel. By contrast, both hotel EOC members in F&B and Rooms department have high scores on the general managerial anchor. Their finding suggests that hotel EOC members in F&B and Rooms department are more likely to pursue the hotel GM position (Beck & La Lopa, 2001).

1.1.4 Aspirations and related factors

Based on Gottfredson's (1981; 1996) developmental theory of aspiration, career-related aspiration comes from an individual's assessment of compatibility with a job and accessibility to a job. Therefore, two factors related to aspiration appear in this theory, namely, self-job congruence and perceived advancement prospect.

The concept of self-job congruence is developed from the assessment of compatibility. By assessing the compatibility between the image of a job and the image of an individual, an individual can identify his/her most suitable choice. In other words, congruence represents the degree of fit between an individual and a job (Holland, 1997).

The concept of a perceived advancement prospect is developed from the assessment of accessibility to a job. Before an individual begins to pursue a preferred position, he/she must evaluate the accessibility and possibility or prospect of the preferred position. According to Hall (2002), an individual is more likely to pursue a job position if one thinks he/she is capable of attaining it.

The third factor related to aspiration is commitment. Colarelli and Bishop (1990) argue that a committed individual tends to set a high career goal and takes action to achieve it. When an individual feels more affection, involvement, and identification with a his/her job, he/she is more likely to develop himself/herself in that job (Lee, Carswell, &

Allen, 2000; Meyer et al., 1993; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1.2.1 General problems

First, studies on the career analysis of hotel managers in the Mainland China context, especially for international brand hotels, remain scarce. Until recently, only one study was conducted on hotel GMs in indigenous hotels in China's Guangdong Province (Li et al., 2007). The study only focused on hotel GMs in the economy and budget hotels with ratings of two and three stars in one region of China. This study also suggests that research on hotel managers in international brand hotels in Mainland China is necessary because it may help domestic employees develop their career paths.

Second, the previous studies on career analysis in the hotel industry only focused on hotel GMs and ignored other hotel managers such as heads of hotel departments (Birdir, 2002; Ladkin, 1999a; Li et al., 2007; Nebel et al., 1995; Woods et al., 1998). The lack of research on the top positions of hotel departments may neglect a significant aspect of career studies in the field.

Third, the hotel managers in EOC refer to the heads of each hotel department and potential candidates for the hotel GM position.

However, little is known about the relationships between their profiles and aspirations for hotel GM position. Only a few studies on hotel EOC members' career anchors in the United States have been conducted, and they imply that aspiration differences between hotel EOC members' functional department backgrounds exist (Beck & La Lopa, 2001). The hotel HRM has difficulty arranging proper organizational career development for hotel employees because of the lack of comprehension on the relationships between hotel managers' profiles and aspirations.

1.2.2 Research gap

First, career analysis cannot measure the relative strength of psychological factors such as aspirations by analyzing hotel managers' profiles such as data on career paths. Ladkin (2002) suggests that data on career paths combined with psychological assessment type research can advance the career research area.

Second, the major limitation of previous studies on contrast analysis is the comparison between pre-assigned groups such as gender (i.e., male vs. female), age (i.e., 40 years vs. above 40 years), and functional department (e.g., F&B, Rooms, and Marketing). The inherent groups within the pre-assigned groups are ignored (Beck & La Lopa, 2001; Li et al., 2007; Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007). Therefore, an alternative method to explore the relationships between overall profile

(i.e., demographic characteristics and career paths) and aspirations is imperative.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

This study has two major research questions:

1. What are hotel EOC members' profiles in international brand hotels in Mainland China?
2. What are the relationships between profiles of hotel EOC members and their aspirations for hotel GM position?

In order to answer these two major research questions, this study develops eight specific research objectives:

1. To identify the demographic characteristics of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China.
2. To identify the career paths of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China.
3. To create clusters based on the similarity of demographic characteristics and career paths of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China.
4. To examine the effect of desired aspiration on enacted aspiration.
5. To examine the effect of perceived advancement prospect on enacted aspiration.
6. To examine the effect of occupational commitment on

enacted aspiration.

7. To examine the effect of perceived self-GM congruence on desired aspiration.
8. To identify the differences of aspirations among clusters of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is unique in providing a comprehensive view of hotel EOC members' profiles that contain both demographic characteristics and career paths in the Mainland China setting. Given the importance of the hotel industry in Mainland China's economy and the subsequent growth in tourism-related employment, careers in the hotel industry are promising options available to Chinese seeking jobs within the labor market in Mainland China. Information on the careers of hotel managers may help to inspire people's career choice in the hotel industry.

The hotel EOC members refer to the department heads and the top positions of each functional department in the hotel. Their career paths can serve as a map and timeline of career progression in each department. Based on this map and timeline, junior hotel employees can have better ideas to plan and manage their careers to reach the top.

From the company perspective, information on hotel EOC members' career paths can also facilitate better planning and management of human resources for hotel companies.

Furthermore, this study examines the relationship between hotel EOC members' profiles and aspirations for hotel GM position. This study identifies the differences in aspirations between hotel EOC members and provides a comprehensive explanation on these differences through the aspiration model. Identifying who has the higher or lower aspirations for hotel general management and the reasons behind the differences may facilitate the hotel HRM to select, motivate, and nurture the hotel EOC members as candidates for future hotel GMs. The results of this study can be beneficial to both hotel companies and employees in Mainland China.

1.5 Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined and used in this study:

1.5.1 Hotel EOC members

Hotel EOC members are hotel managers in the Executive Operating Committee, including heads of each functional department such as F&B, Rooms, Marketing, Human Resources, Finance & Accounting, and Engineering (Woods et al., 1998).

1.5.2 Profiles of hotel EOC members

Hotel EOC members' profiles include demographic characteristics and career paths. Demographic characteristics include age, gender, and education; career paths include every work experience with working length, position, and organization.

1.5.3 Desired and enacted aspirations

Desired aspiration is the attitudinal component of the dual-faceted construct of aspiration, and it refers to the hotel EOC members' desire to move up to the hotel GM position. Enacted aspiration is the behavioral component of the dual-faceted construct of aspiration, and it refers to the hotel EOC members' action to pursue the hotel GM position.

1.5.4 Aspiration-related factors

The perceived advancement prospect is a belief about the possibility or opportunity of attaining the hotel GM position. Perceived self-GM congruence is a broad match or fit between a hotel EOC members' perceived personality, the ability, and requirements of the hotel GM position. Occupational commitment includes affective, continuance, and normative components of the hotel management profession.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a summary of the literature review on the related variables and rationale of study. Specifically, this chapter reviews the literature on human resources issues in Mainland China's hotel development, career analysis for hotel managers, aspiration and other related factors, rationale of the concept of the aspiration model, data mining, and self-organizing map (SOM).

2.1 Human resources issues in Mainland China's hotel development

First of all, this study would like to review literatures in human resources issues in the context of Mainland China's hotel industry. In the last decade, human resources issue is one of the major thematic categories of hospitality research in Mainland China (Kong & Cheung, 2009). The research scope in human resources issues in Mainland China's hotels has shifted from more general investigation to more specifically, and from more industry perspective to employee perspective. The following sections would like to elaborate on details. Table lists selected papers that related to human resources issues in Mainland China's hotel industry.

2.1.1 Shortage of qualified hospitality professionals

In the earlier 21 century, the hotel industry has become a multi-billion dollar enterprise and is one of the fastest growing sectors of the economy in Mainland China (Zhang, Pine, & Lam, 2005). Hotel staffs with the requisite levels of expertise are in great demands owing to the fast growing of hotel industry in Mainland China. Researches started to investigate the general human resources issues from industry's perspectives and identified that there is a shortage of qualified hospitality professionals in both hospitality education institutions and hotel industry. Universities lack of qualified hospitality educator and cannot provide proper hospitality education to students. There is a huge expectation gap between education and industry. There are not enough qualified hospitality graduates to sustain this large demand and the Mainland China hotels need to do on-the job training to develop their own human resources; in the consequence, qualified hospitality trainers are also in great demand. Recruiting, developing, and retaining qualified talents are major challenges for hotel human resources management (HRM) (Qiu & Lam, 2004; Zhang & Wu, 2004).

2.1.2 Profiles of hotel employees and managers

As the general human resources issues such as qualified staffs shortage are identified, more information on backgrounds and career

paths of hotel managers are required since these related to recruiting, developing, and retaining qualified talents. A couple studies start to investigate the profiles of hotel employees and managers. Kong and Baum (2006) identify female employees with vocational education dominate hotel front office in Mainland China. Most of them plan to commit themselves in hotel industry and seek promotion in their current job; however, half of them think that promotion and career development opportunity in their current hotel are not promising. Li, Tse and Xie (2007) find hotel GMs in Guangdong Province are middle-aged men with vocational education. It took them about eight years to reach their first GM position. Sales and Marketing department is the most important work experience in qualifying for hotel GM position. Information of hotel staff profiles are very valuable which can serve as a map, timeline, and training ground to reach their career goals.

2.1.3 Career development

In recent years, career development has drawn hotel employees and researchers' attention. Kong and Baum (2006) state that career development is vital for hotel HRM in Mainland China. Young people are aware their career development. Qiu and Lam (2004) state that young people are more willing to work in international hotels; they believe that international hotels provide intensive training programs for

staffs at all levels that will benefit the development of their career. Kong and Cheung (2009) recommend more research on career development in Mainland China's hotel industry and develop model/ theory specifically for Mainland China context.

Kong, Cheung, and Song (2011) develop a measurement scale for organizational career management (OCM) in hotel industry in Mainland China context. Three dimensions of OCM are identified: (1) career training, (2) career appraisal and advice, (3) career development program. Training program is found to be the most commonly practiced OCM activity, followed by career appraisal and development programs. Employees are eager to be educated and empowered with further training. Job posting is ranked the highest among all development activities, dual ladder is less common.

Yang (2011) brings out the gender issue in women's career development. The career/family conflict and gender stereotypes are the important obstacles existing in career development. Positions in engineering and security are traditionally perceived as men's job and excluded from women's consideration. In addition, Yang states that the "glass ceiling" exists for women in hotel industry in China because women are more difficult to become GM than men.

Table 1 Selected HRM Research in Mainland China

Author (Year)	Area of study	Finding	Methodology
Qiu & Lam (2004)	HRM problems: a case of Heilongjiang Province	Lack of qualified staff, trainer, and Teacher. Lack of long term HRD strategy.	Qualitative
Zhang & Wu (2004)	General human resources issues in Mainland China: perspectives of hotel, travel agency, and university	Lack of qualified staff , high staff turnover rate, education gap between school and industry	Qualitative
Kong & Baum (2006)	Profile of staffs and perspectives of work in hotel front office	Females with vocational education dominate, Oral communication as the most important required skill.	Quantitative
Li, Tse & Xie (2007)	Profile of GM: a case of Guangdong Province	GMs are middle-aged males with vocational education. Sales &Marketing as the most important work experience for GM position.	Quantitative
Kong & Cheung (2009)	Literature review concerning Mainland China's hotel development	Four thematic categories: strategy & development, marketing, service quality, HRM. Strategy & development is the dominate theme.	Qualitative
Kong, Cheung & Zhang (2010)	Organizational career management in Mainland China's state-owned hotels.	Not all Western career management activities are being practiced in Mainland China's hotel. A gap between hotel career management and employees' career	Qualitative

		need.	
Yang (2011)	Gender issue in career development	Glass ceiling exists for women in hotel industry in Mainland China.	Quantitative
Kong, Cheung & Song (2011)	Measurement scale of Organizational career management (OCM)	Three dimension of OCM: career training, career appraisal & advice, and career development program.	Quantitative

2.2 Career Analysis for Hotel Managers

Career analysis is a useful research technique to examine hotel managers' profiles that include both demographic characteristics and career paths. Most previous studies on career analysis in the hospitality and tourism sector only focused on the career analysis of hotel GMs. Studies on other hotel managers, such as the head of each functional department, are scarce.

Career analysis studies on hotel GMs have conducted in many countries such as the United States (Nebel et al., 1995; Woods et al., 1998), the United Kingdom (Ladkin & Riley, 1996), Mauritius (Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000), and Australia (Ladkin, 2002). A traditional perception indicates that the GM career path is usually en route from the F&B department. Many hotel GMs have worked as the director of F&B before advancing to the hotel GM position. Previous studies show the

pattern of F&B experience as an important training ground for hotel GMs in the United States (Nebel et al., 1995), the United Kingdom (Ladkin & Riley, 1996), Mauritius (Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000), and Australia (Ladkin, 2002). Some studies (Li et al., 2007; Woods et al., 1998) contradict the findings and image of the importance of F&B management experience. Woods, Rutherford, Schmidgall, and Sciarini (1998) indicate that the importance of F&B as a training ground has diminished as a career path to reach hotel GM position in the United States.

In a more recent study on indigenous hotel GMs in China's Guangdong province, the hotel GMs usually come from the hotel's Sales & Marketing department in which they spent the most years of work experience; F&B only ranks fourth among the hotel departments where hotel GMs usually come from. Furthermore, the comparison between the older group (41 years old and above) and the younger group (40 years old and below) indicates different patterns. The hotel department where the older hotel GM group had the most years of work experience is the F&B department. The hotel department in which the younger hotel GM group had the most years of work experience is the Sales & Marketing department (Li, Tse & Xie, 2007). The Sales & Marketing experience appears to be an important training ground for hotel GMs in China in recent years.

Career analysis attempts to “uncover the structure and motivations of a particular career by gaining information from those who are currently engaged in the career” (Ladkin, 2002, p. 380). Career analysis relies on the collection of work history data and assumes that past labor market conditions can give valuable information on the current and future labor market (Riley, 1993). Work history method was developed from large-scale, quantitative studies that focused on women’s employment, but it is currently extended to both genders (Ladkin, 1999b). The collection of work history data has two main approaches, namely, the longitudinal approach and the memory recall method. Longitudinal surveys have the unique ability to illustrate causal direction and processes of change. However, the cost of collecting longitudinal data is high because of the need to revisit the respondents, and over time, respondent attrition often occurs (Dex, 1991; Ladkin, 1999b). Therefore, longitudinal studies are challenging to do. By contrast, the memory recall method has the advantages of being cheaper to implement, unaffected by attrition, and a systematic record can be obtained and coded at one point in time (Dex, 1991). The memory recall method is the most cost-effective and often the most practical and more widely used approach (Ladkin, 2002).

Work history data can be collected on many aspects of an individual’s work using either questionnaires or interviews. Career researchers usually design the questionnaire based on the principles of

work biography of the respondents (Dex, 1991; Ladkin, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000). The questionnaire can collect both quantitative and qualitative data that contain details of the various elements of each job in the career history of the respondents. Each respondent provides information on his/her career, starting with his/her current job and work backwards over time. The accuracy of career information relies on the respondent's memory recall. Therefore, the questions should be specific instead of general to prompt accurate memories. Previous research on career analysis mostly focused on the three career aspects, namely, career length, career mobility, and education influence.

2.2.1 Career length

Career length is the combination of tenures of each job position in an individual's career. Knowing how long it takes an individual on average to reach a certain position is important for all hotel practitioners and researchers. The information is highly related to career planning and development.

Numerous studies have been conducted on career length in the hotel industry; however, they mainly focused on hotel GMs (Ladkin, 1999a, 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996; Li et al., 2007; Nebel et al., 1995; Woods et al., 1998). Studies on other hotel EOC members are lacking.

In the study of hotel GMs in the US context, hotel GMs on average spent 8.9 years before attaining their first hotel GM position at an average age of 33.2 years old. Furthermore, the mean years to reach the hotel GM position between mid-range hotels and upscale hotels have a statistically significant difference. Reaching the hotel GM position in upscale hotels (average of 10.1 years) is longer than that in mid-range hotels (average of 7.1 years) (Nebel, Lee, & Vidakovic, 1995).

In the study of hotel GMs in the UK context, respondents spent an average of 11.19 years before attaining their first hotel GM position based on the standardized measure and an average of 9.5 years before assuming their first hotel GM position based on the non-standardized measure (Ladkin & Riley, 1996).

In the study of hotel GMs in the Mauritian context, the respondents spent an average of 13.1 to reach their first hotel GM position based on the standardized measure and an average of 16.1 years before attaining their first hotel GM position based on the non-standardized measure (Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000).

In the Australian context, the respondents spent an average of 14.1 years to reach their first hotel GM position based on the standardized measure and an average of 12.6 years before reaching their first hotel GM position based on the non-standardized measure (Ladkin, 2002).

In the study of indigenous hotel GMs in China's Guangdong province, the respondents had to wait eight years or so to reach their first general manager position at 28 years old. Furthermore, the study compared the difference between the older group (41 years old and above) and the younger group (40 years old and below) of hotel GMs. The authors found that the older group spent 4.5 years before achieving their first general manager position at 35 years old and the younger group had to wait eight years or so to attain their first general manager position at 25 years old (Li, Tse & Xie, 2007).

More importantly, the length of each job position and the length of the overall career can provide the foundation for a more detailed career analysis. For example, Ladkin (2002) found that career length is important because the length of time from a certain starting point to a certain end point (e.g., from the first hotel job position to the first general manager position) can become the dependent variable. Therefore, career length can explore a range of independent variables such as educational attainment (e.g., vocational education vs. non-vocational education) and functional department experience (e.g., F&B experience vs. Sales & Marketing experience).

2.2.2 Career mobility

Career mobility is the ability to move between jobs in the labor markets. Asking individuals to recall the number of times they changed jobs in their working lives gives an exact number of job movements as a measure of labor mobility. Four career aspects related to job mobility have been explored (Ladkin, 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996), namely, job movement between position levels (upward or downward mobility), job movement between job functions (functional mobility), job movement within company versus job movement between companies (internal mobility vs. external mobility), and locus control of job movement (initiative mobility). The following section explains and summarizes these four types of career mobility based on the literature review.

Upward or downward mobility is the job movement between position levels (e.g., job movement from a Front Desk manager to a director of Rooms, or job movement from a hotel assistant GM to a hotel GM). The upward mobility usually occurs through promotion, and downward mobility usually occurs through demotion. The managerial experience of the majority (87.5%) of hotel GM respondents in the United States is in the same department prior to their first appointment to the hotel assistant GM (Nebel et al., 1995). Most hotel employees stay in the same function of department to accumulate experience and

develop managerial skills from lower operational positions to higher managerial positions.

A large percentage of hotel GM respondents in Australia worked as department heads and deputy GMs before becoming hotel GMs (Ladkin, 2002). Furthermore, 74% of indigenous hotel GM respondents in China's Guangdong province assumed the assistant GM position before taking the hotel GM position. Hotel employees can work from a lower position to a higher position and then to the top position because of upward mobility. However, another study of hotel GMs in the US context (Woods et al., 1998) indicates that the career path to reach the hotel GM has changed as a result of what appears to be a flattening of the hotel organization, which implies fewer middle management positions in the hotel organizational structure. Therefore, the upward mobility pattern may change and need further investigation.

Functional mobility is the job movement between job functions. Research suggests that functional mobility exists within a hotel organization. The indigenous hotel GMs in China's Guangdong province worked in an average of three different hotel departments prior to becoming hotel GMs (Li et al., 2007). Some overlaps and relatedness between functional mobility and upward (or downward) mobility were found because a job movement often involves both hierarchical and functional mobility (e.g., job move from F&B director to assistant hotel GM). Functional mobility in a hotel organization is usually not high.

Nebel, Lee, and Vidakovic (1995) point out that the managerial experience of the majority (87.5%) of hotel GM respondents in the United States is in the same department prior to their first appointment as the hotel assistant GM. Most hotel employees do not accumulate experience and develop managerial skills by moving to different departments. However, vertical mobility within the same department is limited because of small size or flatness of the hotel organization (Woods et al., 1998). Moreover, hotel employees need cross-training in different departments to accumulate experience and develop managerial skills.

The major issue of functional mobility in hotel management is that hotel employees with hotel departmental experience have the best opportunity to become the hotel GM. A long debate is ongoing on the F&B experience as an important route to the hotel GM position. Previous studies in the United States (Nebel et al., 1995), the United Kingdom (Ladkin, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996), Mauritius (Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000), and Australia (Ladkin, 2002) suggest that F&B experience is the most salient experience en route to the hotel GM position, followed by the front office. By contrast, the Accounting and Finance, HRM, and Sales & Marketing are less important. Specifically, 60% of the hotel GM respondents from Mauritius (Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000), 50% from the United Kingdom (Ladkin, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996), 45% from the United States (Nebel et al., 1995), and 40.9%

from Australia (Ladkin, 2002) worked in the F&B department en route to the hotel GM position.

Some studies on hotel GMs in the US and Chinese contexts (Li et al., 2007; Woods et al., 1998) contradict with previous studies. The F&B experience is not a salient function en route to the hotel GM position. Instead, the Sales & Marketing experience has emerged as the most important functional experience en route to the hotel GM position. When the hotel GMs were asked about their perceptions on the importance of a particular functional experience as a qualification for the hotel GM position, both respondents from the United States and China identified Sales & Marketing as the most important (Li et al., 2007; Woods et al., 1998).

Woods et al. (1998) indicate that the importance of F&B functional experience has diminished and that the career path to reach GM has changed in the US context. They conclude that the F&B post is no longer a guaranteed path toward the hotel GM position. In the study on indigenous hotel GMs in China's Guangdong province (Li et al., 2007), before taking the hotel GM position, the Sales & Marketing functional experience is the most salient function en route to the hotel GM position. F&B is only ranked fourth among all functional experiences en route to the hotel GM position. Specifically, the functional experiences in which the respondents spent the most years are

Sales & Marketing (26.5%), Front desk (23.5%), Housekeeping (21.6%), and F&B (20.6%).

A difference in functional mobility exists between older and younger hotel GMs. The comparison between the older group (41 years old and above) and the younger group (40 years old and below) reveals different patterns. The top four functional experiences in which the older group spent the most years are F&B (27.5%), Others (25%), Engineering (22.5%), and Sales & Marketing (17.5%). The top four functional experiences in which the younger group spent the most years are Sales & Marketing (32.3%), Front Desk (32.3%), Housekeeping (29%), and F&B (16.1%). Moreover, both older and younger hotel GMs consider the experience in Sales & Marketing as the most important qualification for the hotel GM position. Older hotel GMs consider the experience in HRM as the least important experience compared with younger hotel GMs. None of the younger hotel GMs considers experience in Engineering as important to the hotel GM position (Li, Tse & Xie, 2007).

Internal mobility refers to employee job movements within an organization, and external mobility refers to job movements between organizations.

In the hospitality industry, internal mobility is high. Employees can change jobs within the hospitality organization easily. For example, most job movements of the hotel GM respondents are within the

company in the United Kingdom (63.3%) (Ladkin & Riley, 1996) and Australia (55%) (Ladkin, 2002).

By contrast, external mobility in the hotel industry is low. Hospitality employees do not or cannot change jobs outside the hospitality industry. About two-thirds (65.4%) of the hotel GM respondents never worked outside the hotel industry after school in the United States (Nebel et al., 1995). The rest (34.6 %) only worked outside the hotel industry for a short period of time (average of 1.6 years). The sample reveals that 75.6% of the hotel GM respondents never worked in different industries against the 24.4% who did in Australia (Ladkin, 2002).

Initiative mobility refers to job movement that is self-initiated or company initiated. Self-initiated mobility is high. In the United Kingdom (Ladkin & Riley, 1996) and Australia (Ladkin, 2002), majority of the moves were initiated by the individuals. In the United Kingdom, about 61.7% of the respondents performed self-initiated job moves, and 38.3% had company-initiated job moves (Ladkin & Riley, 1996). In Australia, about 60% of the respondents performed self-initiated job moves, and 40% had company-initiated job moves (Ladkin, 2002).

The study on functional mobility enables researchers to identify the salient functional departments in the career paths of hotel managers. The F&B department has a higher level of upward and functional

mobility for older-generation managers. However, the Sales & Marketing department has a higher level of upward and functional mobility for younger-generation managers. The salient functional department in the career paths of hotel managers has changed from the F&B department to the Sales & Marketing department. Hotel managers have a higher level of self-initiated mobility and internal hotel and industry mobility than company-initiated mobility and external hotel and industry mobility.

2.2.3 Educational influence

The value and requirement of vocational education or higher education for hotel managers has been debated for years (Ruddy, 1990). Educational attainment is still one of the fundamental variables in career analysis because it is assumed to have a relationship with an individual's career opportunity and advancement. Therefore, career studies need to account for educational attainment in career analysis (Ladkin, 2002). Educational attainment has two major areas in career analysis. The first describes the hotel GMs' educational background, and the second describes the effect of educational backgrounds (i.e., types and levels of education) on the career advancement of hotel managers.

Educational background has two main elements, namely, education type and education level. Education type is usually divided into vocational education and general non-vocational education or the

various majors in college or university. The majority of the hotel GM respondents in the United Kingdom (83%), Mauritius (81.3%), and China (63.1%) have vocational educational background. Conversely, less than half (47.8%) of the hotel GM respondents in Australia have vocational educational background (Ladkin, 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Ladkin & Riley, 1996; Li et al., 2007).

Education level is the highest educational attainment, that is, either high school, college, bachelor's degree, or master's degree. In the United States, the majority (65.7%) of hotel GMs have bachelor's or postgraduate degrees. By contrast, a lower percentage of hotel GMs in the United Kingdom (18.1%), Mauritius (18.8%), Australia (15.6%), and China (21.4%) have bachelor's or postgraduate degrees (Ladkin, 2000, 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Li et al., 2007; Nebel et al., 1995). The majority of hotel GMs in the United States (73.4%) and China (56.3%) have hospitality- and business-related college majors.

The effect of educational background is classified into two perspectives: the effect of education type on career advancement and the effect of educational level on career advancement. In terms of the effect of education type (i.e., vocational versus general education) on the career paths of hotel GMs, vocational education clearly has a more significant influence on career length than general non-vocational education (Ladkin, 2000, 2002). However, in the United Kingdom, hotel GMs with vocational education took a shorter time (10.8 years) to reach

the GM position than those with general non-vocational education (13.14 years) (Ladkin, 2000). By contrast, in Australia, hotel GMs with vocational education took a longer time (14.3 years) to reach the GM position than those with non-vocational education (13.8 years) (Ladkin, 2002).

In terms of the effect of educational level on the career paths of hotel GMs, a higher educational level does not guarantee faster career advancement or shorter time to reach the GM position in the United Kingdom and Australia; however, a higher educational level can help a novice obtain a higher level of starting position (Ladkin, 2000, 2002). Interestingly, in Australia, hotel GMs with a master's degree took the shortest time (10.6 years) to reach the GM position (Ladkin, 2002); in the United Kingdom, hotel GMs with a culinary course or apprenticeship took the shortest time (9.94 years) to reach the GM position (Ladkin, 2000). The diversity of the educational systems of different countries may cause the various educational attainments of hotel managers.

2.3 Aspirations and Related Variables

2.3.1 Desired and enacted aspirations

Career-related aspiration is aspiration toward a leadership position, the desire to train and manage others, and the pursuit of further education (Gray & O'Brien, 2007). The terms *career aspiration* (Gray & O'Brien, 2007; Lisi & Lisi, 2002; Rainey & DiAnne, 1997), *managerial aspiration* (Goffee & Scase, 1992; Hede & Ralston, 1993; Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007; Mael et al., 2001; Tharenou, 2001; Tharenou & Terry, 1998), and *career ambition* (Collins, Lowensohn, & Shaub, 2008; Ladkin, 2002) are used interchangeably in the literature and cause confusion in conceptualization. However, most of these studies consider aspiration as the motivational intensity associated with a desirable career-related outcome.

Numerous studies show that aspiration is an important factor in career or position advancement (Goffee & Scase, 1992; Hede & Ralston, 1993; Mael et al., 2001). For example, aspiration is an important attribute for technical specialists or engineers to become managers (Rynes, Tolbert, & Strausser, 1988) and for managers to be promoted to higher positions (Tharenou, 2001; Tharenou & Terry, 1998). For hotel managers, aspiration is the driving force behind the personal choice and direction of a career path to the topmost position of GM (Ladkin, 2002).

In earlier studies of aspiration, aspiration was usually measured by a single item. This single item asked respondents to rate only the desire for the chosen managerial position (Goffee & Scase, 1992; Hede & Ralston, 1993; Rynes et al., 1988). However, the single-item measure limits aspiration to a mere attitudinal perspective, that is, the desire for a certain position, and excludes other perspectives of managerial aspiration.

Some researchers suggest that aspiration may have more components and should thus be conceptualized beyond mere desire (Tharenou, 2001; Tharenou & Terry, 1998). According to the expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), people who desire to have something are likely to engage in behavior that helps them acquire it and satisfy their desire. Therefore, Tharenou and Terry (1998) conceptualize aspiration as a dual-faceted construct with both attitudinal and behavioral components, that is, desired and enacted aspiration, respectively. Desired aspiration produces a motivational force that triggers effort and persistence toward managerial advancement. Enacted aspiration reflects the actual actions and strategies (e.g., politicking, networking, career planning, and participating in developmental opportunities) associated with position advancement (Tharenou & Terry, 1998). In other words, enacted aspiration is the behavioral manifestation of desired managerial aspiration. Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) identified a positive relationship between desired and enacted aspiration. People's

social background may influence their aspiration for a senior management position.

Tharenou and Terry (1998) also developed measures for desired and enacted aspiration and confirmed the construct validity and reliability of both the Desired Aspirations Scale and the Enacted Aspirations Scale. The Desired Aspirations Scale contains the themes of employee preference, desire, liking, and ambition for higher managerial positions and for responsibility and influence. Responses to each item were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, with the scale point anchors labeled as follows: (1) completely false, (2) mostly false, (3) partly false and partly true, (4) mostly true, and (5) completely true. A higher score represents a higher desired managerial aspiration. The 13 items of the Desired Aspirations Scale are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Desired Aspiration Scale (Tharenou & Terry, 1998)

Scale Items
1. My aspirations are very high in regard to professional recognition and achievement.
2. I have no ambition to advance to a management position (if a non-manager) or a higher level position (if a manager). (reverse-scored)
3. I would like to be in a position of greater influence in the department/organization.
4. It would bother me if I was to continue to do the same type of work.
5. I do not wish to advance to a position of more responsibility. (reverse-scored)
6. I would like to move into a higher position within management over the next 5 year.
7. For me the hassles of being in a higher position within

- management would outweigh the benefits. (reverse-scored)
8. I would like to advance to a position where I can have an influence or a greater influence on policy decisions.
 9. A promotion to a higher position within management means more worries and should be avoided for the reason. (reverse-scored)
 10. It would be good to be in a position in which I could develop, manage, and coordinate the policies and activities of a work area.
 11. I would like to get into jobs with higher levels of responsibility, and would not mind if I eventually moved out of work specifically related to my area of technical expertise.
 12. I intend to apply for a higher position within management.
 13. My plans include attaining a higher position within management.

The behavioral component of aspiration is the actual actions and strategies. The typical measures of previous career-related strategy application often present a list of possible strategic activities and ask respondents how important the strategy is or how often they use the particular strategy to attain career advancement (Weber & Ladkin, 2008). For example, Tharenou and Terry's Enacted Aspirations Scale contains strategic behaviors associated with gaining higher managerial positions. Respondents indicate how often they engaged in these strategic behaviors in the past 12 months on a five-point Likert-type scale, with the scale point anchors labeled as follows: (1) never, (2) occasionally, (3) sometimes, (4) often, and (5) frequently. A high score represents a high enacted managerial aspiration. The six items of the Enacted Aspirations Scale are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Enacted Aspiration Scale (Tharenou & Terry, 1998)

Scale Items
1. I have sought feedback on my job performance.
2. I have discussed my career prospects with someone with more experience in the department/organization.
3. I have engaged in career path planning.
4. I have updated my skills in order to be more competitive for promotion.
5. I have discussed my aspirations with a senior person in the department/organization.
6. I have volunteered for activities other than my day-to-day work tasks, such as working parties and selection panels.

To explore the aspirations of hotel EOC members in the United States, Beck and La Lopa adopted Schein's Career Anchor Inventory (1978) and found that marketing discipline EOC members have a high score in the technical anchor. This finding suggests that marketing discipline EOC members are more focused on technical competence in their own discipline than general management and would rather stay in the current marketing discipline than move jobs laterally within the hotel. By contrast, both F&B and Rooms EOC members have a high score in the general managerial anchor; thus, these members are more likely to pursue the hotel GM position (Beck & La Lopa, 2001).

Ladkin (2002) used open-ended questions to explore the enacted aspirations that hotel managers in Australia use to advance their careers. Respondents were asked to identify the strategies they used to advance their careers. Always being prepared to relocate is the top strategy, which nearly 75% of the respondents adopted for career advancement.

The following strategies are also important and were used by more than 50% of the respondents: moving around to gain knowledge and experience, having long-term career goals, using contacts in the industry to get on, always taking opportunities offered by company training schemes, keeping informed, and making the most of company opportunities.

2.3.2 Perceived self–GM congruence

The concept of perceived self–GM congruence adopts the notion of Super’s occupational self-concept and Holland’s person–environment congruence (Holland, 1997; Super, Starishevsky, Matlin, & Jordaan, 1963; Super, 1980). Self-concept refers to an individual’s perceived image of himself, which has many elements such as gender, appearance, abilities, personality, values, and place in society (Super et al., 1963). An individual also has a certain image of an occupation, which includes the conditions, character, rewards, requirements, and social status of the work and the personality, competence, and lifestyle of people who have such an occupation (Holland, 1997). Holland’s person–environment congruence suggests that people seek a work environment that enables them to use their abilities and express their values. Super’s occupational self-concept refers to the self that arises from an individual’s matching of his/her own attributes with those required by an occupation.

The perceived self-GM congruence is a broad match or fit between the self-perceived personality and ability of job requirements. Generally, the person-job fit can be measured in two ways. One approach is to measure the individual's perception of his/ her overall fitness for the job. Another approach is to compare the facets of an individual's work environment with what the individual desires (Singh & Greenhaus, 2004). However, the facet approach has certain limitations because it includes the facets of a job that are relatively unimportant to an individual and excludes the important ones (Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989).

Singh and Greenhaus (2004) developed a three-item measure to assess the person-job fit. Responses to the items obtained on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) were averaged to form a total score, with high scores indicating a high level of overall fitness for the job. The three items of the Person-Job Fit Scale are shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Person-Job Fit (Singh & Greenhaus, 2004)

Scale Items
1. I have a good fit with my new job.
2. The requirements of my new job match my specific talents and skills.
3. I fit in well with my work environment.

2.3.3 Perceived advancement prospect

The perceived advancement prospect is a belief about the possibility or opportunity of achieving a hotel GM position. In career choice and development, people are more likely to pursue an occupation or position if they think they are capable to attain it (Hall, 2002). The possibility or opportunity of achieving the preferred occupation or position is a significant factor in an individual's aspiration (Gottfredson, 1981, 1996). Before individuals start to pursue the preferred occupation or position, they must first evaluate the possibility or opportunity of obtaining it; when the possibility or opportunity is great, they are more likely to take actual action to pursue it. According to Litzky and Greenhaus (2007), an individual who perceives a higher career advancement prospect is more likely to take action to pursue a senior management position than one who perceives a lower career advancement prospect.

Godshalk (1997) developed a six-item measure to assess a structural plateau. Responses to the items obtained on a five-point scale from 1 (disagree strongly) to 5 (agree strongly) were averaged to form a total score, with high scores indicating a high level of overall fitness for the job. The six items of the Structural Plateau Scale are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Structural Plateau Scale (Godshalk, 1997)

Scale Items
1. My opportunities for upward movement are limited in my present organization.
2. I expect to be promoted in my company. (reverse-scored)
3. I have reached a point where I do not expect to move higher in my company.
4. The likelihood that I will get ahead in my organization is limited.
5. I expect to advance to a higher level in my company. (reverse-scored)
6. I am unlikely to obtain a higher level job in my organization.

2.3.4 Occupational commitment

Many studies have examined and explored work-related commitment. Generally, work-related commitment can be classified into career commitment (Bedeian, Kemery, & Pizzolatto, 1991; Blau, 1985, 1988, 1989, 2003; Blau & Lunz, 1998; Colarelli & Bishop, 1990; Ellemers, de Gilder, & van den Heuvel, 1998), occupational commitment (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000; Meyer et al., 1993), and organizational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979; Porter, Crampon, & Smith, 1976; Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974; Reichers, 1985). However, studies on the connection between work-related aspiration and work-related commitment are lacking.

The distinction between career commitment and occupation is not clear. Blau conducted a series of studies to measure career

commitment. However, his career commitment measure was primarily based on items measuring occupational commitment (Table. 5) (Blau, 1985, 1988, 1989). Although Blau did not distinguish between career and occupational commitment precisely, he suggests that career commitment should be anchored on more specific terminology. Reicher (1985) suggests that a multiple component model of the commitment approach may be more precise and meaningful.

Table 6 Career Commitment Scale (Blau, 2003)

Scale Items
1. If I could go into a different profession other than this profession which paid the same, I would probably take it. (reverse-scored)
2. I definitely want a career for myself in this profession.
3. If I could do it all over again, I would not choose to work in this profession. (reverse-scored)
4. If I had all the money I needed without working, I would probably still continue to work in this profession.
5. I like this vocation too well to give it up.
6. This is the ideal vocation for a life work.
7. I am disappointed that I ever entered this profession. (reverse-scored)

Career is a “planned pattern of work from entry into the workforce to retirement” or “involvement in a particular job, organization, occupation, or profession” (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Therefore, an individual’s career may involve multiple occupations or jobs in multiple organizations. Meyer et al. (1993) suggest that researchers adopt the term *occupational commitment* instead of *career commitment* because of the ambiguity and complexity of the meaning of

career and observe that *occupational commitment* is appropriate when assessing commitment to a particular work.

Allen and Meyer (1990; 1991) integrated various conceptualizations, including that of commitment, as a psychological state that goes beyond the distinction between attitudinal and behavioral commitment. This psychological state of commitment has three components: (a) affective (a desire), (b) continuance (a need), and (c) normative (an obligation). The affective component of organizational commitment refers to employees' emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the occupation. The continuance component refers to commitment based on the perceived costs that employees associate with leaving the occupation. The normative component refers to employees' perceived obligation to remain in the occupation.

Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) conceptualized occupational commitment as having three similar components: affective, continuance, and normative. Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) also developed measures for each component, with six items for each (Table 7). Each item is measured on a seven-point scale, with the scale point anchors labeled as follows: (1) strongly disagree, (2) moderately disagree, (3) slightly disagree, (4) neither disagree nor agree, (5) slightly agree, (6) moderately agree, and (7) strongly agree. Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993) suggest that if someone wants to use the scale to measure

commitment to other occupations, the wording of the items in the three-component model can simply be substituted by appropriate descriptors. Meyer et al. (2002) suggest that the three-component model can be applicable to other countries, that sufficient differences can be found across geographic locations based on research conducted outside North America, and that more systematic cross-cultural research can significantly improve our understanding of commitment globally.

The factor structure, construct validity, and reliability of the three-component model of commitment have been proved by many studies (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 2000; Meyer et al., 2002). Our literature review strongly supports the continued use of these scales in substantive research.

This study is interested in assessing hotel managers' commitment to their occupation instead of to a career of certain expertise. Therefore, the researcher adopted the term *occupation commitment* instead of *career commitment*. Hotel management involves a variety of functional departments, such as F&B management, Sales & Marketing, HRM, and Finance & Accounting. Before working in the hotel, the Finance & Accounting director may have worked in a bank or accounting firm, the F&B director may have worked in a restaurant, and the Sales & Marketing director may have worked in a marketing firm. An EOC manager may have commitment for his/her functional work and focus on career building in the functional work area rather than on

commitment to the general management of the hotel. Therefore, viewing hotel management as a particular occupation and adapting occupational commitment to hotel management are more appropriate when assessing aspiration for the hotel GM position.

Table 7 Three Component of Occupational Commitment (Meyer et al., 1993)

Scale Items
Affective Occupational Commitment
1. Nursing is important to my self-image.
2. I regret having entered the nursing profession. (reverse-scored)
3. I am proud to be in the nursing profession.
4. I dislike being a nurse. (reverse-scored)
5. I do not identify with the nursing profession. (reverse-scored)
6. I am enthusiastic about nursing.
Continuance Occupational Commitment
1. I have put too much into the nursing profession to consider changing now.
2. Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do.
3. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I were to change my profession.
4. It would be costly for me to change my profession now.
5. There are no pressures to keep me from changing profession. (reverse-scored)
6. Changing professions now would require considerable personal sacrifice.
Normative Occupational Commitment
1. I believe people who have been trained in a profession have a responsibility to stay in that profession for a reasonable period of time.
2. I do not feel any obligation to remain in the nursing profession. (reverse-scored)
3. I feel a responsibility to the nursing profession to continue in it.
4. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave nursing now.
5. I would feel guilty if I left nursing.
6. I am in nursing because of a sense of loyalty

2.4 Rationale for the Concept of the Aspiration Model

To explore the relationship between the profiles of hotel EOC members in Mainland China and these members' aspirations, this study collected information on socio-demographic backgrounds and career paths of these individuals. To better understand their aspirations for the hotel GM position, this study developed an aspiration model from theories (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Theoretical Framework of Aspiration Model

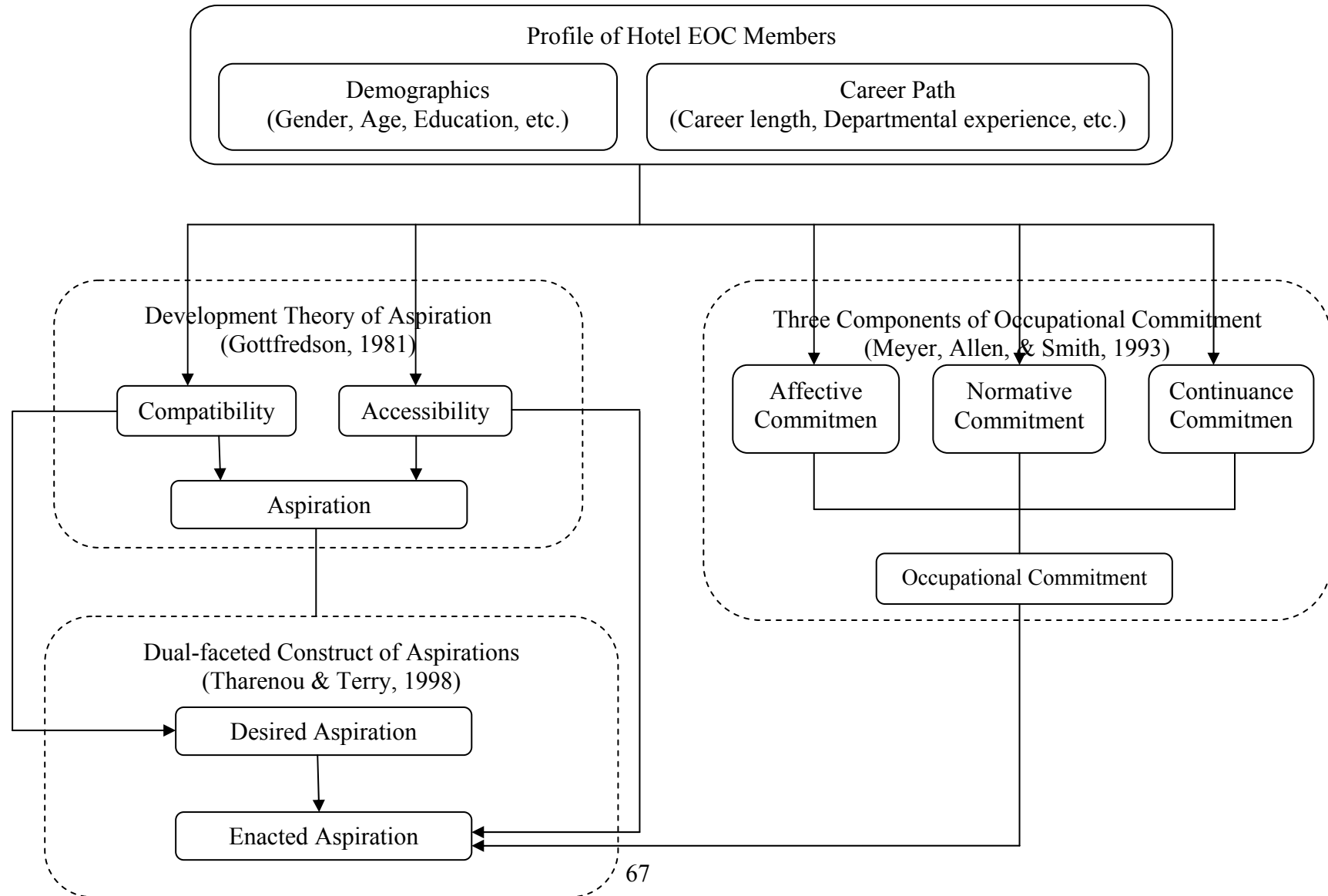
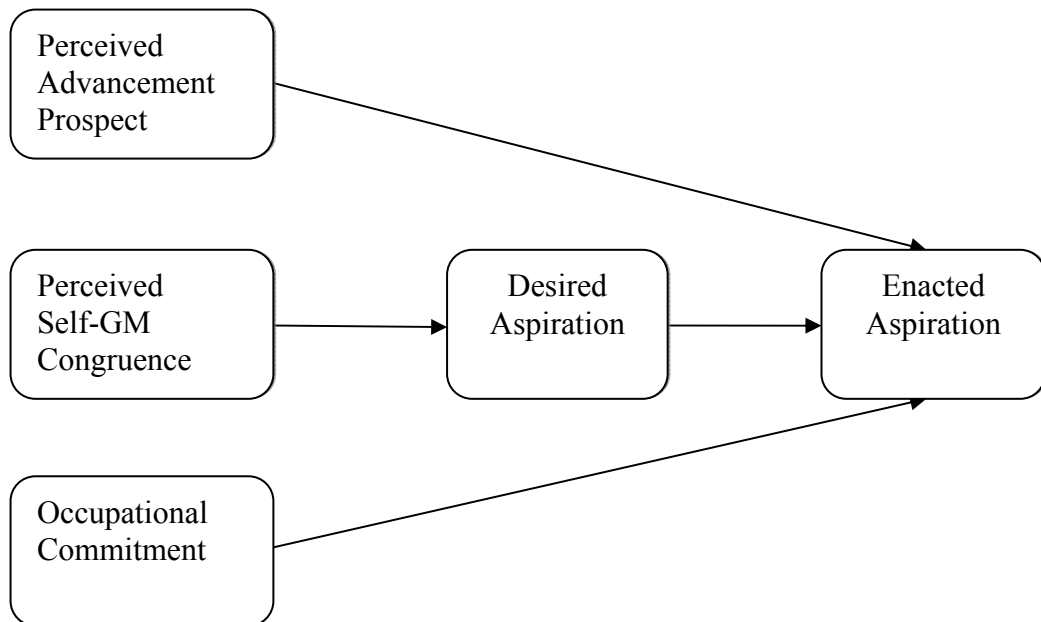


Figure 2 presents the path model of aspiration for hotel GM, a summary of the hypothesized links between the profiles of hotel EOC members, perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, desired aspiration, and enacted aspiration.

Figure 2 Aspiration Path Model



This model has the following assumptions:

1. Hotel EOC members' perceived advancement prospect, desired aspiration, and occupational commitment may influence the enacted aspiration for hotel GM. The equation is as following:

$$\text{Enacted Aspiration} = b_0 + b_1\text{Desired Aspiration} + b_2\text{Perceived Advancement Prospect} + b_3\text{Occupational Commitment} + \varepsilon_i$$

2. Hotel EOC members' perceived self-GM congruence may influence their desired aspiration for hotel GM. The equation is as following:

$$\text{Desired Aspiration} = b_0 + b_1\text{Perceived Self-GM Congruence} + \varepsilon_i$$

2.4.1 Relationship between desired aspiration and enacted aspiration

The concepts of desired and enacted aspiration adapt the dual-faceted construct of managerial aspiration (Tharenou & Terry, 1998), which contains both attitudinal and behavioral components. Desired aspiration represents the attitudinal component of aspiration, which is the extent of the desire to be a hotel GM; enacted aspiration represents the behavioral component of aspiration, which is the extent of the actual actions to pursue the hotel GM position. Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) identified a positive relationship between desired aspiration and enacted aspiration. The higher the desired aspiration to achieve a senior management position, the more actions the individual takes to attain such a position. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: The higher the level of desired aspiration, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

2.4.2 Relationship between perceived advancement prospect and enacted aspiration

The possibility or opportunity of achieving the preferred occupation or position is a factor in an individual's aspiration (Gottfredson, 1981, 1996).

The effect of perceived advancement prospect on hotel GM aspiration follows the central notion of the expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). An individual's tendency to act is guided by his/her expectation of a reward. The extent of the reward in career development is advancement to a higher position. If an individual perceives a higher chance of promotion, he/she takes more action to pursue such position advancement. According to Hall (2002), people are more likely to pursue a position if they think that they are capable of attaining it. Before an individual starts pursuing a preferred occupation or position, he/she must evaluate its accessibility and possibility (prospect) (Gottfredson, 1996). In a more recent study, Litzky and Greenhaus (2007) found that people who perceive a favorable career advancement prospect are more likely to engage in strategies to achieve advancement to senior management position than those who perceive unfavorable

career prospects. Following the foregoing discussion, we hypothesize the following:

H2: The higher the level of perceived advancement prospect, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

2.4.3 Relationship between occupational commitment and enacted aspiration

This study follows Meyer et al. (1993) and adapts their three components of occupational commitment: emotional attachment, perceived costs, and feelings of obligation. Colarelli and Bishop (1990) found that a committed individual tends to set high career goals and take action to achieve it. When people feel more affection, involvement, and identification with the occupation of hotel management, they are more likely to embrace the hotel GM position and take action to attain it. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H3: The higher the level of occupational commitment, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

2.4.4 Relationship between perceived self-GM congruence and desired aspiration

The concept of perceived self-GM congruence is based on the self-occupation congruence in career choice and development research

(Gottfredson, 1981, 1996). Self refers to an individual's image of himself/herself. Self has many elements, including gender, appearance, abilities, personality, values, and place in society. Some elements are more central to one's sense of self than others (Super et al., 1963). Every occupation has its own image or stereotype for people, including the content, conditions, character, rewards, requirements, and social status of the work and the personality, competence, and lifestyle of the people who have the occupation (Holland, 1997). By assessing the compatibility between the image of an occupation and the image of an individual, the individual can identify his/her most suitable choice of occupation. In other words, congruence represents the degree of fit between an individual and an occupation (Holland, 1997). Specifically, the greater the perceived compatibility between the image of an occupation and the image of an individual, the stronger is the desired aspiration that is triggered in an individual. Thus, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: The higher the level of perceived Self–GM congruence, the higher the level of desired aspiration.

2.4.5 Aspiration differences between hotel EOC members

The profile of an individual is composed of the socio-demographic background and work experience, both of which may influence aspiration. For example, according to Litzky and Greenhaus

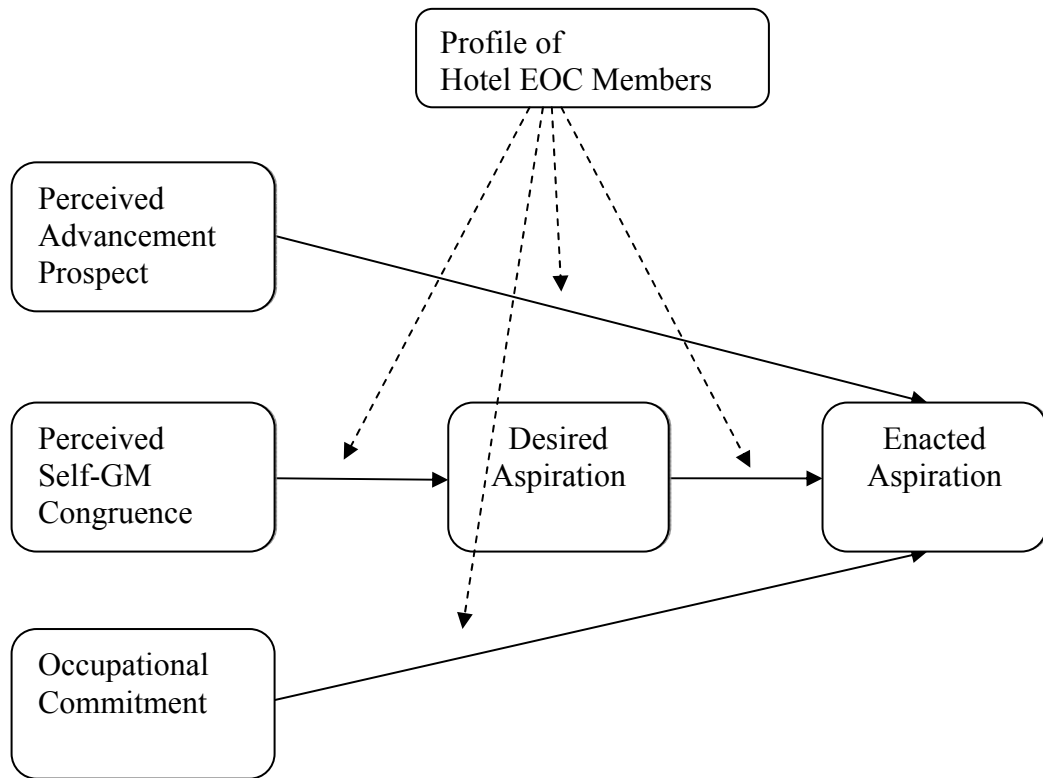
(2007), a difference exists between men and women in terms of senior management aspiration. Women have a lower desired aspiration for promotion to senior management than men partly because of the smaller degree of congruence between themselves and the senior management position and partly because of women's lower advancement prospect to attain senior management position. Work experience, such as functional work background, may influence managerial aspiration. According to Beck and La Lopa (2001), functional work backgrounds (e.g., Rooms, F&B, and Sales & Marketing) are correlated with aspiration for general management in the United States. Rooms and F&B EOC members have higher scores on the Managerial Anchor Scale; thus, they are more likely to take general management work and have a higher desire to become a hotel GM. By contrast, marketing EOC members have higher scores on the Technical Anchor Scale; thus, they focus on becoming technically competent in marketing and are less likely to take outside marketing functional work. Furthermore, a negative correlation exists between the Technical Anchor Scale and the Managerial Anchor Scale. According to Schein (1978), an individual with a dominant technical anchor may fear and disdain general management. Therefore, this discussion suggests that marketing EOC members are less likely to take general management work and have a lower desire to become a hotel GM.

To explore the relationship between the profile of hotel EOC members in Mainland China and these members' aspiration to the hotel

GM position, this study compares the effects of the aspiration path model between hotel EOC members with similar profiles. Please see figure 3 for illustration. The profiles of hotel EOC members in Mainland China include information on work experience and socio-demographic background. Thus, we hypothesize the following:

H5: The effects of perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, and occupational commitment on aspirations for hotel GM differ depending on the profile of hotel EOC members.

Figure 3 Profile of Hotel EOC Members and Aspiration Model



2.5 Analyzing Profiles via Data Mining Approach

Rich data is obtained from the profiles of a group of people. The extraction and comprehension of useful information from rich raw data is a difficult, slow, and complex process. Therefore, data mining has emerged as a feasible technique to facilitate the analysis of profiles. Data mining is effective in dealing with the discovery of hidden knowledge, unexpected patterns, and new rules from databases (Min, Min, & Emam, 2002). Data mining has two major techniques: decision tree and neural

network. Under these two techniques, researchers also develop many specific methods, such as SOM. SOM has the ability to group individuals into a cluster based on selected characteristics so that the individuals in the same cluster are more similar to each other than to those in other clusters (Brey, So, Kim, & Morrison, 2007; Kohonen, 2001; Rong, Li, & Law, 2009; Seiffert & Jain, 2002; Tan, Steinbach, & Kumar, 2006).

2.5.1 Data Mining

Generally, data mining applies artificial intelligence and sophisticated statistical techniques to perform five tasks: classification, clustering, deviation detection, associations, and raw data forecast (Magnini, Honeycutt, & Hodge, 2003). Data mining uncover hidden patterns in raw data. Some data mining techniques are closely related to traditional statistical techniques, such as linear regression and time series analysis, but the models are often richer and more flexible. The ability to handle many variables enables data mining to determine which variables form a much larger set. For example, two data mining techniques, neural networks and decision trees, can each handle up to 200 predictor variables. By contrast, traditional statistical techniques, such as multiple regression, cannot cope with this level of complexity (Thelen, Mottner, & Berman, 2004).

In the hospitality field, some researchers have adopted data mining approaches (Brey et al., 2007; Magnini et al., 2003; Min et al., 2002; Rong et al., 2009), and few have applied SOM. Rong, Li, and Law (2009) adopted SOM to analyze the online purchasers and browsers in hotel websites, focusing on customer segmentation vis-à-vis the hospitality marketing field. Most hospitality research using data mining are from the marketing or customer relationship management perspective (Brey et al., 2007; Magnini et al., 2003; Min et al., 2002; Rong et al., 2009; Thelen et al., 2004). However, studies on hospitality HRM using data mining are lacking. HRM needs to find more information about their employees. Employee-related data are rich and extensive so knowing how to extract information from such data is critical for HRM. Data mining may enable HRM to extract valuable information from the huge amount of data to achieve efficient and better HRM. Data mining can be a valuable tool to better understand hotel employees. Hotel managers may extract valuable information by mining the socio-demographic and career history data of hotel employees to increase the effectiveness of HRM.

2.5.2 Self-organizing Map (SOM)

SOM is a well-known neural network clustering algorithm invented by Professor Teuvo Kohonen. Clustering is a main task of explorative data mining and a common technique in statistical data

analysis used in many fields. Clustering is the process of grouping a set of physical or abstract objects into clusters of similar objects so that the objects in the same cluster are more similar to each other than to those in other clusters (Tan et al., 2006). In marketing, clustering is widely used to partition consumers into market segments and to better understand the characteristics of each group of consumers (Kotler, Bowen, & Markens, 2008). In labor market and HRM, clustering is also a useful technique to partition employees, such as hotel managers, into segments and to better understand the characteristics of each cluster of hotel managers, explore the differences between the different groups of hotel managers, and improve HRM. The data used in cluster analysis can be interval, ordinal, or categorical. However, having a combination of different types of variables makes the analysis more complicated because cluster analysis requires a certain way of measuring the distance between observations, and the type of measure used depends on the type of data (Manly, 2004).

The SOM contains the clustering algorithm and data visualization technique that can group similar data records together and produce low-dimensional (usually two-dimensional (2-D)) maps to present these groups. In other words, the low-dimensional maps are the results of the clustering algorithm, and they provide visualization, which helps people understand high-dimensional data. The reason for the dimension reduction of data is that the patterns in high-dimensional data

often have a complicated structure; human beings cannot visualize high-dimensional data and comprehend their meanings (Kohonen, 2001). The SOM is a very popular artificial neural network algorithm in both the academia and the industry. Many science-related fields, such as finance, medicine, physics, chemistry, and statistics, use the SOM as a standard analytical tool. Numerous industrial projects also adopt the SOM as a tool for solving practical problems (Seiffert & Jain, 2002).

Therefore, SOM is a clustering algorithm with an advantage over traditional clustering algorithms (e.g., K-means) in terms of the improved visualization capability that results from the 2-D graphical representation of clusters (Rong et al., 2009). The SOM can deal with categorical and mixed types of variables for clustering. Therefore, researchers may employ the SOM to cluster respondents based on their socio-demographic characteristics and work experience. The 2-D maps can provide easy-to-understand information that helps researchers visualize the relationships among different data records. These strengths make SOM an ideal technique for understanding different groups of respondents.

In recent years, SOM has emerged as a powerful and sophisticated type of decision support technique in hospitality research (Brey et al., 2007; Rong et al., 2009) and as a tool designed to uncover patterns in data to understand the data better and retrieve useful information. However, data mining is not a tool for determining the

problems or opportunities of a hotel but a tool designed to uncover patterns in data to help make managerial decisions once the problems or opportunities have been determined. Researchers need to establish a precise objective of limiting the scope of SOM. If the question is too broad, it will not work. The query needs to be narrow, and researchers need to have a specific goal in mind when asking questions.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of the this study is to depict hotel EOC members' profiles and examine the relationships between hotel EOC members' profiles and aspirations for hotel GM position through the aspiration model comparisons. There are numerous theories and studies on career development and aspiration, and this study adopts existing aspiration theory and model to examine and explain relationships. The essence of this study is more confirmative than explorative; therefore, this research applies a quantitative approach to examine the research hypotheses and achieve the research objectives. The procedures for this study are described in the following sections: questionnaire development, sample and data collection, and analysis of data.

3.2 Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire has three sections; the first section of the questionnaire collects respondents' career path data, including current work information and past work experience. The second section measures respondents' desired and enacted aspiration, perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, and occupational commitment. The third section collects information about the respondents' socio-demographic backgrounds.

3.2.1 Career path

The first section of the questionnaire collects the respondents' career path which includes both current work information and past work experience. Each respondent provided information on the current and past positions and the duration of these positions. At the end of this section, a question asks the respondents which departmental experience is the most important experience in qualifying for a hotel GM position.

Specifically speaking, this section covers specific work experience such as current position and department, department where the respondent worked for the longest time, other department work experience, total outside hotel work experience, number of hotel jobs held, total length of time in the current position, total length of time in major department work, and total length of time in the hotel industry. This section provides information on the career path of hotel EOC members.

3.2.2 Aspiration and related factors

The second section of the questionnaire features questions related to the following: desired aspiration, enacted aspiration, perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, and occupational commitment.

3.2.2.1 Measure of desired aspiration

Desired aspiration represented the attitudinal component of aspiration to be a hotel GM. Desired aspiration was assessed with four items (Table 8) adapted from the Desired Aspiration Scale by Tharenou and Terry (1998). The hotel EOC members indicated their agreement on four statements on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scores of the four items were averaged to produce the desired aspiration score. A high score represents a high desired aspiration to be a hotel GM.

Table 8 Desired Aspiration Scale

Items	
1.	I have no desire to be a hotel GM. (reversed code)
2.	I have an ambition to advance to a hotel GM position.
3.	I intend to move into a hotel GM position before retirement.
4.	My career plan includes attaining a hotel GM position.

3.2.2.2 Measure of enacted aspiration

Enacted aspiration represented the behavioral component of aspiration to be a hotel GM. Enacted aspiration was assessed with three items (Table 9) adapted from the Desired Aspiration Scale by Tharenou and Terry (1998). The hotel EOC members indicated how often they engaged in behaviors relevant to attaining the hotel GM position in the past 12 months on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (frequently). The scores of the three items were averaged to produce the

enacted aspiration score. A high score represents a high enacted aspiration to be a hotel GM.

Table 9 Enacted Aspiration Scale

Items
1. I have checked hotel GM position vacancies
2. I have applied for a hotel GM position.
3. I have canvassed hotel GM vacancies.

3.2.2.3 Measure of perceived self - GM congruence

The perceived self–GM congruence is a broad match or fit between the self-perceived personality/ability of a hotel EOC member and the requirements of a hotel GM position. This study developed four items (Table 10) to measure the perceived self–GM congruence based on the person–job fit scale of Singh and Greenhaus (2004). The hotel EOC members indicated their agreement to these four statements on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scores of these four items were averaged to produce the perceived self–GM congruence score. A high score represents a high perceived congruence between self and hotel GM position.

Table 10 Perceived Self-GM Congruence

Items
1. My personality fits in well with the requirements of a hotel GM position
2. The requirements of a hotel GM position match my talents and skills
3. I am confident to do the job of hotel GM well.
4. A hotel GM position would be a good fit for me

3.2.2.4 Measure of perceived advancement prospect

Perceived advancement prospect is a belief about the possibility or opportunity of achieving a hotel GM position. Perceived advancement prospect was measured by three items (Table 11) adapted from the structural career plateau measure of Godshalk (1997). The hotel EOC members indicated their agreement to these three statements on a five-point scale from ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scores of these three items were averaged to produce the perceived advancement prospect score. A high score indicates that the respondents have a strong belief about the possibility or opportunity of achieving a hotel GM position.

Table 11 Perceived Advancement Prospect Scale

Items
1. My opportunities for a hotel GM position are limited. (reversed code)
2. The likelihood that I will get a hotel GM position is high.
3. I am unlikely to obtain a hotel GM position. (reversed code)

3.2.2.5 Measure of occupational commitment

The measure of occupational commitment was measured by 18 items (Table 12) adopted from the Occupational Commitment Scale by Meyer et al. (1993), which has good reliability and validity (Allen & Meyer, 1996, 1990, 2000; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 1993;

Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Meyer et al., 2002). The hotel EOC members indicated their agreement on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 12 Occupational Commitment Scale

Items
1. Being a hotel manager is important to my self-image.
2. I regret having entered the hotel profession. (reverse-scored)
3. I am proud to be in the hotel profession.
4. I dislike being a hotel manager. (reverse-scored)
5. I do not identify with the hotel profession. (reverse-scored)
6. I am enthusiastic about hotel.
7. I have put too much into the hotel profession to consider changing now.
8. Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do.
9. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I were to change my profession.
10. It would be costly for me to change my profession now.
11. There are no pressures to keep me from changing profession. (reverse-scored)
12. Changing professions now would require considerable personal sacrifice.
13. I believe people who have been trained in a profession have a responsibility to stay in that profession for a reasonable period of time.
14. I do not feel any obligation to remain in the hotel profession. (reverse-scored)
15. I feel a responsibility to the hotel profession to continue in it.
16. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave hotel profession now.
17. I would feel guilty if I left hotel profession.
18. I am in hotel profession because of a sense of loyalty

3.2.3 Socio-demographic background

The third section of the questionnaire collects information about the socio-demographic variables of hotel EOC members such as gender,

age, highest education attainment, personal annual income, and nationality at birth.

Gender was assessed using a one-item measure asking the respondents to indicate their gender. Age was assessed using a question asking about their age in years. Highest educational attainment was assessed using a five-category (i.e., high school, higher diploma, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree), single-choice question. Personal annual income (including bonus) was assessed using a five-category (i.e., under RMB 150,000; RMB 150,000–RMB 249,999; RMB 250,000–RMB 349,999; RMB 350,000–RMB 449,999; and RMB 450,000 and above), single choice question. Nationality at birth was assessed using a question asking the respondents about their nationality at birth.

3.2.4 Final bilingual version of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed through consultations with doctoral students and faculty members of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University as well as and the senior managers of the corporate offices of international hotel brands in Mainland China.

The final version of the questionnaire contains both the Chinese and English versions. The questionnaire was first developed in English and then was later translated to Chinese. The wording of the Chinese version questionnaire was based on the translation and back-translation

process by two native Chinese-speaking doctoral students in SHTM from Mainland China and two native Chinese speaking senior managers from international brand hotels also in Mainland China.

3.3 Sample and Data Collection

3.3.1 Sampling method

The target respondents of this study were hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China. A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed in the survey because of the limitation of access. According to Fink (2002), using non-probability sampling is appropriate for surveys geared toward specific groups such as working professionals.

To conduct the survey distribution, the proponents of the study first contacted the key persons of the major international hotel brands in Mainland China, such as directors or vice presidents in the regional or country offices, and asked their support. Each regional or country office then asked its own hotels for assistance in the distribution of the survey to their hotel EOC members in the executive committee.

Six international hotel brands kindly offered their assistance: InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts, Holiday Inn, Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, and Marriott Hotel & Resorts. A total of 64 hotels allowed the survey

distribution to their hotel EOC members. Specifically, 11 InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, 23 Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts, 17 Holiday Inn, six Shangri-La hotels, 4 Sheraton hotels, and 3 Marriott hotels participated. Overall, 384 hotel EOC members received the online questionnaires.

InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts, and Holiday Inn are brands of the UK-based InterContinental Hotel Group (IHG). IHG is headquartered in Denham, United Kingdom. It operates seven hotel brands, namely, InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Hotel Indigo, Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites, and Candlewood Suites. IHG has more guest rooms than any other hotel company in the world, with 657,954 rooms in 4,507 hotels globally as of November 2010 (IHG Hotel and Room World Stats, 2010). IHG is also the largest international hotel company that operates 170 hotels in Mainland China (IHG Hotel and Room World Stats, 2012).

Shangri-La Hotels is the flagship chain held by the Hong Kong-based Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts. Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts has four hotel brands, namely, Shangri-La Hotels, Shangri-La Resorts, Traders Hotels, and Kerry Hotels. Shangri-La's history dates back to 1971, when the first deluxe hotel opened in Singapore. Currently, the company boasts of 72 hotels and resorts, with a room inventory of more than 30,000. Shangri-La Hotels operate 48 hotels in Mainland China (“Official Site Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts,” 2012).

Sheraton Hotels & Resorts is the largest, most renowned, and second oldest brand of the US-based company Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Inc. Sheraton's headquarter is in White Plains, New York, USA. It has an international portfolio of more than 400 hotels and resorts in premier cities in more than 75 countries around the world. In 1985, Sheraton became the first Western company to operate a hotel in Mainland China. It assumed the management of the state-built Great Wall Hotel in Beijing, which became the Great Wall Sheraton. The Sheraton brand operates 51 hotels in Mainland China (“Sheraton Hotels & Resorts at Sheraton.com”, 2012).

Marriott Hotels & Resorts is the signature brand of the US-based Marriott International, Inc., which has 17 brands and operates more than 3,700 properties in 73 countries. Currently, 14 hotels are operated under the Marriott Hotels & Resorts brand in Mainland China (“All Marriott Hotel Brands,” 2012).

3.3.2 Data collection

Data was collected through a web-based, self-administered questionnaire. The web-based, self-administered questionnaire was created using Qualtrics, a web-based survey software. The link to the online questionnaire was sent to the hotel EOC members of the participating hotels through their company email system. The cover letter on the first page of the questionnaire explains the general purpose of the study and invites the senior hotel managers in the executive

committees to participate in the survey. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary.

The result of the web-based survey mode may differ from that of the pencil–paper survey mode because of the difference in the respondents (Sax, Gilmartin, & Bryant, 2003). Different modes may affect the responses; therefore, using both web-based survey mode and pencil–paper survey mode can be problematic. To avoid the mode effect bias, this study only adopted the web-based survey mode.

Data collection was carried out from September to November 2011. In the first month after the link of the online questionnaire was sent out, 85 questionnaires were returned. A thank you/reminder email was sent to each participant on October. In the three-week period after the thank you/reminder email was sent out, another 73 questionnaires were returned. The second thank you/reminder email was sent to each participant on November. In the three-week period after the second thank you/reminder email was sent out, another 15 questionnaires returned. Overall, 173 online questionnaires were returned. The response rate was 45%.

3.3.3 Non-response bias

As not all people were willing or able to complete and return the survey in the sample, a non-response bias could occur. Non-response bias refers to the bias that exists when demographic or attitudinal variables separate those who responded to a survey from those who did

not (Sax et al., 2003). Therefore, a significant bias in data may be present if there is a large difference between respondents and non-respondents. To test the non-response bias, the researcher asked the IHG Corporate Office to select two hotels randomly that did not return any survey form. The two GMs were contacted by phone to ask for their assistance. The two GMs then asked their hotel EOC members to fill out the survey online. All 10 EOC members from the two hotels completed the survey. Their answers were compared with the sample through t-test.

3.5 Analyses of Data

The purpose of data analysis was to fulfill the objectives of the study and to answer the research questions. As indicated in chapter one, the main purpose of this study is to identify and explain the differences in hotel EOC members' aspiration for the hotel GM position depending on the profiles of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China. To fulfill the main purpose, three objectives needed to be achieved. A number of statistical techniques were used to achieve the research objectives.

3.5.1 Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis

Descriptive statistics was employed to describe the characteristics of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China. Correlation analysis was employed to describe the

relationships among the variables in the proposed model. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were conducted using the computer based Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.5.2 SOM and crosstabs

The profiles of hotel EOC member contain rich data. The extraction and comprehension of useful information from raw data is a difficult, slow, and complex process. Therefore, SOM emerged as a feasible technique to facilitate the analysis of hotel EOC member's profiles. SOM is a neural network data mining technique suitable for clustering hotel EOC members with many categorical variables. SOM has more advantages than traditional clustering algorithms because of its improved visualization capabilities resulting from the 2-D map. These 2-D maps easily provide an understandable geographic presentation of the relationships between different data records. In other words, the "computer self-organizing" map presents the similarity and difference of clusters. SOM has the clustering ability to group individuals into a cluster based on selected characteristics so that the individuals in the same cluster are more similar to each other than to those in other clusters (Brey, So, Kim, & Morrison, 2007; Kohonen, 2001; Rong, Li, & Law, 2009; Seiffert & Jain, 2002; Tan, Steinbach, & Kumar, 2006).

The Viscosity SOMine software was employed to cluster hotel EOC members based on their demographic characteristics and work experience variables. Clustering by SOM serves several purposes in our

analysis. First, it enables us to examine the entire group of hotel EOC members and immediately find those who appear to be significantly different from others. Second, clustering enables natural grouping structures to emerge, which gives us an alternative view of the entire group of hotel EOC members. Observing and modeling the aspiration of each natural hotel EOC member group, as distinguished by the socio-demographic characteristics and work experience of the data, may be a more insightful approach than observing the aspiration of pre-defined groups, such as gender or department. Once a natural grouping structure has emerged, we can use it for other analysis.

After identifying three clusters and hotel EOC members in each cluster, chi-square tests of independence (i.e., crosstabs) were conducted to test the associations between clusters based on demographic characteristics and work experience variables using SPSS. The chi-square test usually examines whether an association exists between two categorical variables. If the significant value is small enough (i.e., less than 0.05), then we reject the hypothesis that the variables are independent and gain confidence in the hypothesis that they are in some way related.

3.4.3 Reliability test and multiple regression analysis

Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was employed to assess the reliability of all measures of variables. Multiple regression analysis was

then used to test the hypotheses in the proposed model. Reliability test and multiple regression analysis were conducted using SPSS.

3.5.4 Repeated test and model comparison

Multiple regression analysis was repeatedly employed to test the path model by using different hotel EOC member groups clustered by SOM. Multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the data analyses beginning with the description of the survey participants, followed by a description of the statistical results for each research hypothesis. The chapter concludes with a summary of the analysis findings.

Five major sections elaborate the findings of the data: 4.1) Data Screening, 4.2) Sample Description, 4.3) Scale Reliability of Factors in Aspiration Model, 4.4) Intercorrelations among all Variables, 4.5) Clustering Hotel EOC Members Through the SOM Path Model Test, 4.6) Differences in Model Effects between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran, 4.7) Differences in Aspirations and Associated Variables between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran, and 4.8) Chapter Summary.

4.1 Data Screening

In this online survey, 173 valid questionnaires were collected. To ensure that the dataset meets the requirements for analyses, data were screened and purified by handling the missing data and outliers.

4.1.1 Missing data

Non-random missing data can bias the statistical results; therefore, dealing with the missing data before conducting the data

analysis is very important (Hair & Anderson, 2010). A number of methods can be used to handle missing data, with listwise deletion among the most commonly used methods in published studies (Gilley & Leone, 1991). When values are missing at random and represent less than 10% of the dataset, the listwise deletion method is often adopted by researchers. Its utilization in the research resulted in the removal of eight incomplete cases from the dataset before analyses.

4.1.2 Outliers

Outliers bias the mean and influence the normal distribution so removing or correcting them is important (Hair & Anderson, 2010). This study used descriptive statistics to check the accuracy of the extreme scores. No extreme scores were found. After the removal of the missing data and outliers, 165 valid questionnaires were retained. The descriptive statistics of the main constructs after data cleaning are presented in Table 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

Table 13 Descriptive Statistics for Desired Aspiration

<i>Item</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S. D.</i>
I have no desire to be a hotel general manager	1.00	5.00	3.49	1.28
I have an ambition to advance to a hotel general manager position	1.00	5.00	3.65	1.21
I intend to move into a hotel general manager position before retirement	1.00	5.00	3.70	1.30
My career plan includes attaining a hotel general manager position	1.00	5.00	3.81	1.31

Table 14 Descriptive Statistic for Enacted Aspiration

<i>Item</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S. D.</i>
I have checked hotel general manager position vacancies	1.00	5.00	2.83	1.36
I have applied for a hotel general manager position	1.00	5.00	1.88	1.16
I have canvassed hotel general manager vacancies	1.00	5.00	1.82	1.12

Table 15 Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Advancement Prospect

<i>Item</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S. D.</i>
My opportunities for a hotel general manager position are limited	1.00	5.00	3.26	1.23
The likelihood that I will get a hotel general manager position is high	1.00	5.00	3.26	1.18
I am unlikely to obtain a hotel general manager position	1.00	5.00	3.63	1.15

Table 16 Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Self-GM Congruence

<i>Item</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S. D.</i>
My personality fits in well with the requirements of a hotel general manager position	1.00	5.00	3.48	1.15
The requirements of a hotel general manager position match my talents and skills	1.00	5.00	3.48	1.11
I am confident to do the job of hotel general manager well	1.00	5.00	3.66	1.15
A hotel general manager position would be a good fit for me	1.00	5.00	3.42	1.18

Table 17 Descriptive Statistics for Occupational Commitment

<i>Item</i>	<i>Min.</i>	<i>Max.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S. D.</i>
Being a hotel manager is important to my self-image	1.00	5.00	4.45	0.89
I regret having entered the hotel profession	1.00	5.00	4.23	1.01
I am proud to be in the hotel profession	1.00	5.00	4.12	1.01
I dislike being a hotel manager	1.00	5.00	4.32	0.10
I do not identify with the hotel profession	1.00	5.00	4.32	1.06
I am enthusiastic about hotel	1.00	5.00	4.33	0.89
I have put too much into the hotel profession to consider changing now	1.00	5.00	3.76	1.16
Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do	1.00	5.00	3.35	1.20
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I were to change my profession	1.00	5.00	3.40	1.17
It would be costly for me to change my profession now	1.00	5.00	3.43	1.22
There are no pressures to keep me from changing profession	1.00	5.00	2.71	1.18
Changing professions now would require considerable personal sacrifice	1.00	5.00	3.46	1.10
I believe people who have been trained in a profession have a responsibility to stay in that profession for a reasonable period of time	1.00	5.00	4.20	0.88
I do not feel any obligation to remain in the hotel profession	1.00	5.00	3.57	1.18
I feel a responsibility to the hotel profession to continue in it	1.00	5.00	3.85	1.02
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave hotel profession now	1.00	5.00	3.39	1.14

I would feel guilty if I felt hotel profession	1.00	5.00	3.12	1.24
I am in hotel profession because of a sense of loyalty	1.00	5.00	3.88	0.10

4.2 Sample Description

In this study, a total sample was constituted by 165 hotel EOC members. Almost all (97%) the respondents worked in five or four-star hotels (star rating is based on China's national standard). To obtain in-depth information on the demographics and career paths of hotel EOC members in the major hotel functional departments, hotel EOC members were sorted by functional departments. The proportion of hotel EOC members according to functional departments is as follows: F& B (10%), Rooms (19%), Sales & Marketing (15%), Human Resources (13%), Finance & Accounting (35%), and Others (9%). The following section describes the demographics and career paths of hotel EOC members in detail.

4.2.1 Demographics of hotel EOC members

In the overall samples as a group, majority (56%) of the hotel EOC members are male. A significant difference exists between hotel EOC members in terms of gender and the functional departments. For example, females (78%) dominate the Human Resource department, and males (93%) dominate the F&B department.

Majority of hotel EOC members are young. The mean age of the hotel EOC members is 37.7 years old. The age of the participants' ranges from 26 to 57 years old; 56% of the participants are between the ages of 30 to 39 years old. A significant difference exists between the hotel EOC members in terms of age and their functional departments. The Finance & Accounting hotel EOC members are relatively older at 40.7 years old on average, whereas the Sales & Marketing hotel EOC members are relatively younger at 35.3 years old on average.

Majority of hotel EOC members have high education, with 75% having a bachelor's degree, 14% having higher diploma, and 11% having a post-graduate degree. A significant difference exists between hotel EOC members in terms of education level and their functional departments. The F&B EOC members are more inclined to have lower education, with 57% having higher diploma and 0% having a post-graduate degree. By the contrast, the Human Resources EOC members are more inclined to have a higher education level, with all having a bachelor's degree and 17% having a post-graduate degree.

The annual income of the majority (59%) of hotel EOC members is lower than RMB 250,000; only 10% have an annual income of RMB 450,000 and above. No significant difference exists between hotel EOC members' annual income and their functional departments. Table 17 summarizes the demographics of the respondents.

4.2.2 Career paths of hotel EOC members

On average, all hotel EOC members have 14.5 years of experience working in the hotel industry. It took them about 11.5 years to become hotel EOC members. In terms of the length of time spent working in the hotel industry, a significant difference exists between hotel EOC members and the different functional departments. F&B hotel EOC members have the longest (18.3 years) work length in the hotel industry, and it also took them the longest (15.6 years) to become members of the hotel EOC. By contrast, Sales & Marketing (11.7 years) and Human Resources (13.1 years) hotel EOC members have spent the least amount of time working in the hotel industry, but they became hotel EOC members in the least span of time at 10.0 years for Sales & Marketing and 9.5 years for Human Resources hotel EOC members.

In terms of the number of hotel work experience, hotel EOC members have worked for 4.3 hotels on average over the course of their careers. Among the respondents, 11% have worked only in one hotel, and 25% have worked in over six hotels. A significant difference exists in the number of hotel work experience of hotel EOC members and the different functional areas. F&B hotel EOC members have more experience working in different hotels than those from the other groups. The same applies with EOC members from other departments, with F&B hotel EOC members having worked in more than six hotels and

other hotel EOC members having worked in only three to four hotels over the course of their careers.

As regards work experience in the different functional departments, 45% of hotel EOC members have worked in only one department over the course of their careers, and the remaining 55% have experience in working in other functional departments for a short period of time. There was a significant difference in different functional department work experience between the hotel EOC members in different functional departments. Majority (64%) of the Finance & Accounting hotel EOC members have never worked in another functional department. In contrast, majority of hotel EOC members in other departments have other functional department work experience.

In terms of work experience outside hotel industry, majority (54%) of hotel EOC members have never worked outside the hotel industry. No significant difference exists between work experience outside the hotel industry and hotel EOC members in the different functional departments. Note that 7% of hotel EOC members came from outside the hotel industry and directly became hotel EOC members. Table 18 summarizes the work experiences of the respondents.

Table 18 Profile of Hotel EOC Members (N=165)

Characteristics Value	Current Functional Department						Total Sample
	F&B	Rooms	S&M	HR	F&A	Others	
Gender*							
Female	7%	39%	39%	78%	52%	27%	44%
Male	93%	61%	61%	22%	48%	73%	56%
Education*							
Higher Diploma	57%	13%	13%	0%	7%	20%	14%
Bachelor Degree	42%	84%	65%	83%	80%	73%	75%
Post Graduate	0%	3%	22%	17%	13%	7%	11%
Income (N/S)							
Under RMB 150,000	29%	32%	13%	28%	30%	33%	28%
RMB 150,000-249,999	36%	32%	39%	39%	23%	33%	31%
RMB 250,000-349,999	21%	29%	17%	17%	25%	7%	22%
RMB 350,000-449,999	14%	0%	26%	6%	7%	13%	10%
RMB 450,000 and above	0%	7%	4%	11%	14%	13%	10%
Experience-Other Department*							
No	35%	37%	33%	38%	64%	27%	45%
Yes	65%	63%	67%	62%	36%	73%	55%
Experience-Outside Hotel (N/S)							
No	65%	66%	46%	33%	61%	33%	54%
Yes	35%	34%	54%	67%	39%	67%	46%
With Prior Hotel Experience *							
No	6%	6%	25%	0%	5%	0%	7%
Yes	94%	94%	75%	100%	95%	100%	93%
Age_Year**	38.64	35.47	35.26	36.44	39.20	40.67	37.67
Experience-Number of Hotel**	6.06	3.81	4.00	4.00	4.68	3.13	4.33

Length-Hotel Industry_Year**	18.33	13.28	11.86	13.13	15.44	15.96	14.56
Length-Reach Hotel EXCOM_Year**	15.85	11.00	10.00	9.50	11.44	12.34	11.43

Percentage may not total 100% due to rounding

*Pearson's Chi-Square is significant ($\chi^2 < 0.05$); **ANOVA test is significant ($p < 0.05$)

(N/S) = Not significant

F&B: Food & Beverage

Rooms: Rooms

S&M: Sales & Marketing

HR: Human Resources

F&A: Finance & Accounting

4.3 Scale Reliability of Factors in the Aspiration Model

An aspiration path model was developed to better understand the aspirations of hotel EOC members. Five factors were adopted from the theory of aspirations: enacted aspiration, desired aspiration, perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, and occupational commitment.

Before analyzing the relationship between the profiles of hotel EOC members and their aspiration for hotel GM, the construct of each factor must be reliable. This study used the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), which is the most commonly reported estimate of reliability, to assess the internal consistency of measures. If the value of α is above 0.70, then all the measures reflect the constructs well (Kline, 1999). Table 2 shows the results of the reliability test. The coefficients range from 0.85 to 0.95 (Table 19), all of which are above the cutoff point of 0.70. This result suggests that all measures consistently

represent the same latent construct. In summary, the reliability results show a satisfactory level of internal consistency within all five constructs in this study.

Table 19 Construct Reliability of Measures

Construct Measure	Reliability α	α if Item Deleted	Item-Total Correlation
Enacted Aspiration	.85		
I have checked hotel GM position vacancies		.85	.57
I have applied for a hotel GM position		.73	.79
I have canvassed hotel GM vacancies		.69	.83
Desired Aspiration	.91		
I have no desire to be a hotel GM		.90	.78
I have an ambition to advance to a hotel GM position		.89	.81
I intend to move into a hotel GM position before retirement		.90	.76
My career plan includes attaining a hotel GM position		.87	.86
Perceived Self-GM Congruence	.95		
My personality fits in well with the requirements of a hotel GM position		.93	.88
The requirements of a hotel GM position match my talents and skills		.95	.84
I am confident to do the job of hotel GM well		.93	.89
A hotel GM position would be a good fit for me		.93	.90
Perceived Advancement Prospect	.88		
My opportunities for a hotel GM position are limited		.79	.82
The likelihood that I will get a hotel GM position is high		.85	.75
I am unlikely to obtain a hotel GM position		.85	.75
Occupational Commitment	.85		

Being a hotel manager is important to my self-image	.85	.31
I regret having entered the hotel profession	.85	.40
I am proud to be in the hotel profession	.84	.45
I dislike being a hotel manager	.85	.35
I do not identify with the hotel profession	.85	.31
I am enthusiastic about hotel	.84	.60
I have put too much into the hotel profession to consider changing now	.85	.39
Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do	.84	.46
Too much of my life would be disrupted if I were to change my profession	.84	.55
It would be costly for me to change my profession now	.84	.49
There are no pressures to keep me from changing profession	.85	.14
Changing professions now would require considerable personal sacrifice	.84	.49
I believe people who have been trained in a profession have a responsibility to stay in that profession for a reasonable period of time	.84	.54
I do not feel any obligation to remain in the hotel profession	.85	.38
I feel a responsibility to the hotel profession to continue in it	.84	.61
Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave hotel profession now	.84	.57
I would feel guilty if I left hotel profession	.83	.63
I am in hotel profession because of a sense of loyalty	.84	.57

4.4 Intercorrelations among All Variables

Table 20 presents the intercorrelations, means, and standard deviations among all variables in this study. The results indicate that the profiles of hotel EOC members are related to their aspiration for hotel GM. Specifically, desired aspiration is related to gender, income, functional department, and hotel experience, and enacted aspiration is related to gender, income, hotel experience, work length in a major department, and work length in the hotel industry.

Male hotel EOC members who work in revenue-generating departments (e.g., F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing) have higher income and more experience in different hotels, thus having high desired aspiration for hotel GM. Male hotel EOC members have longer work experience in the major departments, longer work length in the hotel industry, more experience in different hotels, and higher income, thus having high enacted aspiration for hotel GM.

However, the results of the intercorrelations among all variables only indicate the relationships between each characteristic in the hotel EOC members' profiles and their aspiration for GM. Therefore, this study clustered the hotel EOC members to obtain an in-depth understanding of the relationships between the overall profiles and aspiration.

Table 20 Correlations of All Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. Gender ^a	1																
2. Income	.20 [*]	1															
3. Age	.13	.41 ^{**}	1														
4. Education	-.09	.16 [*]	.01	1													
5. Department_ Current ^b	-.20 [*]	.04	.23 ^{**}	.16	1												
6. Department_ Most Years ^c	-.21 ^{**}	.03	.21 ^{**}	.20 [*]	.94 ^{**}	1											
7. Outside current department experience ^d	.10	.10	-.02	-.09	-.17 [*]	-.22 ^{**}	1										
8. Outside hotel experience ^e	-.14	-.07	.02	.07	.09	.07	-.02	1									
9. Number_Hotel	.25 ^{**}	.35 ^{**}	.23 ^{**}	-.03	-.03	.01	.12	.00	1								
10. Length_Current	.05	.17 [*]	.38 ^{**}	.07	.17 [*]	.17 [*]	-.14	.01	.03	1							
11. Length_Major Department	.09	.25 ^{**}	.67 ^{**}	-.13	.22 ^{**}	.20 ^{**}	-.21 ^{**}	-.20 [*]	.25 ^{**}	.41 ^{**}	1						
12. Length_Hotel Industry	.21 ^{**}	.37 ^{**}	.77 ^{**}	-.16	.08	.05	.07	-.27 ^{**}	.33 ^{**}	.35 ^{**}	.79 ^{**}	1					
13. Perceived Self-GM Congruence	.44 ^{**}	.32 ^{**}	.12	-.01	-.17 [*]	-.21 ^{**}	.05	-.09	.26 ^{**}	.12	.13	.20 [*]	1				
14. Perceived Advancement Prospect	.37 ^{**}	.34 ^{**}	-.01	.04	-.23 ^{**}	-.28 ^{**}	.06	-.07	.21 ^{**}	.03	.00	.10	.78 ^{**}	1			
15. Occupational Commitment	.01	.08	.22 ^{**}	-.20 [*]	.09	.07	-.14	.01	.18 [*]	.09	.32 ^{**}	.26 ^{**}	.25 ^{**}	.13	1		
16. Desired Aspiration	.47 ^{**}	.17 [*]	.03	-.03	-.16 [*]	-.20 [*]	-.03	-.12	.20 [*]	.11	.08	.11	.77 ^{**}	.68 ^{**}	.16 [*]	1	
17. Enacted Aspiration	.36 ^{**}	.27 ^{**}	.10	.08	-.06	-.07	.13	-.08	.30 ^{**}	.14	.16 [*]	.22 ^{**}	.55 ^{**}	.49 ^{**}	.07	.46 ^{**}	1
Mean	.56	2.41	37.67	2.97	.56	.53	.55	.46	4.33	42.11	143.46	174.75	3.51	3.38	3.77	3.66	2.18
Standard Deviation	.50	1.26	6.02	.52	.50	.50	.50	.50	2.43	43.49	78.73	74.80	1.07	1.07	.57	1.14	1.07

Notes: ^{*} $p < .05$; ^{*} $p < .01$; ^a0=Female, 1=Male; ^{bc}0=Generative, 1=Supportive; ^{de}0=No, 1=Yes

4.5 Clustering Hotel EOC Members through SOM

The second objective of this study is to identify the relationships between the profiles of hotel EOC members and their aspiration for hotel GM. One of the major limitations of the previous studies on contrast analysis is the focus on comparing between pre-assigned groups, such as gender (i.e., male vs. female) and age (e.g., 40 years and below vs. 40 years and above) and the disregard for the inherent groups within the pre-assigned groups. Observing the aspirations of each natural hotel EOC member sub-group, as distinguished by the overall characteristics of hotel EOC members' demographics and career paths, may be a more insightful approach than observing the aspirations of pre-defined groups.

This study adopted SOM to cluster the sample into sub-groups based on the similarities in their demographics and work experiences, and to identify the aspiration differences in the groups of hotel EOC members who hold certain profiles to obtain an in-depth understanding of the relationships between hotel EOC members' profiles and their aspiration for hotel GM.

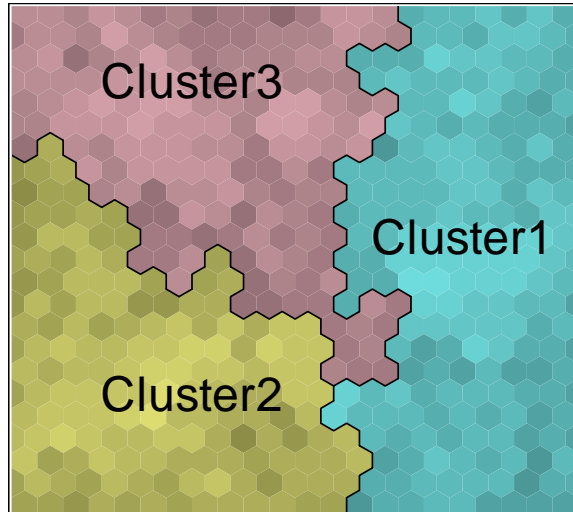
SOM is a neural network data mining technique suitable for clustering hotel EOC members with many categorical variables. SOM has more advantages than traditional clustering algorithms because of its improved visualization capability resulting from 2-D map. These 2-D maps provide an easy-to-understand geographic presentation of the relationships between different data records. In other words, the

“computer self-organizing” map presents the similarities and differences of clusters.

Clustering by SOM may serve two main purposes. First, clustering enables the natural grouping structures to emerge, which gives us an alternative view of the entire sub-group of hotel EOC members. Second, researchers may compare these natural sub-groups in various perspectives and find those who appear to be significantly different from others in the future studies.

Data of the 12 characteristics of the hotel EOC member’s profiles were fed to the Viscovery SOMine software using the SOM algorithm, which had 500 nodes and was trained with a tension of 0.5. The nodes on the Kohonen layer reflect the topological properties of hotel EOC members and project them onto a 2-D space through a map, as shown in Figure 4. This map identifies three segments of hotel EOC members represented by Cluster 1, Cluster 2, and Cluster 3. Each cluster corresponds to a group of hotel EOC members with similar characteristics. Specifically, these three clusters are based on the 12 characteristics of the demographics and career paths of hotel EOC members.

Figure 4 Three Clusters of Hotel EOC Members via SOM



The profile of each cluster can be determined by visualizing its component planes. Figure 5 presents the 12 component planes for the 12 demographics and career paths. The color scale represents the distribution of the value and the characteristics of each cluster. For example, in the gender component plane, the female value “0” is represented by blue, and the male value “1” is represented by red. The color presentation of Cluster 1 is mostly blue, indicating that the majority of Cluster 1 is female. In contrast, the color presentations of Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 are mostly red, indicating that majority of Cluster 2 and Cluster 3 are male. The values of these 12 demographics and career paths are shown in Table 21.

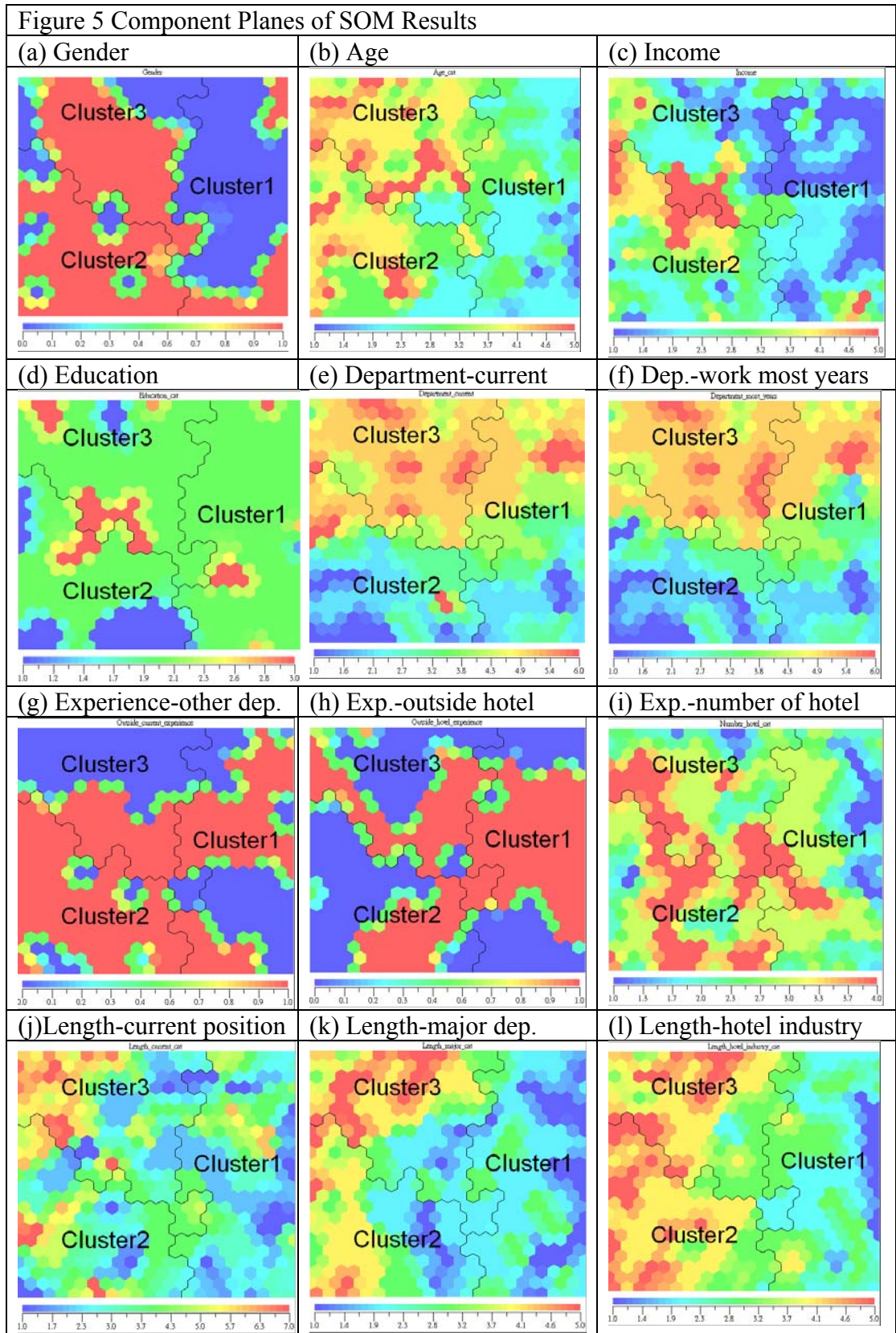


Table 21 Demographics & Career Paths of Three Clusters (N=165)

Characteristics Value	Clusters			Total Sample
	1 Rookie	2 Supportive Veteran	3 Generative Veteran	
Gender**				
0. Female	63%	36%	24%	44%
1. Male	37%	64%	76%	56%
Age**				
1. Under 30 years	14%	0%	0%	6%
2. 30 - 34 years	60%	6%	12%	30%
3. 35 - 39 years	23%	22%	33%	26%
4. 40 - 44 years	3%	42%	38%	25%
5. 45 years and above	0%	30%	17%	14%
Education**				
1. Higher Diploma	3%	6%	41%	14%
2. Bachelor Degree	89%	74%	55%	75%
3. Post Graduate	8%	20%	5%	11%
Income**				
1. Under RMB 150,000	48%	18%	10%	28%
2. RMB 150,000-249,999	35%	32%	24%	31%
3. RMB 250,000-349,999	14%	26%	29%	22%
4. RMB 350,000-449,999	2%	6%	26%	10%
5. RMB 450,000 and above	2%	18%	12%	10%
Position-current **				
1. Food and Beverage	5%	0%	29%	10%
2. Rooms	27%	0%	29%	19%
3. Sales and Marketing	18%	4%	21%	15%
4. Human Resources	18%	12%	6%	13%
5. Finance and Accounting	27%	68%	8%	34%
6. Others	6%	16%	6%	9%
Department-work most years**				
1. Food & Beverage	4%	0%	40%	13%
2. Rooms	27%	0%	27%	19%
3. Sales & Marketing	21%	4%	19%	15%
4. Human Resources	13%	12%	6%	11%
5. Finance & Accounting	28%	68%	8%	35%
6. Others	6%	16%	0%	7%
Experience-other department **				
0 No	45%	72%	17%	45%

1. Yes	55%	28%	83%	55%
Experience-outside hotel (N/S)				
0. No	51%	46%	67%	54%
1. Yes	49%	54%	33%	46%
Experience-number of hotel**				
1. Only 1	19%	8%	2%	11%
2. 2-3	39%	26%	23%	30%
3. 4-5	37%	34%	29%	34%
4. 6 and above	5%	32%	46%	25%
Length-current position**				
1. under 12 months	19%	4%	10%	12%
2. 12 months - 23 months	30%	26%	19%	26%
3. 24 months - 35 months	21%	6%	19%	16%
4. 36 months - 47 months	16%	16%	19%	17%
5. 48 months - 71 months	10%	18%	13%	13%
6. 72 months - 107 months	3%	12%	13%	9%
7. 108 months and above	0%	18%	8%	8%
Length-major department**				
1. 60 months and under	36%	4%	10%	19%
2. 61 months - 120 months	46%	18%	23%	31%
3. 181 months - 240 months	18%	16%	17%	17%
4. 181 months - 240 months	0%	34%	40%	22%
5. 241 months and above	0%	28%	10%	12%
Length-hotel industry**				
1. 60 months and under	18%	0%	0%	7%
2. 61 months - 120 months	43%	6%	2%	20%
3. 121 months -180 months	34%	24%	17%	26%
4. 181 months - 240 months	5%	42%	48%	29%
5. 241 months and above	0%	28%	33%	18%

Percentage may not total 100% due to rounding

** Pearson's Chi-Square is significant ($\chi^2 < .01$)

(N/S) = Not significant

After clustering the hotel EOC members into three sub-groups, chi-square tests of independence (i.e., crosstabs) were conducted to test the associations between clusters based on 12 demographics and career paths using SPSS. Chi-square tests usually examine whether an

association exists between two categorical variables. If the significant value is small enough (i.e., less than .05), then we reject the hypothesis that the variables are independent. The hypothesis that they are related is given some validity.

The results of the chi-square test indicate that a significant difference exists between the clusters. Table 20 presents the profile of the respondents and the chi-square test results. For example, in gender, the crosstab shows that the gender difference between the three clusters is highly significant ($\chi^2 < .001$), indicating that an association exists between gender and the three clusters. Cluster 1 is dominated by females (63%), and Clusters 2 (64%) and 3 (76%) are dominated by males. The proportion of males and females in these three clusters is significantly different. Crosstab also confirms the effectiveness of the SOM method.

Based on the results of the SOM component planes and crosstab, each cluster has a special and distinguishing characteristic that separates it from the rest. The hotel EOC members in Cluster 1 are younger females, have a higher level of education, have a lower personal annual income, have worked in the major departments and in the hotel industry for a shorter period of time, and have less hotel experience. Therefore, this study defines the hotel EOC members in Cluster 1 as Rookie, according to their profile.

Hotel EOC members in Cluster 2 are middle-aged males, have a higher level of education, have a higher personal annual income, have

worked in supportive departments such as Human Resources and Finance & Accounting, have worked only in one major department over the course of their careers, have worked in the major departments and in the hotel industry for a longer period of time, and have more hotel experience. Based on the profile of this cluster, this study defines hotel EOC members in Cluster 2 as Supportive Veteran.

Hotel EOC members in Cluster3 are middle-aged males, have a lower level of education, have a higher personal annual income, have worked in revenue-generating departments (e.g., F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing), have other hotel department work experience, have more hotel experiences, and have worked in the major departments and in the hotel industry for a longer period of time. Based on the profile of this cluster, this study defines hotel EOC members in Cluster 3 as Generative Veteran.

Hotel EOC members in the Generative Veteran and Supportive Veteran clusters are senior members and have more experience than those in the Rookie cluster. The major difference between the Generative Veteran and the Supportive Veteran is their functional areas. Majority of the Generative Veteran members work in F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing functional areas, and most of the Supportive Veteran members work in Human Resources and Finance & Accounting.

The findings show a significant profile difference between the three hotel EOC member sub-groups. Table 21 summarizes the demographics and career paths of the respondents for these three clusters.

4.6 Path Model Tests

After the reliability tests were satisfied, this study then evaluated the proposed path model of aspirations. The multiple regression test was used to examine the hypotheses of the effects on the aspiration for the hotel GM position. The path model was tested first by using all the hotel EOC members. The model was repeatedly tested using the three clusters of hotel EOC members respectively. The results of the tests were used for later model comparison. The effects on aspiration were based on standardized beta values. The standardized beta value indicates the number of standard deviations that the outcome will change as a result of one standard deviation change in the predictor. The standardized beta values were measured in the standard deviation units; they are directly comparable. Therefore, the standardized coefficient values provide a better insight into the importance of a predictor in the model (Field, 2009).

4.6.1 Path model test for all hotel EOC members

First of all, this study tested the path model using all the hotel EOC members.

H1: The higher the level of desired aspiration, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 1 was tested by evaluating the path coefficient between desired aspiration and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 22, the unstandardized coefficient from desired aspiration to enacted aspiration is 0.22; the standardized coefficient is 0.24, which is significant ($p < 0.05$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicate that the influence of desired aspiration on enacted aspiration is both positive and significant. Thus, Hypothesis1 is supported.

H2: The higher the level of perceived advancement prospect, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 2 was tested by evaluating the path coefficient between perceived advancement prospect and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 22 the unstandardized coefficient from perceived advancement prospect to enacted aspiration is 0.33; the standardized coefficient is 0.33, which is significant ($p < 0.01$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicate that the influence of perceived advancement prospect on enacted aspiration is both positive and significant. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

H3: The higher the level of occupational commitment, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by examining the path coefficient between occupational commitment and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 22, the unstandardized coefficient from occupational commitment to enacted aspiration is -0.02; the standardized coefficient is -0.01, which is not significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

H4: The higher the level of perceived Self-GM congruence, the higher the level of desired aspiration.

Hypothesis 4 was tested by examining the path coefficient between perceived self-GM congruence and desired aspiration. As shown in Table 22, the unstandardized coefficient from perceived self-GM congruence to desired aspiration is 0.82; the standardized coefficient is 0.77, which is significant ($p < 0.01$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicate that the influence of perceived self-GM congruence on desired aspiration is both positive and significant. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

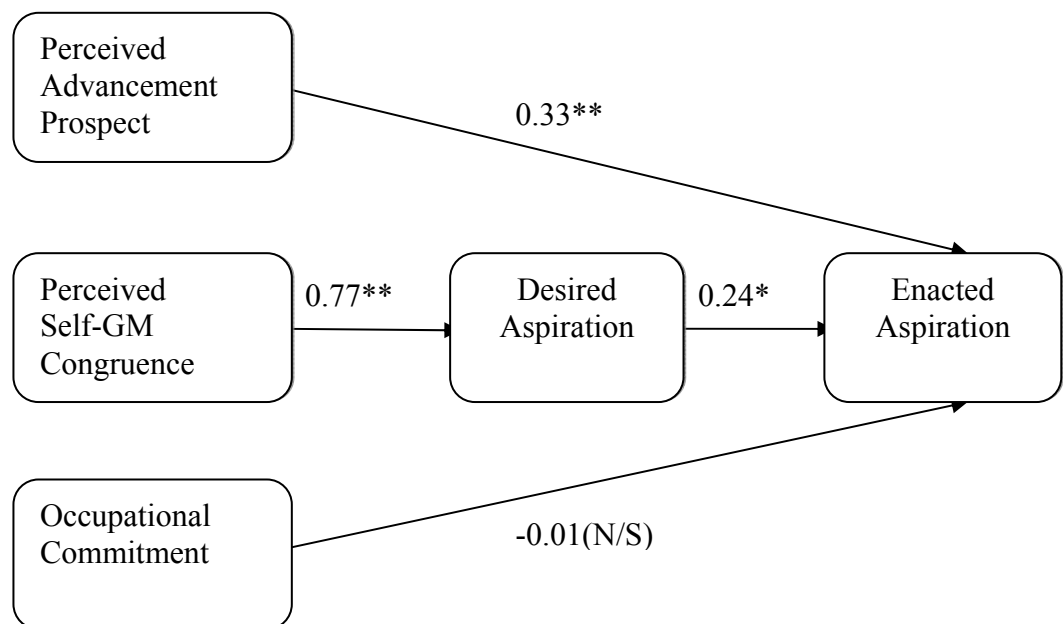
Table 22 Path Results for the Baseline Model

Hypothesis/Path	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	Results
H1: Desired Aspiration → Enacted Aspiration	0.22	0.24*	Supported
H2: Perceived Advancement Prospect → Enacted Aspiration	0.33	0.33**	Supported
H3: Occupational Commitment → Enacted Aspiration	-0.02	-0.01(N/S)	Not Supported

H4: Perceived Self-GM Congruence → Desired Aspiration	0.82	0.77**	Supported
Noted: *Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.05$			
** Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.01$			
(N/S) Not Significant			

In conclusion, perceived self-GM congruence has a positive effect on desired aspiration. Desired aspiration and perceived advancement prospect both have a positive effect on enacted aspiration, but occupational commitment has no significant effect on enacted aspiration. Furthermore, perceived advancement prospect ($\beta_1 = 0.33$, $p < 0.01$) is more important than desired aspiration ($\beta_1 = 0.24$, $p < 0.05$) as a predictor for enacted aspiration. The figure 6 shows the path model associated with the standardized beta values.

Figure 6 Path Model with Standardized Beta Values for all Hotel EOC Members



4.6.2 Path model test for Rookie

The study then tested the path model using the Rookie hotel EOC members (Cluster 1) clustered through SOM.

H1: The higher the level of desired aspiration, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

The Hypothesis1 was tested by evaluating the path coefficient between Desired Aspiration and Enacted Aspiration. As shown in Table 23, the unstandardized coefficient from Desired Aspiration to Enacted Aspiration was 0.27 and the standardized coefficient was 0.38; and was significant ($p < 0.05$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicated that the influence of Desired Aspiration on Enacted Aspiration was both positive and significant; thus the Hypothesis1 was supported.

H2: The higher the level of perceived advancement prospect, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

The Hypothesis2 was tested by evaluating the path coefficient between Perceived Advancement Prospect and Enacted Aspiration. As shown in Table 23, the unstandardized coefficient from Perceived

Advancement Prospect to Enacted Aspiration was 0.14 and the standardized coefficient was 0.16; and was not significant ($p < 0.05$); thus the hypothesis2 was not supported.

H3: The higher the level of occupational commitment, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

The Hypotheses 3 was tested by examining the path coefficient between Occupational Commitment and Enacted Aspiration. As shown in Table 23, the unstandardized coefficient from Occupational Commitment to Enacted Aspiration was -0.16 and the standardized coefficient was -0.10; and was not significant ($p < 0.05$); thus the hypothesis3 was not supported.

H4: The higher the level of perceived Self-GM congruence, the higher the level of desired aspiration.

The Hypothesis4 was tested by examining the path coefficient between Perceived Self-GM Congruence and Desired Aspiration. As shown in Table 23, the unstandardized coefficient from Perceived Self-GM Congruence to Desired Aspiration was 0.87 and the standardized coefficient was 0.79; and was significant ($p < 0.01$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicated that the

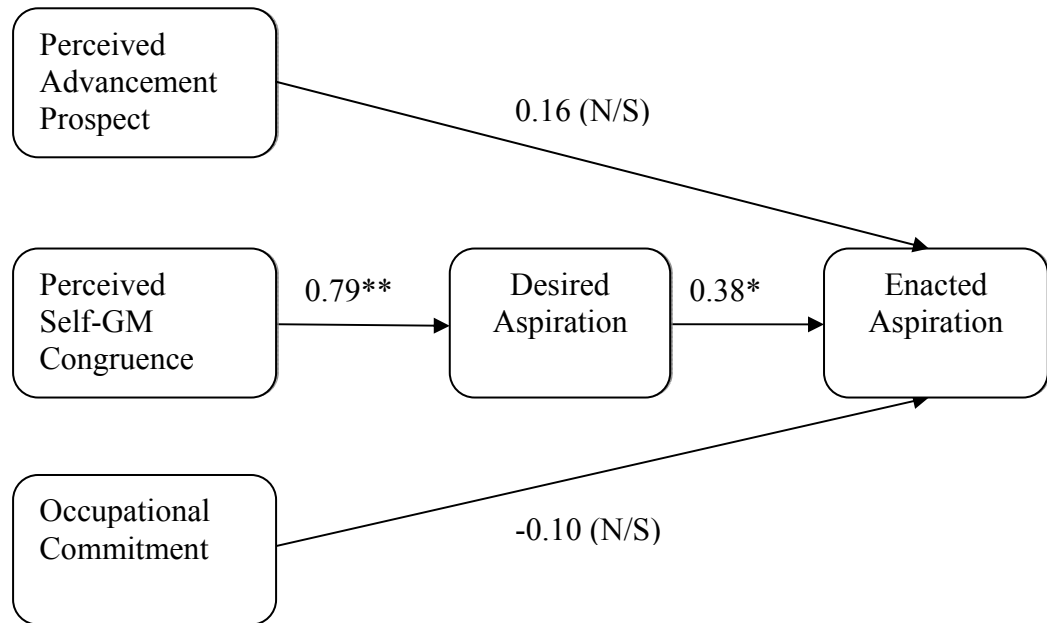
influence of Perceived Self-GM Congruence on Desired Aspiration was both positive and significant; thus the Hypothesis4 was supported.

Table 23 Path Results for Rookie

Hypothesis/Path	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	Results
H1: Desired Aspiration → Enacted Aspiration	0.27	0.38*	Supported
H2: Perceived Advancement Prospect → Enacted Aspiration	0.14	0.16 (N/S)	Not Supported
H3: Occupational Commitment → Enacted Aspiration	-0.16	-0.10 (N/S)	Not Supported
H4: Perceived Self-GM Congruence → Desired Aspiration	0.87	0.79**	Supported
*Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.05$			
** Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.01$			
(N/S) Not Significant			

In conclusion, for Rookie hotel EOC members, Perceived Self-GM Congruence has a positive effect on Desired Aspiration. Only Desired Aspiration has positive effect on Enacted Aspiration but Perceived Advancement Prospect and Occupational Commitment has no significant effect on Enacted Aspiration. Figure 6 shows the path model associated with the standardized beta values.

Figure 7 Path Model with Standardized Beta Values for Rookie



4.6.3 Path Model Test for Supportive Veteran

This study then tested the path model using the Supportive Veteran hotel EOC members (Cluster 2) clustered through SOM.

H1: The higher the level of desired aspiration, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 1 was tested by evaluating the path coefficient between desired aspiration and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 24, the unstandardized coefficient from desired aspiration to enacted aspiration is 0.39; the standardized coefficient is 0.41, which is significant ($p < 0.05$). The path coefficient value and significance level

together indicate that the influence of desired aspiration on enacted aspiration is both positive and significant. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

H2: The higher the level of perceived advancement prospect, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 2 is tested by evaluating the path coefficient between perceived advancement prospect and enacted Aspiration. As shown in Table 24, the unstandardized coefficient from perceived advancement prospect to enacted aspiration is 0.12; the standardized coefficient is 0.11, which is not significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 2 is not supported.

H3: The higher the level of occupational commitment, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by examining the path coefficient between occupational commitment and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 24, the unstandardized coefficient from occupational commitment to enacted aspiration is 0.02; the standardized coefficient is 0.012, which is not significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

H4: The higher the level of perceived Self-GM congruence, the higher the level of desired aspiration.

Hypothesis 4 was tested by examining the path coefficient between perceived self–GM congruence and desired aspiration. As shown in Table 24, the unstandardized coefficient from perceived self–GM congruence to desired aspiration is 0.87; the standardized coefficient is 0.75, which is significant ($p < 0.01$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicate that the influence of perceived self–GM congruence on desired aspiration is both positive and significant. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

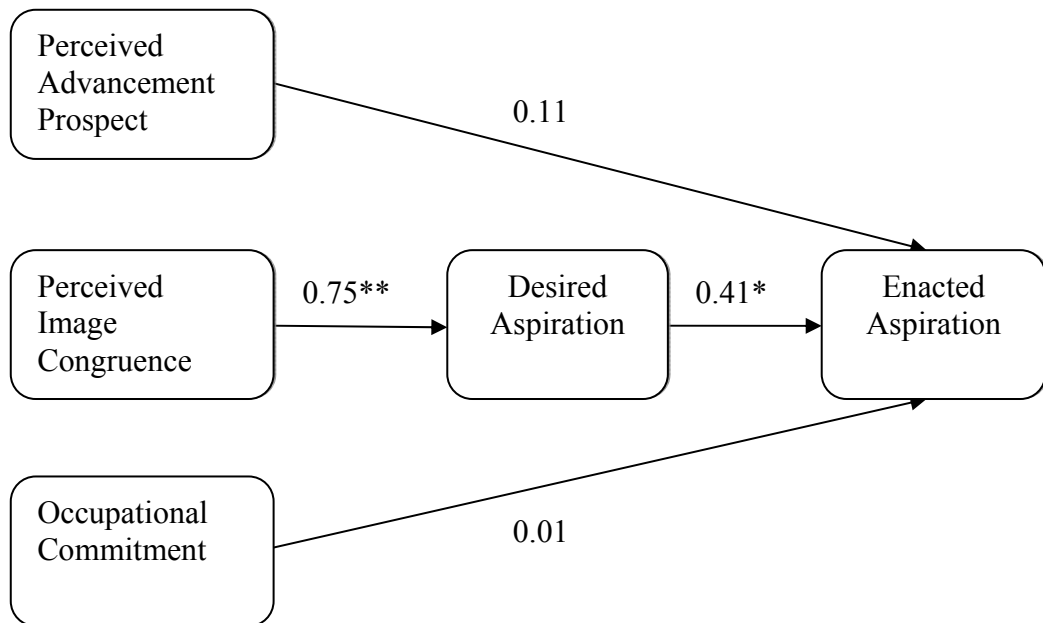
Table 24 Path results for Supportive Veteran

Hypothesis/Path	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	Results
H1: Desired Aspiration → Enacted Aspiration	0.39	0.41*	Supported
H2: Perceived Advancement Prospect → Enacted Aspiration	0.12	0.11(N/S)	Not Supported
H3: Occupational Commitment → Enacted Aspiration	0.02	0.01(N/S)	Not Supported
H4: Perceived Self-GM Congruence → Desired Aspiration	0.87	0.75**	Supported
*Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.05$			
** Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.01$			
(N/S) Not Significant			

In conclusion, for the Supportive Veteran hotel EOC members, perceived self–GM congruence has a positive effect on desired aspiration. Only desired aspiration has a positive effect on enacted aspiration, but perceived advancement prospect and occupational

commitment has no significant effect on enacted aspiration. Figure 8 shows the path model associated with the standardized beta values.

Figure 8 Path Model with Standard Beta Values for Supportive Veteran



4.6.4 Path model test for Generative Veteran

The study tested the path model using the Generative Veteran hotel EOC members (Cluster 3) clustered through SOM.

H1: The higher the level of desired aspiration, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 1 was tested by evaluating the path coefficient between desired aspiration and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 25, the unstandardized coefficient from desired aspiration to enacted

aspiration is -0.10; the standardized coefficient is -0.09, which is not significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 is not supported.

H2: The higher the level of perceived advancement prospect, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 2 was tested by evaluating the path coefficient between perceived advancement prospect and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 25, the unstandardized coefficient from perceived advancement prospect to enacted aspiration is 0.80; the standardized coefficient is 0.70, which is significant ($p < 0.01$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicate that the influence of perceived advancement prospect on enacted aspiration is both positive and significant. Thus, Hypothesis 2 is supported.

H3: The higher the level of occupational commitment, the higher the level of enacted aspiration.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by examining the path coefficient between occupational commitment and enacted aspiration. As shown in Table 25, the unstandardized coefficient from occupational commitment to enacted aspiration is -0.19; the standardized coefficient is -0.08, which is not significant ($p < 0.05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 is not supported.

H4: The higher the level of perceived Self-GM congruence, the higher the level of desired aspiration.

Hypothesis 4 was tested by examining the path coefficient between perceived self–GM congruence and desired aspiration. As shown in Table 25, the unstandardized coefficient from perceived self–GM congruence to desired aspiration is 0.71; the standardized coefficient is 0.74, which is significant ($p < 0.01$). The path coefficient value and significance level together indicate that the influence of perceived self–GM congruence on desired aspiration is both positive and significant. Thus, Hypothesis 4 is supported.

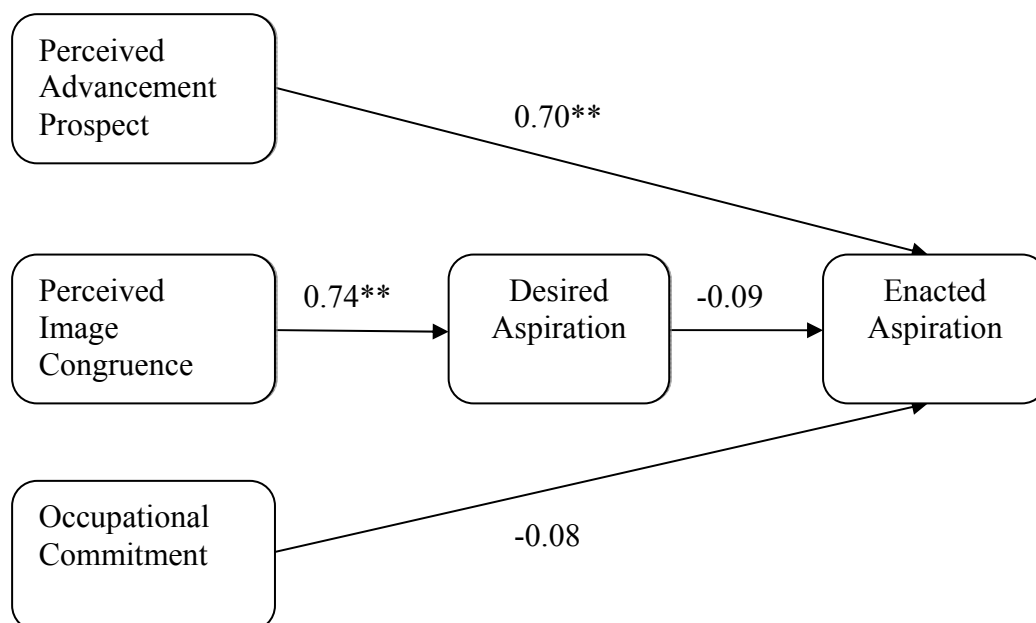
Table 25 Path Results for Generative Veteran

Hypothesis/Path	Unstandardized Coefficient	Standardized Coefficient	Results
H1: Desired Aspiration → Enacted Aspiration	-0.10	-0.09(N/S)	Not Supported
H2: Perceived Advancement Prospect → Enacted Aspiration	0.80	0.70**	Supported
H3: Occupational Commitment → Enacted Aspiration	-0.19	-0.08(N/S)	Not Supported
H4: Perceived Self-GM Congruence → Desired Aspiration	0.71	0.74**	Supported
*Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.05$			
** Parameter estimates significant at $p < 0.01$			
(N/S) Not Significant			

In conclusion, for the Generative Veteran hotel EOC members, perceived self–GM congruence has a positive effect on desired aspiration. Only perceived advancement prospect has a positive effect on enacted aspiration. Desired aspiration and occupational commitment

has no significant effect on enacted aspiration. Figure 8 shows the path model associated with the standardized beta values.

Figure 9 Path Model with Standardized Beta Values for Generative Veteran



4.7 Differences in Model Effects between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran

H5: The effects of perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, and occupational commitment on aspirations for hotel GM differ depending on the profile of hotel EOC members.

To examine the model effect differences between hotel EOC members, this study compared the model effects for the three groups of hotel EOC members: Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran. The comparisons were based on the standardized beta values in the path model. Table 26 summarizes the standardized beta values for all path models.

Table 26 Path Model Comparisons

Hypothesis/Path	Cluster			All Hotel EOC members
	1 Rookie	2 Supportive Veteran	3 Generative Veteran	
H1: Desired Aspiration → Enacted Aspiration	0.38*	0.41**	-0.09 (N/S)	0.24*
H2: Perceived Advancement Prospect → Enacted Aspiration	0.16(N/S)	0.11 (N/S)	0.70**	0.33**
H3: Occupational Commitment → Enacted Aspiration	-0.10(N/S)	0.01(N/S)	-0.08 (N/S)	-0.01 (N/S)
H4: Perceived Self-GM Congruence → Desired Aspiration	0.79**	0.75**	0.74**	0.77**

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

**Significant at $p < 0.01$

(N/S) Not Significant

The number in the bold text show the highest value among clusters, and the number in the underlined text show the lowest value among clusters.

4.7.1 Effect of comparisons on desired aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran

The effects of perceived self-GM congruence on desired aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran were based on standardized beta values, as shown in Table 26. The results indicate that the effects of perceived self-GM congruence on desired aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran are different. Specifically, perceived self-GM congruence has

the highest effect on desired aspiration for Rookie ($\beta_1 = 0.79, p < 0.01$), followed by Supportive Veteran ($\beta_1 = 0.75, p < 0.01$) and Generative Veteran ($\beta_1 = 0.74, p < 0.01$). The results indicate that the effects of perceived self–GM congruence on desired aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran are different. Therefore, perceived self–GM congruence has a greater effect on desired aspiration for those in the Rookie cluster than it has for those in the Veteran.

4.7.2 Effect of Comparisons on enacted aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran

The effects of desired aspiration, perceived advancement prospect, and occupational commitment on enacted aspiration were based on their standardized beta values, as shown in Table 26. For the overall hotel EOC members, both perceived advancement prospect and desired aspiration have a significant positive effect on enacted aspiration, and occupational commitment has no significant effect on enacted aspiration. However, for Rookie and Supportive Veteran, desired aspiration is the only factor with a significant effect on enacted aspiration, and perceived advancement prospect and occupational commitment have no significant effect on enacted aspiration. Moreover, desired aspiration has a greater effect on enacted aspiration for Supportive Veteran ($\beta_1 = 0.41, p < 0.01$) than for Rookie ($\beta_1 = 0.38, p < 0.05$), Generative Veteran ($\beta_1 = -0.09, N/S$), and overall hotel EOC members ($\beta_1 = 0.24, p < 0.05$). In the contrast, for Generative Veterans,

perceived advancement prospect is the only factor with a significant effect on enacted aspiration. Desired aspiration and occupational commitment have no significant effect on enacted aspiration. Perceived advancement prospect has a greater effect on enacted aspiration for Generative Veteran ($\beta_1 = 0.70, p < 0.01$) than that for overall hotel EOC members ($\beta_1 = 0.33, p < 0.01$), Rookie ($\beta_1 = -0.10, N/S$), and Supportive Veteran ($\beta_1 = 0.01, N/S$).

In conclusion, these findings indicate that the effects on enacted aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran are different. The effect of desired aspiration is important for Rookie and Supportive Veteran to enacted aspiration but not for Generative Veteran. For Rookie and Supportive Veteran, desire transforms actual action, and this desire is more important for Supportive Veteran than for Rookie to take actual action. By contrast, the effect of perceived advancement prospect is important for Generative Veteran to enacted aspiration but not for Rookie and Supportive Veteran. The likelihood and possibility of hotel GM position will motivate Generative Veteran to take actual action to pursue the hotel GM position. However, these factors will not induce Rookie and Supportive Veteran to take action.

4.8 Important experience in qualifying to be hotel GMs

The hotel EOC members were asked which departmental experience had been the most important experience in qualifying for a hotel GM position. Most hotel EOC members considered that work experience in Sales & Marketing is the most important experience in qualifying for a hotel GM position, followed by Rooms and Food & Beverage (Table 26).

Table 27 Perception of Important Experience in Qualifying Hotel GM Position (n =165)

1. Sales & Marketing	36%
2. Rooms	22%
3. Food & Beverage	16%
4. Accounting & Finance	14%
5. Human Resources	6%
6. Other	6%
Total	100%

4.9 Test for the Non-response Bias

To test the non-response bias, the researcher asked one of the international hotel groups to select two hotels randomly that did not return any survey form. The two GMs were contacted by phone to ask for their assistance. The two GMs then asked their hotel EOC members to fill out the survey online. All 10 EOC members from the two hotels completed the survey. Their answers were compared with the sample through independent t-test. No statistical differences were found (Table 28).

Table 28 Results of Independent t-test

	Group 1* Mean (n=165)	Group 2** Mean (n=10)	<i>p</i>
Enacted Aspiration	2.18	2.51	0.37(N/S)
Desired Aspiration	3.66	3.86	0.71(N/S)
Perceived Self-GM Congruence	3.51	3.75	0.57(N/S)
Perceived Advancement Prospect	3.38	3.81	0.78(N/S)
Occupational Commitment	3.77	3.78	0.84(N/S)
*Group 1 is the main survey			
**Group 2 is the survey of two randomly selected non-response hotels			
(N/S) = Not significant			

4.10 Post Hoc Analyses

To better understand the relationship between hotel EOC members' profiles and their aspirations, this study conducted post hoc analyses to determine the sub-group differences.

4.10.1 Relationships between current work department and perception of important experience in qualifying for a hotel GM position

It was a reasonable assumption that hotel EOC members would think their current work department as important experience in

qualifying for a hotel GM position. However, the majority of Human Resource and Accounting & Finance hotel EOC members did not rank their own department as the most important department experience, instead, most of them ranked Sales & Marketing work experience as the most important department experience. For Food & Beverage and Rooms hotel EOC members, the majority ranked their own department as the most important and Sales & Marketing work experience as the most important department experience got the second. The majority of Sales & Marketing hotel EOC members considered Sales & Marketing work experience as the most important department experience in qualifying for a hotel GM position (Table 29).

Table 29 Current Department VS. Most Important Department Experience for GM Position

Current Department	Perception of important department experience in qualifying for a hotel GM position (n=165)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Food & Beverage	59%	12%	24%	0%	0%	6%
2. Rooms	9%	44%	28%	6%	3%	9%
3. Sales & Marketing	8%	4%	79%	0%	4%	4%
4. Human Resources	14%	24%	29%	19%	5%	9.5%
5. Accounting & Finance	11%	16%	36%	2%	32%	4%
6. Other	13%	40%	13%	20%	13%	0%

4.10.1 Differences in aspirations and associated variables among Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran

To better understand the relationship between hotel EOC members' profiles and their aspirations, this study conducted post hoc analyses to determine the sub-group differences in enacted aspiration, desired Aspiration, perceived advancement prospect, perceived self-GM congruence, and occupation commitment.

ANOVA tests were applied on enacted aspiration, desired aspiration, perceived advancement prospect, perceived self-GM congruence, and occupation commitment to determine the differences between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran. The results of ANOVA were shown in Table 30.

To examine the data for any between-group differences between the existing means, post hoc tests were conducted. Various kinds of post hoc tests were used in various situations. According to Field (2009), 1) if sample sizes are equal, use Turkey's HSD or REGWQ; 2) if sample sizes are slightly different, use Gabriel; 3) if sample sizes are very different, use Hochberg's GT2. The sample sizes of the three clusters were not equal so this study chose Hochberg's GT2. Generative Veteran has the highest means in every construct among the groups so this study also used Dunnett t-test to determine whether the means of Generative Veteran will be larger than that of Rookie and Supportive Veteran.

In summary, the mean scores of the five variables were computed for Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran and tested for differences using ANOVA tests. Post hoc Hochberg's GT2 and Dunnett t-test tests were used to identify which cluster of hotel EOC members differed from each other.

The mean scores and significant differences are shown in Table 26. The result of the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in enacted aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran, $F(2, 156) = 5.18, p < 0.05$. Post hoc Hochberg's GT2 tests show that a significant difference exists between Rookie and Generative Veteran; however, no significant difference exists between Rookie and Supportive Veteran, and between Supportive Veteran and Generative Veteran. Dunnett t-test treated Generative Veteran as a control and compared Rookie and Supportive Veteran against it. Using a one-tailed probability, the mean of Generative Veteran was hypothesized to be greater than that of Rookie and Supportive Veteran. The result of Dunnett t-test indicates that Generative Veteran has a significantly higher enacted aspiration than Rookie and Supportive Veteran, $p > .05$ (1-tailed). In conclusion, Generative Veteran has a significantly higher enacted aspiration than Supportive Veteran and Rookie. Generative Veteran take more actual actions to pursue the hotel GM position than do Supportive Veteran and Rookie.

The result of the ANOVA test reveals no significant difference in desired aspiration between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and

Generative Veteran, $F(2, 156) = 1.50, p > .05$. Dunnett t-test also indicates that the desired aspiration of Generative Veteran is not significantly greater than that of Rookie and Supportive Veteran, $p > .05$ (1-tailed).

The result of the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in perceived self-GM congruence between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran, $F(2, 156) = 4.21, p < 0.05$. Hochberg's GT2 test shows that a significant difference exists between Rookie and Generative Veteran, $p < 0.05$, but no significant difference exists between Rookie and Supportive Veteran, $p > 0.05$. No significant difference exists between Supportive Veteran and Generative Veteran, $p > 0.05$. Dunnett t-test treated Generative Veteran as a control and compared Rookie and Supportive Veteran against it. Using a one-tailed probability, the mean of Generative Veteran was hypothesized to be greater than that of Rookie and Supportive Veteran. The result of the Dunnett t-test indicates that Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived self-GM congruence than Rookie, $p < 0.05$ (1-tailed). However, even as a one-tailed probability, perceived self-GM congruence of Generative Veteran is not significantly greater than of that Supportive Veteran, $p > 0.05$ (1-tailed). In conclusion, Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived self-GM congruence than Rookie.

The result of the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in perceived advancement opportunity between Rookie, Supportive

Veteran, and Generative Veteran, $F(2, 156) = 5.59, p < 0.05$. Hochberg's GT2 indicates that a significant difference exists between Rookie and Generative Veteran, and between Supportive Veteran and Generative Veteran, $p < 0.05$. However, no significant difference exists between Rookie and Supportive Veteran, $p > 0.05$. Dunnett t-test treated Generative Veteran as a control and compared Rookie and Supportive Veteran against it. Using a one-tailed probability, the mean of the perceived advancement opportunity in Generative Veteran was hypothesized to be greater than that of Rookie and Supportive Veteran. The result of the Dunnett t-test indicates that Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived advancement opportunity than Rookie and Supportive Veteran, $p < 0.05$ (1-tailed). In conclusion, Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived advancement opportunity than Supportive Veteran and Rookie.

The result of the ANOVA reveals a significant difference in occupational commitment between Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran, $F(2, 156) = 3.34, p < 0.05$. Hochberg's GT2 shows that a significant difference exists between Rookie and Generative Veteran, $p < 0.05$ but not between Rookie and Supportive Veteran, and between Supportive Veteran and Generative Veteran, $p > 0.05$. Dunnett t-test treated Generative Veteran as a control and compared Rookie and Supportive Veteran against it. Using a one-tailed probability, the mean of Generative Veteran was hypothesized to be greater than that of Rookie and Supportive Veteran. The result of the

Dunnett t-test indicates that Generative Veteran has a significantly higher occupational commitment than Rookie, $p < 0.05$ (1-tailed). However, even as a one-tailed probability, occupational commitment of Generative Veteran is not significantly greater than that of Supportive Veteran, $p > 0.05$ (1-tailed). In conclusion, Generative Veteran has a significantly higher occupational commitment than Rookie.

Table 30 Results of ANOVA for Three Clusters

Variable	Cluster			Overall Hotel EOC Members (n=165)
	1 Rookie (n=67)	2 Supportive Veteran (n=50)	3 Generative Veteran (n=48)	
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Enacted Aspiration*	<u>1.93a</u>	2.13a	2.58b	2.18
Desired Aspiration (N.S.)	3.54	3.60	3.91	3.66
Perceived Advancement Prospect*	3.24a	<u>3.18a</u>	3.83b	3.38
Occupational Commitment*	<u>3.65a</u>	3.81	3.93b	3.78
Perceived Self-GM Congruence*	<u>3.30a</u>	3.48	3.89b	3.52

*Significant at $p < 0.05$

**Significant at $p < 0.01$

(N/S) Not Significant

a, b represent the significant difference between clusters.

The number in the bold text show the highest value among clusters, and the number in the underlined text show the lowest value among clusters.

4.10.2 Differences in aspirations and associated variables between male and female hotel EOC members

Research indicates that fewer females than males reach the upper-middle managerial position. In 2011, women held 14.1% of executive officer positions in *Fortune* 500 companies and 7.5% of Executive Officer top earner positions. In 2010 and 2011, nearly one-fifth of companies had 25% or more women executive officers, but more than one-quarter of companies had no women executive officers (Catalyst, 2011). Aspirations are considered to influence managerial advancement; gender difference in aspirations may be one of the reasons why fewer females than males reach the upper-middle managerial position. Therefore, a closer examination to understand gender differences in aspirations is necessary.

ANOVA tests were applied on enacted aspiration, desired aspiration, perceived advancement prospect, perceived self-GM congruence, and occupation commitment to determine the differences between female and male hotel EOC members. The mean scores and significant differences are shown in Table 31. The result of the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in enacted aspiration between female and male hotel EOC members, $F(1, 155) = 22.39, p < 0.01$. Male hotel EOC members have a significantly higher enacted aspiration than female hotel EOC members. The result of the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in desired aspiration between female

and male hotel EOC members, $F(1, 155) = 43.78, p < 0.01$. Male hotel EOC members have a significantly higher desired aspiration than female hotel EOC members. The result of the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in perceived self-GM congruence between female and male hotel EOC members, $F(1, 155) = 35.38, p < 0.01$. Male hotel EOC members have a significantly higher perceived self-GM congruence than female hotel EOC members. The result of the ANOVA test reveals a significant difference in perceived advancement opportunity between female and male hotel EOC members, $F(1, 155) = 23.68, p < 0.01$. Male hotel EOC members have a significantly higher perceived advancement opportunity than female hotel EOC members. The result of the ANOVA test reveals no significant difference in occupational commitment between female and male hotel EOC members, $F(1, 155) = 0.00, p > 0.05$. Male and female hotel EOC members have similar occupational commitment.

Table 31 Results of ANOVA for Gender

Variable	Female	Male	Total
	Mean (n=77)	Mean (n=88)	Mean (n=165)
Enacted Aspiration**	1.74	2.49	2.18
Desired Aspiration**	3.08	4.14	3.66
Perceived Advancement Prospect**	2.94	3.72	3.38
Occupational Commitment (N /S)	3.78	3.78	3.78
Perceived Self-GM Congruence**	2.98	3.93	3.52
**Significant at $p < 0.01$ (N/S) Not Significant			

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the results of the main survey, hypothesis testing, and model comparison. After dealing with the missing data and outliers, 165 valid questionnaires are retained. The profile of the respondents is given. The reliability of the data is tested and found to be satisfactory.

This study identifies the profiles of hotel EOC members by analyzing their career paths and demographic characteristics. The hotel EOC members in Mainland China's international brand hotels are middle-aged men with bachelor's degrees and an annual income lower than RMB 250,000. They have worked in the hotel industry for 14.5

years, and they took 11.5 years to become hotel EOC members. They have worked for more than four hotels over the course of their careers. In terms of hotel work experience, hotel EOC members have worked for 4.3 hotels on average over the course of their careers; 11% have worked in only one hotel; 25% have worked in six or more hotels. Most of them have work experience in other functional departments in the hotel for a short period of time; however, majority of the respondents have never worked outside the hotel industry. In terms of work experience in the different functional department in hotels, 45% of the hotel EOC members have worked in only one department over the course of their careers, and 55% have work experience in other functional departments for a short period of time. In terms of work experience outside the hotel industry, majority (54%) of the hotel EOC members have never worked outside the hotel industry.

Summarizing the SOM results, the hotel EOC members in Cluster 1 are younger females with a higher level of education but a lower personal annual income. They have worked for a shorter period of time and have less hotel experience. Therefore, hotel EOC members in Cluster 1 are defined as Rookie. The hotel EOC members in Cluster 2 are older males with a higher level of education and higher personal annual income. They have worked for a longer period of time and have more hotel experience. They work in supportive departments in hotels, such as Human Resources and Finance & Accounting. Therefore, hotel EOC members in Cluster 2 are defined as Supportive Veteran. The

hotel EOC members in Cluster 3 are older males with a lower level of education and higher personal annual income. They have worked for a longer period of time and have more hotel experience. They work in the revenue-generating departments, such as F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing. Therefore, hotel EOC members in Cluster 3 are defined as Generative Veteran.

The group of Generative Veteran has the highest perceived self-GM congruence, perceived advancement prospect, desired aspiration, and enacted aspiration among hotel EOC members. The group of Supportive Veteran has the lowest perceived advancement prospect among hotel EOC members. The Rookie group has the lowest perceived self-GM congruence, desired aspiration, and enacted aspiration among hotel EOC members. Statistically, Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived advancement prospect, perceived self-GM congruence, and enacted aspiration than the Rookie group; Generative Veteran has a significantly higher perceived advancement prospect and enacted aspiration than Supportive Veteran.

In terms of the effects on desired aspiration, perceived self-GM congruence has more influence on desired aspiration for Rookie than for Generative Veteran and Supportive Veteran. By contrast, perceived self-GM congruence has less influence on desired aspiration for Generative Veteran than for Rookie and Supportive Veteran. In terms of the effects on enacted aspiration, perceived advancement prospect has more influence on enacted aspiration for Generative Veteran than for

Rookie and Supportive Veteran; by contrast, perceived advancement prospect has less influence on enacted aspiration for Supportive Veteran than for Generative Veteran and Rookie. Desire aspiration has more influence on enacted aspiration for Supportive Veteran than for Generative Veteran and Rookie; by contrast, desired aspiration has less influence on enacted aspiration for Generative Veteran than for Supportive Veteran and Rookie.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the thesis. An overview of the study is presented first, followed by the achievement of research objectives, study limitations, and conclusion.

5.1 Overview of the study

Chapter I presents the research background, objectives, significance of the study, and definitions of the main constructs. Chapter II reviews the previous studies on career analysis of hotel managers, desired aspiration, enacted aspiration, perceived advancement prospect, perceived self-GM congruence, and occupational commitment, followed by an illustration of the rationale of the study design and hypotheses.

Chapter III explains the research methodology and elaborates on the survey instrument development, target sample, data collection method, and data analysis method. The questionnaire has three major parts: 1) hotel EOC members' career paths, 2) aspirations and associated variables, and 3) demographics. The target sample is the EOC members of international brand hotels in Mainland China. The data collection method is online survey, which adopts the Qualtric as online platform for distribution and collection. This study uses Viscovery SOMine and SPSS software to analyze data. The Viscovery SOMine is used for clustering hotel EOC members based on their demographics and work

experience. The SPSS is used for descriptive statistics, chi-square test, reliability test, multiple-regression test, and ANOVA.

Chapter IV presents the results of the survey. It discusses the results of the analyses of the study objectives. The results indicate that the demographics and work experience of hotel EOC members are different in the three clusters. All measures are reliable in the five variables. The paths between enacted aspiration and associated variables are significant, except occupational commitment. Aspiration and associated variables are significantly different among the clusters. Chapter V concludes this study and provides some recommendations.

5.2 Achievement of the research objectives

This study has two major objectives: to identify the profiles of hotel EOC members, which include both demographics and career paths, in international brand hotels in Mainland China and to identify the relationships between the profiles of hotel EOC members and their aspiration for hotel GM position. Based on the study findings, the research objectives have been achieved.

5.3 Discussion of the findings

5.3.1 Demographic characteristics of the hotel EOC members

Almost all (97%) international brand hotels where our samples worked for have four or five-star rating (star rating is based on China's

national standard). Consistent with the current situation, these international brand operators dominate the high-end hotel sector in Mainland China (Okoroafo, 2009).

The number of male (56%) hotel EOC members is more than that of females (44%). However, the male–female proportion is more balanced than that in previous studies, that is, hotel managers are predominantly male (more than 70%) (Ladkin, 2002; Ladkin & Juwaheer, 2000; Li et al., 2007; Nebel et al., 1995). This result suggests that the dominance of men in hotel management has gradually changed and that more women have become hotel managers, especially in the Human Resource functional area. Females are the majority in the Human Resource department, but males still dominate the F&B department.

In terms of age, the hotel EOC members in Finance & Accounting are relatively older than those in other functional areas; the hotel EOC members in Sales & Marketing are relatively younger than those in other functional areas.

In terms of education, the majority of hotel EOC members are well educated. About 75% have a bachelor's degree, 14% have higher diploma, and 11% have a post graduate degree. This finding is likely a reflection of the demand for hotel EOC members with higher education in international brand hotels in Mainland China, especially for hotel EOC members in the Human Resource functional area, as all of them have a bachelor's degree or higher levels of education. However, higher

education does not seem to be a requirement for hotel EOC members in the F&B functional area because majority do not have a bachelor's degree.

In terms of annual income, almost 60% of hotel EOC members earn under RMB 250,000 (US\$ 40,000). Compared with Western country salary standards (US\$ 60,000 to 100,000 for hotel EOC members in upscale hotels), this rate is relatively low. However, if we compare the average income between the United States and Mainland China, the salary of hotel EOC members is relatively high. Moreover, no significant difference in personal annual income between hotel EOC member's functional departments was observed. This finding indicates that the salary levels are similar among functional departments for hotel EOC members.

5.3.2 Career paths of hotel EOC members

About 7% of hotel EOC members come from outside the hotel industry and directly become hotel EOC members. This finding indicates the possibility that they became hotel EOC members without prior hotel experience. Thus, possible career mobility exists for managers in executive levels from other industries in the hotel industry. This study made a detailed examination of these hotel EOC members without prior hotel experience and obtained the following information: 25% of hotel EOC members in Sales & Marketing, 5% of hotel EOC members in Finance & Accounting, 6% of hotel EOC members in

Rooms, and 6% of hotel EOC members in F&B do not have prior hotel experience. However, all hotel EOC members in Human Resources have prior hotel experience. This finding suggests that Sales & Marketing executives in other industries have more career mobility to become hotel EOC members than other executives. This result also suggests that prior hotel experience is relatively important for Human Resource executives because all hotel EOC members in Human Resources have prior hotel experience.

Although the majority of the hotel EOC members have outside-department work experience, most of the hotel EOC members in Finance & Accounting have never worked in other functional departments in hotels. This finding suggests that hotel EOC members in Finance & Accounting lack cross-department training, which may limit the general management competency of the hotel. This result may partially explain why the Finance & Accounting functional area is not a salient career route toward hotel GM position. If a manager in Finance & Accounting would like to become a hotel GM, he/she may request for more cross-department training to understand the work of other departments and acquire the ability of general management. If a hotel company would like to train a manager from the Finance & Accounting department, hotel HRM may provide him/her with more cross-department training opportunities to increase his/her knowledge on other functional departments and develop general management competencies.

The results of this study indicate that the career lengths of hotel EOC members in the different functional areas vary. Hotel EOC members in F&B have the longest work experience in the hotel industry (18.3 years) and take the longest time (15.6 years) to become hotel EOC members. By contrast, Sales & Marketing (11.7 years) and Human Resource (13.1 years) hotel EOC members have a shorter tenure in the hotel industry and take much shorter time to become hotel EOC members (10.0 years for Sales & Marketing hotel EOC members and 9.5 years for Human Resources hotel EOC members). These findings suggest that a longer period of time is needed to become a department head in the F&B department. By contrast, a relatively shorter period of time is needed to become a department head in the Sales & Marketing and Human Resources department.

Hotel EOC members in F&B have more different hotel work experiences than those in other departments. F&B hotel EOC members have worked in more than six hotels on average; other hotel EOC members have worked in three or four hotels on average over the course of their careers.

Majority (64%) of the hotel EOC members in Finance & Accounting have never worked in other functional departments; on the contrary, most of the hotel EOC members (more than 60%) in all other departments have other functional department work experiences outside their major departments. However, no significant difference exists in

work experience outside the hotel industry among hotel EOC members in different functional departments.

5.3.3 Aspirations and related factors

In the proposed aspiration model for hotel EOC members, a positive relationship exists between perceived advancement prospect and enacted aspiration, which indicates that hotel EOC members have higher perceived advancement prospect and higher enacted aspiration. This finding is consistent with the expectations and result of a previous study (Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007). Specifically, when a hotel EOC member perceives more opportunities or a higher likelihood for having a hotel GM position, the more actual actions he/she will take to pursue it. The effect of perceived advancement prospect on enacted aspiration is consistent with the central notion of the expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) that people's action tendencies are guided by their expectations of receiving a reward. In this case, the reward for hotel EOC members is career advancement to the hotel GM position.

A positive relationship exists between desired aspiration and enacted aspiration, indicating that a hotel EOC member has higher desired aspiration and higher enacted aspiration. Specifically, if a hotel EOC member has a stronger desire to be a hotel GM, the more actual actions he/she will take to pursue it. This finding is consistent with the previous literature on aspirations (Hall, 1976; Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007; Tharenou & Terry, 1998).

A positive relationship exists between perceived self-GM congruence and desired aspiration, indicating that a hotel EOC member has higher perceived self-GM congruence and higher desired aspiration. Specifically, if a hotel EOC member feels more congruence between his/her image and the image of the hotel GM position, he/she has a stronger desire to be a hotel GM. This finding is consistent with Gottfredson's theory (1981) and an empirical study (Litzky & Greenhaus, 2007).

No relationship exists between occupational commitment and enacted aspiration, which is contrary to the expectation of this study, that is, higher commitment to hotel management and higher aspiration for hotel general management. This result may be caused by two reasons. First, occupational commitment scale contains large numbers of items (18 items) with complex meanings; it may need to reduce and adapt items or divide into several factors. Second, the ambiguity in the meaning of the terms this study adopted. The terms "occupation" and "career" have been used interchangeably in the commitment literature, causing some confusion in the conceptualization of commitment (Blau, 1985, 1988, 1988, 2003; Blau & Lunz, 1998). Moreover, career commitment may involve several occupations, and occupational commitment focuses on the commitment of a particular occupation; it is not necessarily meant to commit to advancement in that occupation, which is referred to as career. Therefore, the phrase "commitment to have a career in a particular occupation" is probably the best way to

describe this kind of commitment in this study. Commitment to occupation and commitment to career are often correlated, but they are distinct and may have different causes and consequences. Hotel management involves the staff in many different departments; a hotel EOC member may focus only his/her expertise on a particular discipline, such as finance or marketing rather than hotel general management. He/she may also build his/her career on a particular discipline in other industries. For example, the director of finance may build his career in the hotel industry and in other industries; he/she may commit to financial management as his/her career anchor but not necessarily commit to hotel general management. Future research may need to define commitment precisely and create tailor-made measures to examine the relationships.

5.3.4 Relationships between hotel EOC member profiles and aspirations

For Rookie, only desired aspiration has a significant effect on enacted aspiration; perceived advancement prospect and occupational commitment have no significant effects on enacted aspiration. This finding suggests that a Rookie will take actions to pursue the GM position depending on whether he/she wants it.

For Supportive Veteran, only desired aspiration has a significant effect on enacted aspiration. Therefore, enacted aspiration depends on desired aspiration. If hotel companies can ignite the desire of

Supportive Veteran to be a hotel GM, then the members of this cluster will take more action to pursue it. Moreover, desired aspiration affects enacted aspiration more for Supportive Veteran than for Rookie, indicating that if Supportive Veteran and Rookie have the same level of desire for the hotel GM position; Supportive Veteran will take more action than Rookie to pursue the hotel GM position.

For Generative Veteran, only perceived advancement prospect has a significant effect on enacted aspiration. Therefore, their enacted aspiration depends on their perceived advancement prospect. The Generative Veteran perceives a higher chance to be hotel GM and takes more action to pursue it. Desired aspiration and occupational commitment have no significant effect on enacted aspiration for Generative Veteran.

No significant difference in desired aspiration exists among Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran. However, a significant difference in enacted aspiration exists among Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran. Generative Veteran has significantly higher enacted aspiration than Rookie and Supportive Veteran. This result indicates that all hotel EOC members have a similar desire for the hotel GM position; however, senior male hotel EOC members who work in F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing put more effort to strive for the hotel GM position than senior male hotel EOC members who work in Human Resources and Sales & Marketing and junior hotel EOC members who work in all functional areas.

Generative Veteran has higher enacted aspiration and also higher perceived advancement prospect than Supportive Veteran and Rookie; perceived advancement prospect has a positive effect on enacted aspiration. This finding is consistent with the expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Senior male hotel EOC members who work in F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing perceive more chances to advance to the hotel GM position than senior male hotel EOC members who work in the Human Resources and Sales & Marketing functional areas and junior hotel EOC members; senior male hotel EOC members who work in F&B, Rooms, and Sales & Marketing will take more action to pursue the hotel GM position than senior male hotel EOC members who work in Human Resources and Sales & Marketing and junior hotel EOC members.

For Rookie, Supportive Veteran, and Generative Veteran, perceived self-GM congruence has a significant effect on desired aspiration. Moreover, perceived self-GM congruence affects desired aspiration more for Rookie than for Supportive and Generative Veteran, indicating that if Rookie, Supportive, and Generative Veteran have the same level of congruence between self and hotel GM, Rookie will generate more desire for hotel GM position than Supportive and Generative Veteran. In other words, perceived self-GM congruence is a more important factor that influence desired Aspiration for hotel GM position for junior female hotel EOC members than for senior male hotel EOC members. Therefore, increasing perceived self-GM congruence

will increase junior female hotel EOC members' desire for the hotel GM position. Moreover, desired aspiration also has a positive effect on enacted aspiration for junior female hotel EOC members. Increasing perceived self-GM congruence will motivate junior female hotel EOC members to take action to pursue the hotel GM position.

The result of this study also indicates that male hotel EOC members have a significantly higher enacted aspiration, desired aspiration, perceived self-GM congruence, and perceived advancement opportunity than female hotel EOC members. However, no significant difference in occupational commitment exists between males and females.

The results may provide explanations about the limited number of female hotel GMs and a possible "glass ceiling" existing for of becoming a hotel GM for women (Yang, 2011). This study indicates that female hotel EOC members have less desire, and also take less action to pursue the hotel GM position, although female hotel EOC members commit themselves to hotel management similar to male hotel EOC members. Furthermore, the reasons for less desire and less action to pursue the hotel GM position may come from less belief about fit with the hotel GM position, and perceive less likelihood to obtain the hotel GM position.

The aspiration of hotel EOC members for hotel GM is important for their career development and the hotel's development because hotel GM is the most crucial position for the success of hotel operations.

Lack of aspiration for hotel general management may cause problems for the development of both the hotel EOC members and the hotel industry. Hotel EOC members will encounter career plateaus, indicating that the current department head is the highest position he/she can reach. Hotel companies will have limited talent selections for hotel GMs, affecting the hotel operation and company development because candidates do not strive for advancement.

5.4 Contributions of this study

This study is unique in that it provides a comprehensive view of the profiles and aspirations of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China. The practical contributions of this study will benefit hotel employees and hotel companies in Mainland China.

For hotel employees, the findings in the career paths of hotel EOC members may benefit their individual career management. The hotel EOC members have the top positions of each functional department in the hotel so their career paths can serve as a map and timeline of career progression in each department. Based on this map and timeline, junior hotel employees may have a better idea on how to plan and manage their careers to reach the top. Moreover, given the importance of the hotel industry in Mainland China's economy and the subsequent growth in tourism-related employment, career in hotel and tourism is an option available to Chinese seeking jobs within Mainland

China's labor market. Information on careers in the hotel industry in Mainland China can help these people in making their career choices.

For hotel companies, the findings in the profiles and aspirations of hotel EOC members may benefit their organizational career management. This study adopts SOM-based contrast analyses of aspirations for hotel EOC members and provides a comprehensive explanation about aspiration differences through an aspiration model developed from the aspiration theory. The aspiration model can help hotel companies understand the reasons behind the aspiration differences among hotel EOC members. The major contribution of the aspiration model is not the model itself but what the model tells us. The findings can facilitate hotel HRM to train hotel EOC members to become future hotel GMs.

Perceived self-GM congruence has a significant effect on desired aspiration for Rookie and Supportive Veteran. However, Rookie and Supportive Veteran have relatively lower means in the four items of perceived self-GM congruence. Therefore, hotel HRM should increase perceived self-GM congruence of the Rookie and Supportive Veteran if hotel companies want to nurture and promote them to be hotel GM. These results indicate that they have lower confidence in their talents and skills for the job requirements of hotel GM. They also perceive lower fit with the hotel GM position. This study recommends that hotel companies should reinforce their organizational career management for the Rookie and Supportive Veteran. First, the hotel HRM can

periodically conduct appraisal of general management performance to inform them which skill is lacking and give recognition for their talent. Second, based on the results of their appraisal, hotel HRM may implement tailor-made training programs for them to increase their confidence in general management. Third, the hotel HRM may also hold workshops to discuss the reasons for their perceived less fit with the GM position. Hotels should put in effort to motivate and nurture young talents with diverse functional backgrounds for hotel GM positions. Furthermore, providing appropriate organizational career development plans for these hotel EOC members can facilitate their individual career management within the organization, which may reduce career plateau and turnover.

The competition in Mainland China's hotel industry is getting severe and required diverse and innovative business models. To address these diverse and innovative business models, hotel chains need diverse talents. The hotel GM is the crucial position of hotel management and operation and the background of the hotel GM would influence the focus and style of management. There are certain stereotypes or perceptions for the background of the hotel GM such as age, gender, and career path. These stereotypes or perceptions should be changed; otherwise, this will depress the aspiration of hotel EOC members who do not fit these stereotypes or perceptions. Then this would limit the potential opportunity of hotel development.

In order to change these stereotypes or perceptions, organizational career management (OCM) should be offered to boost hotel EOC members with all kinds of background to go for hotel GM position. Three major dimensions of OCM which include regular career appraisals and advices, career development programs, and career training activates (Kong, Cheung, & Song, 2011), could change these hotel GM stereotypes or perceptions. The result of this change may help hotels to retain or even attract qualified hotel EOC members because they perceive the prospect for advancement. Moreover, this may diversify the background of the hotel GM which could address the challenge of diverse and complex of hotel industry in the near future.

In terms of theoretical contribution, the findings of this study indicate that although individuals have similar desires, it does not necessarily mean that they can transform their desire into action. This result indicates the importance and necessity of the dual-faced construct of aspiration, which should contain both desire and action (Tharenou, 2001; Tharenou & Terry, 1998). This research also proves the general applicability of the SOM, which can be valuable in the worldwide hospitality industry.

5.5 Study Limitations

The first limitation is the restriction in the non-probability convenience sampling, which cannot be used to infer from the sample to

the general population. In other words, the sample may not represent the whole population and may limit the generalizability of the study because the respondents come from six international brand hotels, namely, InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts, Holiday Inn, Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts, Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, and Marriott Hotel & Resorts.

The second limitation of this study is the sampling distribution by corporate offices of international brand hotels. Due to confidentiality of employee information, the corporate offices of international brand hotels can not reveal the contact list of hotel EOC members. Therefore, the researcher did not have the participant list and could not contact directly with the participants. Lack of information for the participants such as location of hotel EOC members who finished the survey would restrict the examination of area (city, province) differences. This limitation can be overcome by asking their hotel location in questionnaire, but it may raise anonymous issue because the survey have other personal information and people can easily match and identify who they are.

The third limitation of this study is the aspiration model. The purpose of this model is to facilitate the understanding of the variations of hotel EOC members' aspirations for hotel GM, so the research design and focus of the aspiration model does not permit strong inferences in the causal direction of the relationship factors. In addition, the sample

size of this study is relatively small and not suit for some statistical procedure such as structural equation model (SEM).

5.6 Recommendations for future research

5.6.1 Future research for hotel GMs

This study examines the profiles and aspirations of hotel EOC members, except the hotel GMs, in international brand hotels in Mainland China. Therefore, conducting a research for hotel GMs in the future is necessary to acquire a better understanding of the profiles and aspirations of hotel GMs and determine how they became hotel GMs. Furthermore, future research may compare profiles and beliefs of the current and potential GMs.

5.6.2 Female hotel EOC members

In the traditional Chinese culture, women are considered to be the major care giver of family; therefore, work and family balance will become an important issue for the female hotel EOC members. Most female hotel EOC members are in their 30's. They would face important life change decision related to family such as getting married, having children, and taking caring of elderly family members. Their decision will also affect hotel's HRM and development. To retain these female talents to hotel industry, it is important for hotel company to develop support schemes to facilitate them. Therefore, the work and

family balance of female hotel managers and support of hotel company are worth more attention for hospitality researchers.

5.6.3 SOM for hospitality research

SOM can be used to deal with mixed types of variables for clustering and producing the two-dimensional graphical representation of clusters. The two-dimensional maps can provide easy-to-understand information to help researchers visualize the relationships among different data records. These strengths make the SOM an ideal technique for understanding different groups of respondents. The empirical findings of this study are useful. A natural extension of this research is the application of the SOM technique to hospital research.

5.7 Concluding Remarks

Hotels are run by an EOC that typically includes the hotel GM and directors (heads) of each department. Hotel EOC members are top manager position holders who are crucial in the hotel management. Other hotel EOC members are potential candidates for the hotel GM position. Eligible hotel managers in all functional areas and hotel GMs are in great demand because of the fast expansion of the hotel industry in Mainland China. This situation is a challenge for hotels' HRM and a great career opportunity for hotel employees in Mainland China's labor market. Therefore, information on who the hotel managers are, how they get here, and what hotel managers want for their career in the future

has emerged as an important issue for hotel companies and staff in Mainland China's hotel industry.

This empirical study adopts the career analysis technique to analyze the profiles of hotel EOC members in international brand hotels in Mainland China and provides valuable information on the current and future labor market. The patterns of hotel EOC members' profiles explored from the career analysis supply side information that can be used for human resource planning.

Moreover, this research provides an insightful contrast analysis on hotel EOC members' profiles and aspirations for hotel GM. The findings identify the differences in aspirations between hotel EOC members and explain these differences through the aspiration path model.

This research also shows that SOM is a useful technique for cluster respondents. Comparing the aspirations and related factors of each natural hotel manager sub-group, as distinguished by the overall characteristics of hotel EOC member's demographics and career paths, may be a more insightful approach than observing the aspirations of pre-defined groups. This research can be used as a starting point for further study.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire (Bilingual Version)

HOTEL EXECUTIVES IN CHINA:
CAREER PATHS, COMMITMENTS, AND ASPIRATIONS

中国酒店行政人员的职业规划，承诺，及抱负

A Survey Conducted by
School of Hotel and Tourism Management of
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院

About this survey

Hello, hotel executives. My name is Yi-Fan Tung and I am a Graduate Instructor and doctoral student of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. This survey is aiming to explore the career paths of China's hotel executives and examine the relationships of China's hotel executives' backgrounds, commitments, and aspirations. Your answers are very important and valuable. They will contribute the development of China's hotel industry. Thank you very much for your help!

关于此次调查

酒店行政人员，您好！我是董逸帆，香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院的博士生兼导师。这份调查旨在调查中国酒店行政人员们的职业规划，个人背景、对于酒店业的承诺及抱负之间的关系。您的回答是我最重要及最有价值的资料，并且将对中国酒店业的发展献出一份力。非常感谢您的帮助！

Filling the questionnaire

- Completing the questionnaire takes about 15 minutes. For each item on the questionnaire, please choose the answer that is most true for you.
- All information and answers you provided will be used solely for academic purposes and kept in strictest confidentiality.

关于问卷

- 此问卷需大约 15 分钟完成。请对每个问题选出对您来说最为正确的选项。
- 所有收集到的资料和信息纯为学术研究，并将严格保密。

For more information about this survey, please contact: 关于此调查的详情请联系:	
<p>Tung, Yi-Fan (Alex) 董逸帆</p> <p>Graduate Instructor & doctoral student, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. 博士生兼导师， 香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院</p> <p>alex tung8@gmail.com (852) 3400-2361</p>	<p>Dr. David Jones</p> <p>Associate Professor, Undergraduate Program Director, School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. 副教授 本科课程主管， 香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院</p> <p>hmdjones@polyu.edu.hk (852) 6391-3866</p>

Section1: Please begin by telling us your work experiences.

第一部分：工作经验

1. What is your current position and department? (e.g., Director of Food and Beverage) 您目前的职位和部门是什么？（例如：餐饮总监）

2. How long have you been worked in your current position over your course of career? 您在目前的职位上工作了多久了？ ____ (years 年) ____ (months 月)
(e.g., 2 years 3 months, 2 年 3 个月)
3. How long did you take to reach the current position (i.e., your first time to reach this position, not limit to your current hotel) since your first full-time job in the hotel industry? 从您的第一份酒店工作算起，您花了多少时间做到目前的职位？ ____ (years 年) ____ (months 月)
4. Apart from your current department, have you ever worked in other department in the hotel industry? 除了您目前的部门以外，您还在酒店的其他部门工作过吗？

☐ Yes 是

☐ No 否
5. Which department do you work for the most years over your course of career? 您的职业生涯中在哪个部门工作的时间最长？

6. How long have you been worked in that most years department over your course of career? 在你的职业生涯中，你在那个工作最久的部门工作了多长时间？
____(years, 年) ____ (months, 月)
7. How long have you worked in the hotel industry in total? 您在酒店行业总共工作了多长时间？ ____ (years, 年) ____ (months, 月)
8. What is your first full-time job (position and department) in the hotel industry? 您在酒店行业的第一份工作是什么（职位和部门）？

9. How long did you take to make your first executive committee position since your first full-time job in the hotel industry? 从您第一次进入行业开始，您花了多长时间第一次进入执行委员职位 ____ (years, 年) ____ (months), 月
10. Have you ever worked outside hotel industry? 您有没有在酒店业以外的行业里面工作过？
☐ Yes 是
☐ No 否
11. What is your current hotel star rating (based on China's national standard)? 您现在工作的酒店是几星级的（根据中国国内的酒店评星标准）
☐ Five Star 5 星
☐ Four Star 4 星
☐ Three Star 3 星

☐ Two Star 2 星

12. How long have you been worked in your current hotel? 您在目前的酒店工作了多久了? _____ (years, 年) _____(months, 月)

13. How many hotels have you been worked (included the current hotel) over your course of career? 在您的职业生涯中，您为多少个酒店工作过（包括现在这个） _____

14. In my point of view, which departmental experience is the most important experience in qualifying for hotel general manager position? (Please only select ONE). 在您看来，那一个部门的经验对胜任酒店总经理一职的资格最为重要？（仅选择一项）

☐ Food and beverage 餐饮部

☐ Front desk 前厅部

☐ Housekeeping 客房部

☐ Sales and marketing 销售及市场部

☐ Human resources 人事部

☐ Accounting and finance 财务部

☐ Engineering 工程部

☐ Other其他: _____

15. Follow by previous question, why do you think this departmental experience is the most important experience in qualifying for hotel general manager position?

根据之前的选项，为什么您认为这个部门的经验对胜任酒店总经理一职的资格最为重要？

Section 2: For the following statements, please indicate the number that best represents your own view. For example, if you agree the statement strongly, please indicate 5; if you do not agree the statement strongly, please indicate 1.

第二部分：对下列每个说法选出最能代表您意见的相关数字。例如，如果您非常同意，请选择数字5；如果您非常不同意，请选择数字1。

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Being a hotel manager is important to my self-image. 做一个酒店人自我形象非常重要。	1	2	3	4	5
2. I regret having entered the hotel profession. 我后悔进入酒店行业。	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am proud to be in the hotel profession. 我对进入酒店业感到自豪。	1	2	3	4	5
4. I dislike being a hotel manager. 我不喜欢做一个酒店人。	1	2	3	4	5
5. I do not identify with the hotel profession. 我对酒店业没有清楚的认识。	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am enthusiastic about hotel. 我对酒店充满热情。	1	2	3	4	5
7. I have put too much into the hotel profession to consider changing now. 我现在对酒店投入了太多以至于没法考虑转变。	1	2	3	4	5
8. Changing professions now would be difficult for me to do. 转行对我来说太难了。	1	2	3	4	5
9. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I were to change my profession. 转行将在极大的打乱我的生活。	1	2	3	4	5
10. It would be costly for me to change my profession now. 转行对我来说代价太高了。	1	2	3	4	5
11. There are no pressures to keep me from changing profession. 没有阻力阻止我转行。	1	2	3	4	5
12. Changing professions now would require	1	2	3	4	5

considerable personal sacrifice. 现在转行会需要很大的个人牺牲。					
13. I believe people who have been trained in a profession have a responsibility to stay in that profession for a reasonable period of time. 我相信经过专业培训的人有责任留在相关行业历练相当长的一段时间。	1	2	3	4	5
14. I do not feel any obligation to remain in the hotel profession. 我不认为我有义务留在酒店业。	1	2	3	4	5
15. I feel a responsibility to the hotel profession to continue in it. 我觉得继续留在酒店业是我对酒店业的一种责任。	1	2	3	4	5
16. Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave hotel profession now. 我认为现在离开酒店业是不对的，即使这会对我有利。	1	2	3	4	5
17. I would feel guilty if I felt hotel profession. 离开酒店业将使我内疚。	1	2	3	4	5
18. I am in hotel profession because of a sense of loyalty 我留在酒店业是为了忠诚。	1	2	3	4	5
19. My personality fits in well with the requirements of a hotel general manager position. 我的个性非常适合酒店总经理这个职位的要求。	1	2	3	4	5
20. The requirements of a hotel general manager position match my talents and skills. 酒店总经理一职的要求和我的才能及技能非常匹配。	1	2	3	4	5
21. I am confident to do the job of hotel general manager well.	1	2	3	4	5

我对我能胜任总经理一职有信心					
22. A hotel general manager position would be a good fit for me. 酒店总经理的职位对我很合适	1	2	3	4	5
23. My opportunities for a hotel general manager position are limited. 我出任酒店总经理的机会很小	1	2	3	4	5
24. The likelihood that I will get a hotel general manager position is high. 我出任酒店总经理的可能性很高	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am unlikely to obtain a hotel general manager position. 我不会得到酒店总经理的职位	1	2	3	4	5
26. I have no desire to be a hotel general manager. 我没有成为酒店的总经理的欲望	1	2	3	4	5
27. I have an ambition to advance to a hotel general manager position. 我有成为酒店总经理的雄心抱负	1	2	3	4	5
28. I intend to move into a hotel general manager position before retirement. 我希望在退休前能做到酒店总经理	1	2	3	4	5
29. My career plan includes attaining a hotel general manager position. 我的职业规划包括了出任酒店总经理	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3: For the following statements, please indicate how often you have engaged in the behaviors relevant to attaining a hotel general manager position in the past 12 months. For example, if you have engaged in the behaviors frequently, please indicate 5; if you have not engaged at all, please indicate 1.

第3部分：在过去的12个月内，您是否有过一下的这些行为。例如，经常有，请选择5；从没有请选择1。

Statement	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
1. I have checked hotel general manager position vacancies. 我留意过总经理的职位是否有空缺	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have applied for a hotel general manager position. 我申请过总经理的职位	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have canvassed hotel general manager vacancies. 我游说争取过总经理的职位空缺	1	2	3	4	5

<p>Section 4: Please tell us a few things about your background. All information is strictly confidential and is never linked with your name.</p> <p>第三部门分：个人背景 (所有信息将严格保密)</p>	
<p>1. Gender 性别</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Male 男</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Female 女</p>	
<p>2. Age 年龄</p> <p>_____ years</p>	
<p>3. What is your highest education?</p> <p>最高学历</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High School</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Higher Diploma</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor Degree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Master Degree</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral Degree</p>	
<p>4. Personal annual income in 2010 (including bonus)</p> <p>2010 年个人收入 (包括奖金)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Under RMB 150,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> RMB 150,000 – RMB 249,999</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> RMB 250,000 – RMB 349,999 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> RMB 350,000 – RMB 449,999</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> RMB 450,000 and above <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>5. Nationality at birth _____</p>	

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

非常感谢您能完成这份问卷！