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A Study to Determine the Number of Students Continuing in a Hotel Career after Completing a Vocational Education Course in Hotel Operations

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**A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE NUMBER OF
STUDENTS CONTINUING IN A HOTEL CAREER
AFTER COMPLETING A VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
COURSE IN HOTEL OPERATIONS**

**A RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTED TO
THE GRADUATE FACULTY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL AND TECHNICAL STUDIES
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY**

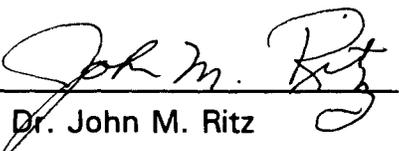
**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT
FOR
THE DEGREE MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION**

**BY
JILL ANDERS JOHNSON
AUGUST, 1994**

APPROVAL PAGE

This research paper was prepared by Jill Anders Johnson under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Education. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science of Education.

APPROVAL BY:



Dr. John M. Ritz
Graduate Program Director

8-8-74
Date

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For the past twelve years the state of Virginia has been experimenting with specialized courses under the Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education, in the public school system. Hotel operations was one of those exclusive courses. In 1992, the Virginia Beach City Public Schools system determined that a hotel operations course would be very beneficial to the community and its students. Therefore, in September of 1992, the first hotel operations course began.

The instructor, whose background was hotel management and training, was hired in August of 1992. The Cavalier Hotel volunteered to house the classes on a daily basis. The students used their own transportation to arrive from the nine different high schools throughout the city.

Nationally and locally, administrators have been taking a very long look at "outcome based education". The administrators were asking to see if students were graduating from high school with skills enabling them to compete in our global economy (America 2000).

No employment goals or objectives were identified for the Virginia Beach hotel operations course at its inception. However, the following research will investigate if students who took the hotel operations course in 1992 continued in the hotel industry. Dr. Konopnicki, Director of Vocational Education for Virginia Beach City Public Schools, states that "Follow up of any Vocational Program is not only significant but very important as an outcome indicator to the long range affect of the program on the students." This research will be directed at finding out exactly what impact the hotel operations course had on its students and the community.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to determine how many of the students who completed the hotel/motel operations class in Virginia Beach, Virginia, continued employment in the hospitality industry. The study group consists of students from the academic year of 1992-1993.

Research Goals

The following goals were used to direct this study:

1. Determine if students who completed the hotel/motel operations course continued in the hotel industry.
2. Determine if students who completed the hotel/motel operations course continued to further their education in the hospitality industry.
3. Determine if the hotel/motel operations class is a valuable course to the Virginia Beach community under the philosophy of outcome-based education.

Background and Significance

The Virginia Beach tourist industry provides the city with over 40 million dollars in tax revenues per year. The Virginia Beach hospitality industry is one of the city's leading employers. With this background a perfect setting was available to experiment with one specialized course that would adhere to the goals of America 2000. Virginia Beach City Public Schools instituted the hotel/motel operations vocational course in the summer of 1992. Qualified employees were needed in all facets of the business within the city. However, the question remained as to whether this program was providing the community with experienced employees and whether the students were being properly trained to pursue a hotel career.

The question arises as to whether this course should be continued in the Virginia Beach City School System?

Currently, "60 percent of U.S. adults say high schools do not do enough to prepare non-college bound students for careers" (Gallup Poll Organization/National Career Development Association, 1994, CNN Headline News). This follow up study will determine if this class meets the needs of its customers -- students, parents and the business community.

Limitations

The following limitations were utilized in this research study:

1. The students surveyed graduated from the hotel/motel operations course in 1993.
2. The research was limited to Virginia Beach City Public School's marketing education course - hotel/motel operations.

Assumptions

When conducting research certain circumstances must be assumed.

The following assumptions were made in this research paper:

1. Students unemployed did not benefit from the hotel/motel operations course.
2. Students either still employed in the hospitality industry and/or furthering their education in hospitality are considered to have benefitted from the course.
3. Students who work part-time during their college breaks are considered to be employed in the field.
4. Students who are gainfully employed in a hotel have met the needs of the community by possessing experience gained from this class.

Procedures

This research was designed to determine the number of students who were still in the hospitality industry after graduating from the hotel/motel operations program in Virginia Beach. To obtain that information a survey was designed and mailed to all the students who completed the program in 1993.

The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions that required the respondents to express their opinions about the value of the hotel/motel operations class in relation to their present career. The survey asked for their experiences (work and educational) in chronological order since graduating from the program. The survey also asked the reasons for any transition in employment and what their present day work status was. Information from the survey was also beneficial in isolating what areas of instruction were or were not useful to the student. The results of the survey were then tabulated and analyzed to determine the number of students who continued in the hotel industry after completing this high school marketing course.

Definition of Terms

Following is a list of terms that are defined to provide a clearer understanding of the research project.

Outcome Based Education:

The practice of teaching students so that they will be conforming to America 2000 objectives. America 2000 Goal #5 states that "Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship."

- Hotel Industry:** This includes any department of a hotel or related industry, i.e., Central Reservations Offices for hotels; Concierge services for hotels; educational courses with subject matter about the hotel industry.
- Hospitality Industry:** This term includes the hotel industry plus any other related field that includes travel to and from a hotel, i.e., Travel Agencies, Airlines and Car Rental Agencies.
- Qualified Employees:** This term is used synonymously with "trained employees". Those employees that possess some skills or experience about the field in which they work or are aspiring to work for.
- Work Status:** How an employee's job performance is evaluated by their superior, i.e, Excellent, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement.

Overview of Chapters

In an effort to answer the need of our community for skilled employees, specialized courses started up in high schools countrywide. The national education goals included teaching students so that they were capable of meeting the needs of the global economy. Are these specialized courses, like hotel/motel operations, the answer? This research study surveyed the students who have completed the hotel/motel operations course in Virginia Beach, Virginia, to find out this answer.

The following chapter will review the literature surrounding this topic by other researchers and writers. Chapter III will present the methods and procedures used in this research. In Chapter IV, the survey findings are reported, analyzed, and presented. Finally, in Chapter V, the findings are summarized and conclusions from those findings are drawn. Others who may want to start a hotel/motel operations course in their city, or any other

specialized course of this nature, will be able to determine if it will be a valuable asset to their core curriculum.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

"In 1988, the William T. Grant Foundation released "The Forgotten Half," which warned that more than half of all American high school students wouldn't graduate from college. What would happen to those 20 million kids?" (Harrison, 1992, p. 30) From 1990 to present, committees and sub-committees have been attempting to establish policies to react to this question.

Following are a few of the reform plans that have surfaced in response to "The Forgotten Half". The Council of Chief State School Officers, in 1991, decided that secondary programs must guarantee students quality education and access to postsecondary education, training and employment. The expansion of cooperative education, youth apprenticeship and focus schools were needed. The National Governors Association determined that every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. The Bush Administration proposed to create a network of local skill centers to serve as a common point of entry to vocational training (Harrison, 1992, p. 30-31). In the state of Virginia, Virginia Beach City Public Schools determined that existing vocational education programs needed to add specialized courses such as hotel operations.

In Virginia Beach, the hospitality industry provides the city with over 40 million dollars of tax revenues per year. Hotel occupancy rates in Virginia Beach have been on the rise since 1991. On a national level, economists from Arthur Andersen & Company forecasted the additional revenues gained from the increased occupancy would fall to the bottom line and profits will nearly double in 1994. The demand for rooms would increase at four times

the rate into 1996. The hotel industry is one of the top twenty industries in the country projecting revenue increases for the next six years (Cline, 1994, p. 48-51). Building of hotels has come to a near halt and the economy is slowly recovering thus creating the higher demand for hotel rooms.

In this chapter the trends in the hospitality industry and the need for a specialized vocational education program will be discussed. The hotel operations curriculum in Virginia Beach City Public Schools will be reviewed and the significant learning experiences provided to the students will be presented.

Trends in the Hospitality Industry

According to analysts, "the United States lodging industry is entering the most consistently positive period of occupancy and rate growth in more than 30 years (Walker, 1993, p. 34). Nationwide, hoteliers are excited about the upward trends that are taking place in this industry. Financially, hotels have been plagued by over-building and the economic slump. Virginia Beach, Virginia, hotel occupancy trends are no different.

In 1991, the hotel occupancy rate for Virginia Beach, Virginia, was fifty-nine percent. In 1992, the rate increased to sixty-one percent and remained at that level through 1993. The Virginia Beach hotel industry has not experienced these percentages since 1989 when the occupancy level was sixty-two percent. Virginia Beach, Virginia, has eleven thousand hotel rooms and employs twenty-two thousand hotel workers. If Virginia Beach follows the national trend, occupancy would increase by another 2.1 percent in 1994 (Arnold, 1994, p. 33). Created by the occupancy increases, jobs for skilled hotel employees will be available. The specialized vocational education hotel operations course was designed to provide the hotels in Virginia Beach with the qualified employees to fill these jobs.

School to Work Transition

In the United States the goal of vocational education reform has been to provide a trained skilled workforce. Every student must leave a vocational education program with skills that are valuable for all types of jobs (Harrison, 1992, p. 29). Vocational education places abstract knowledge into the practical context of problems and situation. The Perkins Act recognized that vocational education was a dynamic force to accomplish this goal. Therefore, federal money was targeted toward these programs that produce results (Jennings, 1991, p. 18).

By the fall of 1992, the Perkins Act was demanding accountability systems to document the progress of vocational education students and programs. Possible performance measures included course completion rates and job placement rates. Other measures included, but are not limited to the following (Hoachlander, 1991, p. 20-21):

- * Employer satisfaction
- * Time to employment
- * Earnings
- * Job placement
- * Pursuit of further education
- * Gains in academic achievement or occupational competencies

Even if it were not for the Perkins Act, well-designed accountability systems have the potential to reaffirm and document the success of vocational education programs. This research hopes to support with facts that specialized vocational education programs, including the hotel operations course and courses similar to it, are very successful and meeting the requirements of the Perkins Act.

In 1991, a study was done by Charles Gorgoglione on cooperative training programs and non-cooperative vocational programs. It was determined that the cooperative students had greater earnings than non-

cooperative students. The results when comparing the number of hours a student worked and/or which student held more skilled and managerial positions - the cooperative education students rated higher. Overall, according to Gorgoglione, cooperative education students were more successful in the post job market (Gorgoglione, 1991, p. 2518). Another study (Spurlin, 1990, p. 552), followed up on completers of a technology training school and it was determined that 60 percent of the students that received technical training had a job in their field of study two years after completing the courses.

Virginia Beach City Public School Hotel Operations Program

In this chapter the increasing trends in the hotel industry nationally, and locally in Virginia Beach, Virginia, have been presented. The trends show increasing occupancies and the need for skilled workers to fill the job market. Virginia Beach responded by establishing a specialized vocational education course- hotel operations. The importance of the transition from school to work for graduating seniors has been discussed. In addition, The Perkins Act was cited to establish the need for program follow up. Now it will be reported how the hotel operations course in Virginia Beach meets all the needs above.

Virginia Beach has established a hotel operations course which is held at the Cavalier Hotel. Students who attend this course drive their own vehicles daily to this location. The distances driven range from five to twelve miles each way. This self reliability on transportation builds responsibility in the students as they need to deal with transportation dilemmas (car problems, gas money, timing) on a daily basis. Their problem solving skills are tasked early. Students are required to wear uniforms in accordance with the Cavalier hotel policy. This is a daily challenge simply

because seventeen and eighteen year olds like to have their own identity. The heart of this vocational education class is having the student experience first hand what employment is all about. Professionalism, accountability and first impressions are the most important lessons.

In the state of Virginia there are seven hotel operations courses offered. Three of the seven courses are conducted right on a hotel property while the other four are held on school grounds. The teachers who teach these courses are in consensus that conducting the hotel operations course on a hotel property is more beneficial for the student. In some areas however, it is not feasible to work out the logistic of this with a hotel, therefore forcing the schools to offer the class on school site.

The curriculum of the course begins with the meaning of professionalism. As students from different high schools and socio-economical backgrounds meet, they develop respect for each other and professionalism is learned early. The lesson on professionalism continues when the students are put in contact with the hotel guests. Throughout the year, lesson plans delve into every department of a hotel. The departments include:

- * front desk
- * reservations
- * sales and marketing
- * restaurant
- * banquets
- * kitchen and purchasing
- * security
- * bellstand
- * finance and accounting
- * personnel
- * housekeeping

The principal advantage of this vocational education program is that the

students not only learn these departments through the traditional methods (lecture and videos), they also work hands-on in each department with the Cavalier Hotel staff. This method of instruction is extremely effective for the student, the parent and the employer.

Summary

Vocational Education has made great strides in anticipating the need for professional and qualified employees in the hospitality industry in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Occupancy trends increasing in the hotel field are causing the demand for qualified employees to rise, therefore placing even greater importance on the hotel operations class. As this chapter states, the hotel operations course attempts to bridge the school to work transition gap.

With this research study, statistics were gathered to determine if the results of this course (the outcome of the student) were met as identified by the Perkins Act. Due to the originality of this course, and others like it, accountability systems are very important to determine if the outcomes of the class were as anticipated. The following chapter will cover how the statistics were gathered for this research project.

Chapter III

Introduction

Chapter III will define the population surveyed, the instrument and the procedures used for collecting data, and the statistical analysis used.

Chapter III will further clarify for the reader, exactly what research took place throughout this study.

Population

The population studied consisted of twenty-two male and female students who graduated from the hotel/motel operations course in 1993. This particular course was taught in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The surveys were sent to the last known address of each of the former students.

Instrument Design

The questionnaire was designed around the article "Designing A Plan To Measure Results" by E. Gareth Hoachlander, Director of National Planning and Evaluation for the National Center for Research in Vocational Education. According to Hoachlander, for an accountability system to be sound, the standards and measures needed to meet four tests. They are as follows:

1. The measures and standards must be clearly defined.
2. The number of measures and standards should be manageable.
3. The data for measuring performance indicators must be reasonably accurate, timely and easy to measure.
4. Measures and standards information must be provided regularly enough to make it useful.

The survey included questions to determine exactly what career field or higher education major each student pursued after completing the hotel operations course. Questions were also designed to determine the work status and wages of the former students as they compared to their peers.

Job changes were questioned as to their reasons. The survey also asked for recommendations as to what changes the graduates felt would benefit the quality of the hotel/motel operations course. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A.

Methods of Data Collection

The purpose of this study was to determine the number of students continuing in a hotel career after completing a vocational education course in hotel operations. A cover letter (Appendix B), explaining the need for the survey along with the survey was sent to the students who graduated from the hotel/motel operations course in 1993. The survey was sent out on May 15, 1994 with a request that it be returned no later than May 25, 1994. On June 1, 1994 a follow-up letter (Appendix C), along with a blank survey form and another stamped self-addressed envelope was sent to those students who had not responded. The responses from the survey have been classified in the following groups:

- 1) Former students that are still in the hospitality industry.
- 2) Former students that are pursuing the hospitality industry in their education.
- 3) Former students that did not pursue the hospitality industry.

Statistical Analysis

Under each classification listed in the Data Collection section above, the survey results were tabulated. Numbers and percentages have been calculated for each classification.

Summary

Upon the compilation of the survey responses, a determination as to whether the hotel/motel operations course played a role in the future of its students will be made. With this survey data it will be determined whether or not the hotel/motel operations course, and courses similar to it, are providing an edge in the real world for those students who take vocational education courses over those students who do not. It will also be feasible to determine whether courses such as hotel/motel operations are valuable to the customers of the vocational education system-- the student, the parent, and the community.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the findings of the research study. The purpose of this study was to determine the number of students continuing in a hotel career after completing a vocational education course in hotel operations.

The survey used (Appendix A) consisted of questions concerning the student's current employment status. Also, there were nine questions asked in relationship as to the significance of the hotel course curriculum to the student's present day endeavors (work & educational). A cover letter was sent along with the survey (Appendix B) and a follow-up letter (Appendix C) was sent to those students who had not responded after two weeks.

The research instrument used focused on three goals:

Goal 1. How many of the twenty-two students who completed the hotel/motel operations class in 1993 were still employed in the hotel industry?

Goal 2. Did the students continue to further their education and if so, how many pursued the hospitality field?

Goal 3. Was the course valuable to the Virginia Beach community under the philosophy of outcome-based education?

The survey was sent to twenty-two students. Seventeen of the surveys were returned (77.3%).

STUDENTS STILL EMPLOYED IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

Of the seventeen respondents, the following results were found through the survey to answer Goal 1: How many students who completed the hotel/motel operations course were still employed in the hotel industry.

The data was calculated by taking the total number of students indicating a job presently in the hotel field and dividing it by the number of surveys that were returned.

STUDENTS EMPLOYED IN HOTELS 13

76.5%

STUDENTS PURSUING FURTHER EDUCATION

The following statistics were compiled from the survey section that requested information as to the student's educational status. The data was calculated by taking the total number of students indicating present enrollment in educational courses and dividing it by the number of surveys that were returned (17). This information was further analyzed as to the number of students who continued their education specifically in the hospitality field. To calculate this percentage, the number of students noting enrollment in hotel classes was divided by the number of students continuing any education.

STUDENTS IN FURTHER EDUCATION COURSES 11

64.7%

STUDENTS IN HOTEL RELATED EDUCATIONAL COURSES 6

54.6%

SIGNIFICANCE OF HOTEL COURSE CURRICULUM TO STUDENT'S PRESENT DAY ENDEAVORS

The final information gathered involved the student's thoughts as to whether the hotel/motel operations class instruction was beneficial to them upon completion. These questions relate back to the demand for classes to comply with the Perkins Act and Outcome Based Education. The Likert Scale of measurement was used in this section of the survey.

REFERENCE

Table I categorizes the responses to whether the students found the hotel/motel operations class a beneficial reference when applying for a job or for college entry. The responses to two questions were grouped together for this table and graph. One question was targeted to the college student and the other question was targeted at the employed student. Since both questions related to their thoughts on if the hotel class was beneficial to them as a reference on their perspective applications, the answers were grouped together. The mean score on this combined question was 4.3 indicating that students agreed that "having the hotel/motel operations class as a reference on your resume was a benefit for work and college." Figure 1 further illustrates these responses in bar graph form.

TABLE I - WAS HAVING THE HOTEL/MOTEL OPERATIONS CLASS AS A REFERENCE ON YOUR RESUME A BENEFIT TO YOU FOR WORK OR COLLEGE?

	No. of Responses	% of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	12	54.5%
Agree	6	27.3%
Undecided	3	13.6%
Disagree	1	4.6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
TOTAL	22	100%
MEAN	4.3	

Hotel Operations Class Reference Beneficial or Not

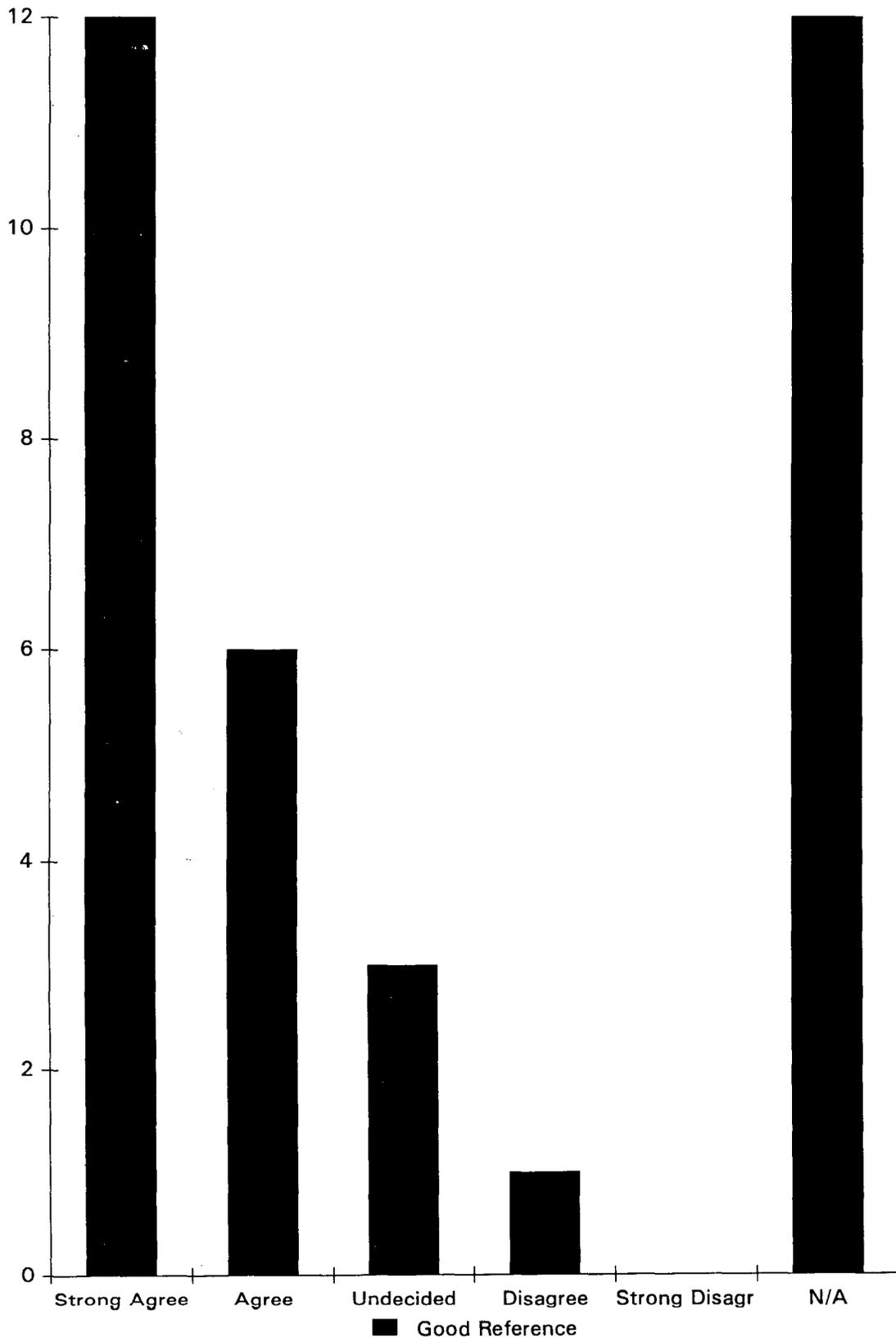


FIGURE 1

INTERVIEW SKILLS

Table II displays the responses to whether the interview skills taught in the hotel/motel operations class were beneficial in the real world. Figure 2 further depicts this information. Students strongly agreed, mean of 4.6, that interview skills taught in the program gave them confidence.

TABLE II - INTERVIEW SKILLS TAUGHT GAVE CONFIDENCE

	No. of Responses	% of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	10	66.7%
Agree	4	26.7%
Undecided	1	6.6%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	15	100 %
MEAN	4.6	

HOSPITALITY SKILLS

Table III illustrates to what degree the students felt the hospitality skills taught in the hotel/motel operations class placed them above their co-workers or peers. A mean score of 4.2 indicated that they felt the skills taught in this program put them above their co-workers. These results are also displayed in Figure 2.

TABLE III - HOSPITALITY SKILLS PUT ME ABOVE CO-WORKERS

	No. of Responses	% of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	5	29.4%
Agree	11	64.7%
Undecided	1	5.9%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	17	100%
MEAN	4.2	

SKILLS TAUGHT IN HOTEL CLASS BENEFICIAL OR NOT

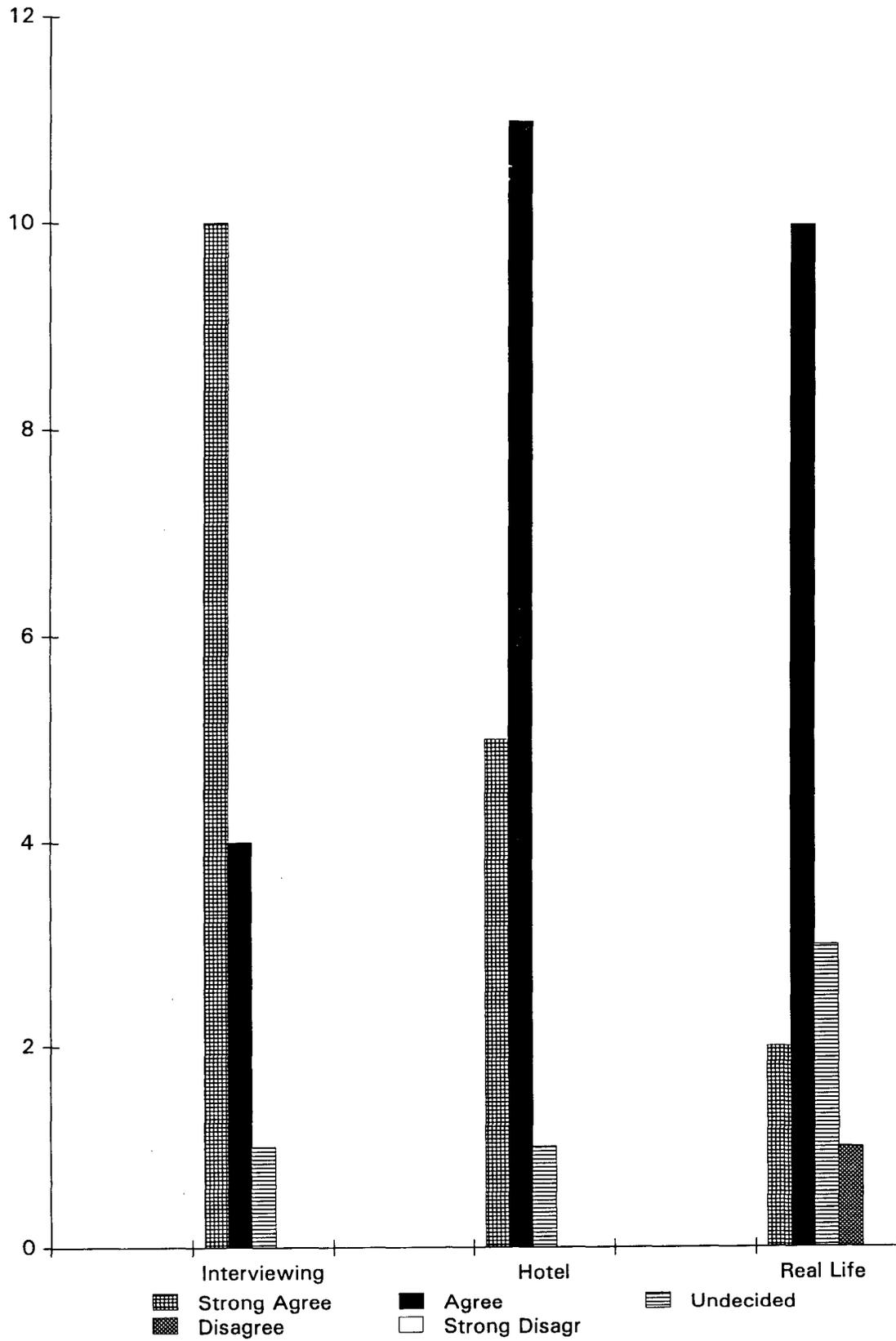


FIGURE 2

REAL LIFE SITUATIONS

Figure 2 depicts how the students answered the question: Were they better prepared to deal with real life situations than their co-workers after completion of the hotel/motel operations class. The mean score was 3.9, indicating the students agreed the hotel/motel operations course prepared them to deal with real life situations. Table IV illustrates these facts.

TABLE IV - BETTER PREPARED TO DEAL WITH REAL LIFE SITUATIONS

	No. of Responses	% of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	2	12.5%
Agree	10	62.6%
Undecided	3	18.6%
Disagree	1	6.3%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%
TOTAL	16	100%
MEAN	3.9	

WAGES

Figure 3 illustrates the students answers if they receive higher wages due to the experience gained in the hotel/motel operations course. The mean of 2.5 reflects that the students disagreed that their wages were higher due to this class experience. Table V illustrates these answers.

TABLE V - THE HOTEL OPERATIONS CLASS HELPED YOU EARN HIGHER WAGES

	No. of Responses	% of Total Responses
Strongly Agree	2	15.4%
Agree	0	0%
Undecided	4	30.8%
Disagree	3	23.1%
Strongly Disagree	4	30.7%
Total	13	100%
MEAN	2.5	

WAGES EARNED

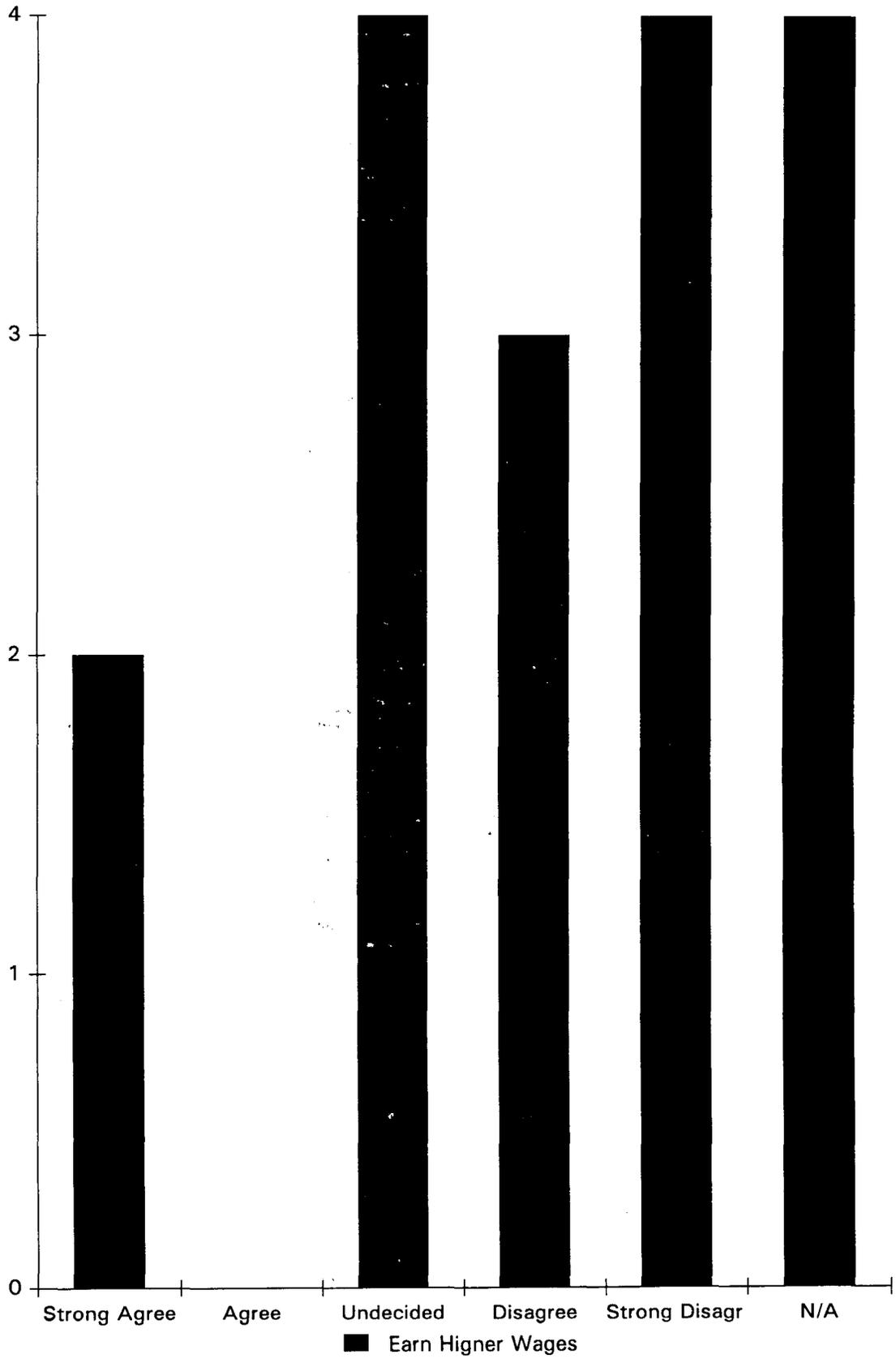


FIGURE 3

OTHER SURVEY FINDINGS

Another statement posed on the survey was: The hotel operations class did not prepare the student for the real world. The reported results were 76.5 percent (13 out of 17 respondents) disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. Four former students, or 23.5 percent of the reported responses, stated that they were undecided about this topic. Figure 4 displays these results in bar graph form.

Other information gathered from this survey dealt with how the student perceived their self as an employee/student. Additionally, it was asked what their thoughts were as how their supervisor or teacher would rate them. One hundred percent of the surveys collected reported they agreed and/or strongly agreed that they were a quality student or employee. Seventy-six percent reported that they also felt that their supervisor or teacher would give them an excellent rating.

One hundred percent of the students responded positively to the question: Was the hotel/motel operations course valuable to your present day endeavors?

RECOMMENDED INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGES

The final questions on the survey asked the students about any areas on the instruction that they felt needed to be revised. The following are a list of those responses:

- Add computer use.
- Add more housekeeping curriculum.
- Add Management shadowing.
- Additional instruction on accounting and food and beverage.
- Delete Laundry Department.

SUMMARY

The findings of this study were obtained from the survey responses. In Chapter V the research will be summarized, conclusions will be drawn and recommendations will be made based on the findings.

**DID NOT PREPARE
ME FOR THE REAL WORLD**

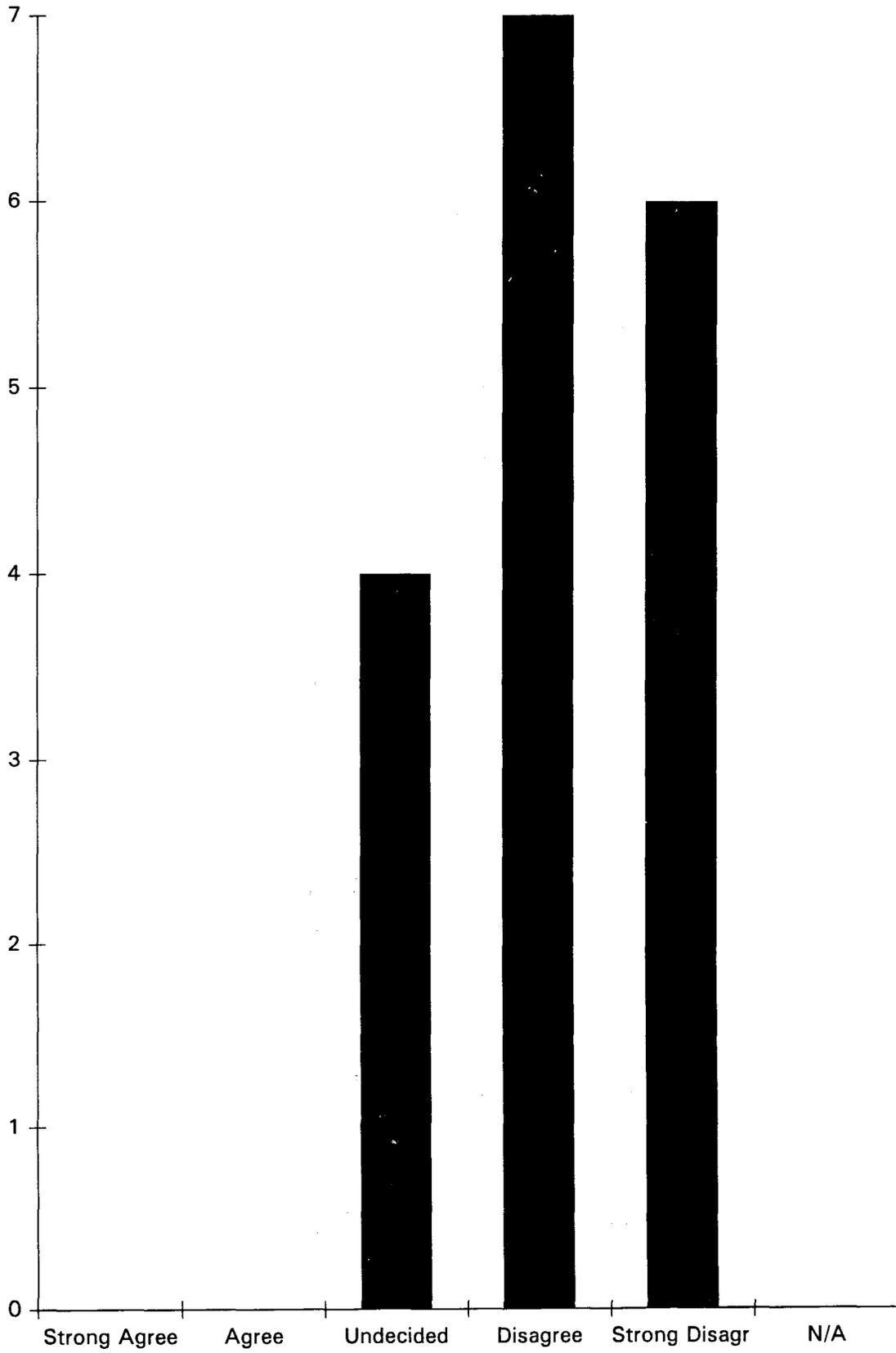


FIGURE 4

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The problem of this study was to determine the number of students continuing in a hotel career after completing a vocational education course in hotel operations. To achieve this goal, a survey was sent to all Virginia Beach students who completed this course in 1993.

This study reviews the increasing demand for qualified employees in the hospitality industry in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Perkins Act is also highlighted determining the need for follow-up statistics as this research study has achieved. To determine if the hotel/motel operations class is achieving these goals a survey was sent to students who have completed this course. The actual findings collected reflect that 76.5 percent of the students who completed the hotel/motel operations course maintained a career in the hotel field. Following are the conclusions drawn based upon the data collected.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data gathered, the following conclusions can be made:

Goal 1. Determine if students who completed the hotel/motel operations course continued in the hotel industry.

Based on the findings, 76.5 percent of the students who completed the hotel/motel operations course in 1993 are currently employed in the hotel field one year later.

Goal 2. Determine if students who completed the hotel/motel operations course continued to further their education in the hospitality industry.

The findings determined that 64.7 percent of the students who completed the hotel/motel operations course continued to further their

education. Of those students, 54.6 percent majored specifically in the hospitality field.

Goal 3. Determine if the hotel/motel operations class is a valuable course to the Virginia Beach community under the philosophy of outcome-based education. Specifically, did the hotel/motel operations class teach these students the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy. (America 2000 objective)

According to the findings, 94.1 percent of the students agreed or strongly agreed that the hotel operations class trained them with hospitality skills which put them above other co-workers or peers. Eighty-two percent responded that the interview skills learned in the hotel/motel operations class gave them confidence when applying for jobs and /or colleges. Additionally, 76.5 percent of the students reported that their supervisor or teacher would rate them as excellent.

The question is raised as to whether specialized off-campus courses such as the hotel/motel operations course are beneficial to the employment and education of high school students today. It may be concluded from the findings that real life classrooms have a tremendous impact on the employability skills of high school students.

The research does indicate that wages are not affected by this classroom experience. Over sixty-four percent of the students disagreed that they earned higher wages than their peers due to their experience in the hotel/motel operations class. However, in a further study of the thirteen students still employed in the hotel industry, a 23.4 percent increase in wages was realized by those student's earnings between June 1, 1994 and their first day on the job.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that the hotel/motel operations class be continued. It may also be concluded that other specialized classes held off-campus in a specialized setting be added in areas where the local community has a need for worker training. To progress in this direction the following recommendations are made:

1) Instructors should have experience in the particular field of the vocation to be taught. Instructors should be given every opportunity to gain more experience and education in their related field throughout their years of instruction.

2) Follow-up studies with students who completed vocational courses should continue from year to year. The results need to be made available to principals, administrators and school board members so that decisions toward the existence of a course can be made with statistical knowledge--not emotions.

3) Curriculum should be constantly updated with the result of research to improve the instruction from year to year and thus improve the students wisdom simultaneously.

4) Advisory committees that include local business associates should be formed to insure support from the community and provide necessary focus for the courses as they pertain to the economic needs of the community.

Based on this research study, off-campus classes have a need in our society and should be allowed to grow in our high schools. The results of this study support the fact that through courses such as the hotel/motel operations course in Virginia Beach, Virginia, educators are meeting the needs of the community, the student and the parents.

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Appendix A

Hotel/Motel Operations Course Survey

Name _____

**SURVEY FOR GRADUATES OF
VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HOTEL/MOTEL OPERATIONS COURSE**

Directions: Please reserve ten minutes of your time to complete this questionnaire. Answer each question as accurately as possible. Where indicated, please add any additional comments you may feel are relevant to this survey.

Please check one of the following responses related to what you are currently pursuing in life: Working; Attending school full time; Unemployed.

PRESENT EMPLOYER

COMPANY _____
SUPERVISOR _____
ADDRESS _____

DATES OF EMPLOYMENT _____
JOB TITLE AND BRIEF JOB DESCRIPTION _____

CURRENT WAGE _____ STARTING WAGE _____

PRESENT COLLEGE

NAME OF COLLEGE _____
YOUR MAJOR _____

Please list any courses that you have taken that are related to the hospitality industry and the grade you received.

COURSE _____	GRADE _____	COURSE _____	GRADE _____
COURSE _____	GRADE _____	COURSE _____	GRADE _____
COURSE _____	GRADE _____	COURSE _____	GRADE _____

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT

PLEASE LIST ALL PREVIOUS JOBS YOU HAVE HELD SINCE YOUR COMPLETION OF THE HOTEL OPERATIONS COURSE. LIST THE MOST RECENT JOB FIRST.

COMPANY	JOB TITLE	WAGE	DATES OF EMPLOYMENT	REASON FOR LEAVING
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please write the letter SA(strongly agree), A(agree), U(undecided), D(disagree), or SD(strongly disagree) on the left of each statement indicating how much each statement describes your opinion of the statement. Write N/A if the statement does not apply to you.

_____ I found the hotel operations class reference a benefit on my application when job hunting.

_____ I found the hotel operations class reference a benefit on my application when applying to colleges.

_____ The hotel operations training gave me confidence when it came to job interviews and/or college interviews.

_____ The hotel operations training prepared me with hospitality skills which put me above other co-workers:

_____ I am better prepared to deal with real life situations than my peers due to the hotel operations class.

_____ The hotel operations class did not prepare me for the real world.

_____ I receive higher wages than my peers due to the experience gained in the hotel operations course.

_____ I am a quality employee/student.

_____ My supervisor/teacher rates me as an excellent employee/student.

In your opinion was the hotel/motel operations course valuable to your present day endeavors? Why or why not?

Please list any areas of instruction in the hotel operations course that you now feel were very useful to your present day life and why.

Please list any areas of instruction that you now feel were not beneficial to your present life and why.

Please list any areas of instruction that you feel should be added to the curriculum of the hotel operations course.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME. I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR RESPONSES.

Appendix B

**Hotel/Motel Operations Course Survey
Cover Letter**



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Jeremy Phelps
4940 Admiration Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23464

May 15, 1994

Dear Jeremy,

I hope that this letter finds you healthy and prospering in your endeavors. I am writing to ask for your assistance in evaluating the success of the Hotel/Motel Operations class you attended last year. As one of the first students to graduate from this course, I am interested in determining if the course was valuable to your future.

Please find attached a survey that has been sent to all the 1993 Hotel/Motel Operations graduates. As always, please be honest when completing this survey. It is my hope that with your response along with your classmates responses I will be able to improve the quality of this course.

This survey is also part of my graduate degree thesis that I am pursuing at Old Dominion University. Please complete and return the survey in the enclosed stamped self addressed envelope by May 25, 1994. All the respondents names are kept confidential. If you have any questions or just want to say Hi, call me at the Cavalier (804)425-8555. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jill A. Johnson
Hotel/Motel Operations Instructor

Appendix C

**Hotel/Motel Operations Course Survey
Follow-up Letter**

June 1, 1994

Dear Jason,

HELP!!! IT'S NOT TOO LATE!!!
I need the survey completed and sent back to me.
This project can not be concluded without your input.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!!!!

Sincerely,

Jill A. Johnson

p.s. Additional survey and stamped self-addressed
envelope enclosed.

