The Use of Technologies for Hospitality Managers’ Professional Development

PhD Researcher:
Li Li (Ms)

Supervisors:
Andrew Lockwood
David Gray
Dimitrios Buhalis

Institution:
Faculty of Management and Law
University of Surrey
Declaration of Originality

I declare that my thesis titled “The Use of Technologies for Hospitality Managers’ Professional Development” for the degree of Philosophy Degree (PhD) of the University of Surrey embodies the results of an original research programme undertaken by me. I have included references to my work.

Li Li

May 2009
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the unfailing help and support of my supervisors, Professor Andrew Lockwood, Professor David Gray and Professor Dimitrios Buhalis. I must also acknowledge the assistance of Mr. Philippe Rossiter, Chief Executive, the Institute of Hospitality, with getting access to helpful individuals in hospitality organisations for the field study.

I express thanks the following for their advice, encouragement and good counsel.

Professor Eugene Sadler-Smith
Professor Adele Ladkin
Professor Mark Saunders
Dr Jane Mathison
Yanli Cheng
Lisa Durant
Novie Johan
Catherine Collins
Harshita Goregaokar

I thank my friends Andrew Vallins, David Major, Daniel Smith, Gloria Chan and Lauren Durant for help with proof reading.

I am grateful for the support of my mother, Meiwen, and my husband, Michael. I thank my daughter, Yihui, for her best distraction from this work.

I’d like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of my loved father, Rongde. Over 20 years ago, he told me that I would be “taking off the blue robe and putting up a red robe” at the age of 36, which has now become true.
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List of Abbreviations

CV     Curriculum vitae
GM    General Manager
ICT Information and communication technology
MBA Master of Business Administration
MD Management development
RSS Really simple syndication
SWOT Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
Abstract

This is a qualitative inquiry into hospitality management development. Research on hospitality managers’ professional development is very limited. Aiming to fill this knowledge gap, this research investigates management development in the hospitality industry with a focus upon the use of technologies. The study develops a conceptual framework of managerial learning for hospitality professionals. It identifies that the complex nature of managers’ job and the diverse nature of managerial learning can be understood based on the formality of the work and that of the learning experience. The core question, as emerged from literature review, is to what extent technologies affect how hospitality managers learn and their work. Taking a case study approach, documentation, observation and face-to-face interviews were used to gather data. Data were analysed by using the framework analysis method.

The study discovers a process of management learning in the workplace, which consists of four stages: 1) Being Challenged, 2) Information Searching, 3) Information Transformation and 4) Testing. It reveals that technologies have an important role to play at the stages 2 and 4. The research identifies the relationships of some technology applications and devices with knowledge, the formality of managerial work and the formality of management development. These interplays suggest a theory of formality of technology in management learning. The proposed theory provides a new way of examining the effectiveness of technology-mediated management development initiatives. This should be of interest to hospitality organisations, educational institutions, managers, human resource professionals, training consultants, hospitality management educators and academia in this field.
Chapter 1

Introduction

It is estimated that the world’s Travel and Tourism Economy contributed 10.5% to global Gross Domestic Product by 2018 with growth averaging 4.4% per annum between 2009 and 2018 (WTTC 2008a). It is estimated that 8.4% of total employment is associated with travel and tourism activities in 2008, which is expected to increase to 9.2% by 2018 (WTTC 2008a). In the UK, the travel and tourism economy employment is estimated at 2.7 million jobs in 2008, representing 8.6% of total employment (WTTC 2008b). The hospitality industry represents a significant proportion of the sector, embracing all operations that provide hospitality products and service including hotels, restaurants, pubs, bars and nightclubs and contract foodservice (people 1st 2008). Therefore, the development and productivity of the hospitality industry has a significant impact on UK economy and beyond.

The industry is facing many challenges raising from the changing socio-economic and technological environment. Hospitality firms continue to adopt international expansion strategies due to globalisation (D’Annunzio-Green 1997). As a result of this, hospitality corporations’ structure and organisation are increasingly becoming complex (Cho & Schmelzer 2000). Companies and their managers are facing the challenge of managing the business in a multi-ethnic and multi-national environment (Jayawardena 2001). Furthermore, in modern knowledge-driven economies, while the lifecycle of knowledge is reducing, employees are required to constantly develop their knowledge and skills so that they can remain competent (Sadler-Smith, Allinson, & Hayes 2000).

Management is an essential resource in unlocking the potential of an organisation (Armstrong 2006; Buckley & Kemp 1987; Garavan 1995; Storey 1989; Storey 1990; Thomson, Mabey, Storey, Gray, & Iles 2001); therefore, the development of managers is central to the development and success of a business and critical to the profitability and productivity of an industry (Garavan, Barnicle, & O’Sullleabhain 1999). Effective management development (Rahman 1993) initiatives will enable businesses to improve their managers’ competencies and thus sustain organisational competitive advantage (Garavan et al 1999; Lees 1992; Mabey & Ramirez 2005; Teare & Pantin 2002; Teare &
Rayner 2002). However, given the challenges posed by the continuous state of change and uncertainty in the business environment, it has become ever challenging in developing competent hospitality managers for the industry.

Indeed, an abundant volume of studies have highlighted a range of problems in developing managers. For example, Mintzberg (2004) suggested that it is practically not possible to develop individuals who do not have management experience to become good managers in an educational environment. This is, however, not shared by Armstrong (2005) who argued that this depends on the effectiveness of formal management education. Moreover, it was reported that management programmes put too much emphasis on problem-solving, but not enough on problem finding and integration across functional areas (Mintzberg 2004; Porter & McKibbon 1988).

It has also been reported that the deficiency of management skills is a factor causing the UK hospitality industry lagging behind international competitors (LSC 2005; people 1st 2006e). Jayawardena (2001) criticised many of the hospitality management programmes being ill-equipped structurally and culturally to be sensitive and adaptive to environmental change. In hospitality management training, studies revealed that there are insufficiencies in developing hotel managers’ managerial skills (Ladkin 2000a) and preparing them for the constantly changing and complex workplace and their abilities to think critically and collaborate effectively (Cho et al 2000).

There is also an inefficient attention given to the development of international managers who understand the worldwide “ramifications of their business and can operate effectively around the world” (D’Annunzio-Green 1997, pp 200). Many scholars have also identified that informal managerial learning is not well managed to best support managers’ professional development in the workplace (Cheetham & Chivers 2001; Marsick & Watkins 1990; Watkins & Marsick 1992b). Therefore, there is a need to research for solutions to develop hospitality managers more effectively.

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) are increasingly playing an important role in education (DfES 2003; Haven & Botterill 2003; HEFCE, JISC, & HEA 2005) and training (Barron 2003; CIPD 2005; Ellis 2004), although little is known on how ICTs being used for managers’ professional development in the hospitality industry (Li, Buhalis, Lockwood, & Benzine 2007). Sigala and Baum (2003) argued that, in order to prepare
future managers for the tourism and hospitality industry, institutions need to exploit modern technologies and shift the balance from an educator-centred to a learner-centred model. They believed that the learner-centred education provision can support lifelong learning, interactive and collaborative learning and develop the knowledgeability qualities of students for the future. Similarly, Cho and Schmelzer (2000) suggested that advanced technologies allow just-in-time education which encourages critical thinking and collaborative learning and that this provision enables students and managers in the hospitality industry to develop their decision-making, problem solving and communication skills.

It appears that modern technologies may provide a solution to some of the foresaid problems in developing managers. Hence, the researcher embarks on a journey to identify how management learning may be facilitated by new technologies. The research interest is how hospitality managers learn. The research questions are:

1. What do hospitality managers need to learn?
2. How have they learned them?
3. What is the role of technologies in their learning?

If management development activities are to be effective they must reflect the reality of management (Hales 2001; Hales 1986; Mumford 1994). As such, it is important to understand the industry features and management challenges because the unique characteristics of hospitality industry pose some specific challenges to managerial practices (Baum 1995; Gannon 2003; HEFCE 2001; Kriegl 2000; Lashley & Morrison 2000). Therefore, Chapter 2 outlines the nature of hospitality industry and highlights management challenges that the industry is facing. The study chooses the UK hospitality industry as the research context because it is believed that it possesses the same industry characteristics as that of other countries and thus shares the same learning and development requirements for the management population.

In addition to this, a holistic understanding of what hospitality managers need to develop is required. As such, Chapter 3 reviews literatures on what managers do, which provide evidence on what hospitality managers need to develop. The holistic view is developed by looking into both the main stream management literature (Hales 2001; Hemphill 1959; Kotter 1982; Luthans, Hodgetts, & Rosenkrantz 1988; Mintzberg 1973; Sayles 1964; Stewart 1967) and those focusing on the practices of hospitality managers (Dann 1990; Ferguson & Berger 1984; Ley 1980; Ritchie & Riley 2004). Aggregating the evidence, a
model for understanding hospitality managers’ work is proposed. It demonstrates the complex nature of managerial work.

Furthermore, an argument is put forward that managers’ work has formal and informal aspects which constitute what hospitality managers need to know in order to do their job. The formal element is predictable, perpetual and programmable, which is essentially explicit knowledge about management. On the other hand, the informal element is variable, volatile and varietal, which is implicit management knowledge. Given the complex nature of management practices, it is argued that the developmental process of hospitality managers should be facilitated through different learning means.

The following question is "how managers learn?" Chapter 4 looks into different learning theories and discusses the meaning of managerial learning. It argues that in order to best understand what "learning" is, one ought to embrace notions advocated in different schools of thought in learning. Learning has four elements, namely the learner, the content/task of learning, the learning process and the context in which the learning occurs. Thus, managerial learning is the engagement of the learning/manager with management knowledge through mental processes and social interactions, in a working environment and institutional settings. This discussion provides a theoretical ground for understanding how hospitality managers learn.

Chapter 5 discusses the nature of management development (Rahman 1993). MD is all about improving managers’ competencies and capabilities through learning process in management education and training and other developmental activities (Garavan et al 1999; Marchington & Wilkinson 1996; Mintzberg 2004; Molander 1986; Snape, Redman, & Bamber 1994). It can be formal or informal. As emerged from the literature, formal MD is planned, structured and intentional and usually occurs outside managerial activities. The learning is explicit. Hence, formal MD creates conditions for the acquisition of explicit management knowledge. Informal MD, on the other hand, allows contextualised learning, thus creating a ground for gaining tacit knowledge and applying explicit knowledge.

To understand how ICT can facilitate learning, Chapter 6 explores the concept of "eLearning" which is defined as learning with ICTs. A variety of technologies being used in learning will be discussed. A number of scholars have applied learning theories and explored how ICT applications can be employed to enhance learning in an education context (Gray
2001; Littleton & Whitelock 2004; Paulsen 2001). It is generally assumed that knowledge on eLearning practice can be transferred and applied to eLearning practice in the corporate training context. However, this is challenged by some authors (Baruchelli, Calza, Cattani, Dorigati, Stead, & Jacucci 2002; Sloman & Reynolds 2003; Svensson 2004) given the situated nature of work practice. Nonetheless, the evidence that ICTs can enhance learning is witnessed.

Based on the literature review, Chapter 7 outlines research design. Alternative knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry and methods are the three elements that are central to the design of research (Creswell 2003). The chapter presents the decisions that the researcher has made on the knowledge claims that underpin this research, the research strategy and the methods to use. Embracing the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research paradigm of constructivism, the research employs the case study strategy to gather informative accounts of managers’ learning experience through in-depth interviews and observations. The framework analysis approach is considered a suitable data analysis method for this research. How these methodological choices address the research aim and objectives are also discussed.

The process of analysis has two perspectives, according to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), which are data handling and imaginative reconstruction of meaning from the data. As such, Chapter 8 details the process of how data is handled and managed in a qualitative data analysis computer programme, NVivo, and how meaning is derived from data using a range of techniques of framework analysis and the query functions in NVivo. How individual research objectives are addressed in the analytical process is also stated.

Research findings are reported in Chapter 9. A process of “finding out” is emerged from the data. It consists of 4 stages, which are Stage 1 – Being Challenged, Stage 2 – Information Searching, Stage 3 – Information Transformation and Stage 4 – Testing. Reflective thinking is found central to the learning process. Some information and communication technology applications and devices play an important role in gathering new information at Stage 2 and in gathering feedback information at Stage 4.

In Chapter 10, literature is reflected upon to make sense of the research findings. The process of “finding out” mirrors the notions of experiential learning theory (Dewey 1933; Jarvis 1987; Kolb 1984; Piaget 1973) and highlights the function of “disjuncture” (Jarvis
Technology is a very important tool to enable instantaneous flow of diverse information; hence it facilitates effective and efficient decision-making. It is argued that the hospitality managers who participated in this study learn through solving problems grounded in management practice and learn through reflective thinking, like other professionals (Argyris 1974; Kolb 1984; Schön 1991); and that the difference of their learning is reflected in what they have learned. The acquisition of the learning content is mediated by technology. More interestingly, there seems to be a pattern between ICT applications and the nature of knowledge.

In the Conclusion, the researcher reflects upon the research journey and identifies 3 lessons learned in this process. It is suggested that a new epistemology is needed to accommodate the converging nature of learning and work in management practice in order to advance the understanding of the process of management learning in the workplace. The unique contributions of the study are summarised. The limitations of the research are acknowledged. The area of future research is also suggested.
Chapter 2

Management Challenges in the Hospitality Industry

2.1 Introduction

Tourism is one of the biggest industries in the world. As a sub-sector of the tourism industry, the hospitality industry is featured by the diverse business portfolios and fragmented industrial structure with a dominance of medium and small-sized enterprises (Baum 1995; Davidson 1989; Leiper 1979). The service-driven industry is also associated with labour intensive, low pay, low qualification, socially unfriendly work patterns and high staff turnover (Boella & Goss-Turner 2005). On the one hand, hospitality organisations require qualified personnel to manage the business and well-trained workers to deliver quality service in a sustainable manner. On the other hand, they face various aforesaid problems and issues in employment.

While managing a business is not easy, managing a hospitality business requires extra efforts due to the unique characteristics of the industry. This chapter explores some of the uniqueness and identifies critical challenges facing hospitality managers. It is believed that one solution to helping them to face the challenges is through engaging them with managerial learning and development activities. In doing so, they will become more competent in carrying out management functions, also be in a better position to train their staff. This suggestion raises a research interest, which is discussed in this chapter.
2.2 The Hospitality Industry

Many authors have made an effort to define the tourism and hospitality industry, subsuming hospitality within tourism (Baum 1995; Davidson 1989; Leiper 1979). One approach to defining the tourism and hospitality industry is to consider the economic activities that take place when a visitor interacts with tourism products and services through purchasing, consuming or other usage (Baum 1995). Taking this further, Leiper (1979) distinguished between the incidental industries and the tourist industry. The former comprises businesses, such as shops, restaurants and recreational facilities, which tourists may use, but their users are normally the locals. The later consists of organisations that are intended to serve the unique needs and wants of tourists.

This approach leads to a couple of issues. First, there may be remarkable overlap between incidental and tourist services (Leiper 1979). Second, such distinction is not clear in regions such as the North America and Europe whereby the gap between local and visitor consumption of tourism products and services have considerably reduced due to mass participation (Baum 1995). Baum continued that, however, Leiper’s two-type classification has greater applicability in the developing countries where the international tourism starts to develop.

The conventional approach to defining the industry is to consider its component sub-sectors. Davidson (1989) identified three major sub-sectors, namely travel and transport, accommodation and catering and leisure, recreation and business facilities. Baum (1995) provided a more comprehensive list of firms and organisations that form the industry as outlined in Table 2.1.

“Hospitality industry” is an umbrella term for all operations that provide hospitality products and service, including hotels, restaurants, pubs, bars and nightclubs and contract foodservice. Despite the expansion of international hotel chains, the hotel industry is dominated by medium and small-sized businesses, particularly in Europe (Todd & Mather 2001). For example, in the UK, it is estimated that there are over 12,400 individual hotel establishments. This figure does not include many smaller establishments which may be near 30,000 (people 1st 2006b). The hotel industry is indeed dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises; however, it is the large corporations that have the power to
influence the marketplace. A large hotel organisation can have over thousands of properties over many different countries. For example, the Best Western International, which is the world's largest hotel brand with more than 4000 hotels in over 80 countries (Best Western 2009). The Accor Hotels is a leading French hotel organisation in Europe, offering over 500,000 rooms over 90 countries (Accor 2009). Some other large hotel corporations include the Hilton and Starwood. These large corporations are leaders of the industry, thus any market effort that they introduce are likely to affect the profitability and survival of those small and medium-sized businesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-sectors</th>
<th>Firms</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodation</strong></td>
<td>Hotels/motels, self-catering accommodation, health farms, camping sites/caravan parks, holiday camps, timeshare, ferries/cruise liners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business, conference /convention tourism and hospitality</strong></td>
<td>Business centres, conference/convention centres, incentive organisers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catering</strong></td>
<td>Restaurants, cafes, bars/clubs, fast food, outdoor and speciality catering, transport catering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructed attractions</strong></td>
<td>Theme parks, animal parks/zos, interpretation centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entertainment</strong></td>
<td>Clubs, theatres/cinemas/concert halls, outdoor theatre and music venues/festivals, sports (non-participatory).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Events</strong></td>
<td>Sporting, cultural, festivals, shows.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>History and heritage</strong></td>
<td>Museums, galleries, historic buildings/sites, interpretation centres, heritage and genealogical services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Natural/Scenic heritage</strong></td>
<td>Attractions/sites, coastlines, mountains, woodland etc., protected sites for flora and fauna.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Retail</strong></td>
<td>Tourist craft and souvenir shops, duty-free shopping, boutiques and speciality shops, major department stores and similar shops, food shopping, airport/other transport shopping, hotel shopping.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sports and recreation</strong></td>
<td>Participation sports, sports/fitness clubs and centres, hotel sports and fitness facilities, outward bound/activity centres, organised recreation, national/regional parks, beaches and other waterfront locations, gambling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism and hospitality Information and facilitation</strong></td>
<td>Travel agents, tour guides, tourist information centres/offices, national, regional and local tourist boards, motoring/travel organisations, media tourism and hospitality presentations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism and hospitality support services</strong></td>
<td>Bureaux de change, customs, immigration, tourist Police, government ministry responsible for tourism, industry and professional associations, voluntary associations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel and transport</strong></td>
<td>Air/water/road/rail transport, air/rail/road transport Infrastructure services, tour operator, travel agents.</td>
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Source: Baum (1995)

The contract foodservice sector has become more important in industrialised countries (Haywood & Wilson 2004). The contract caterers offer their service in the areas of healthcare, business and industry, education, military, prisons and transportation. According to the Contract Catering Survey (BHA 2001), contract caterers served around 951 million
meals from 22000 outlets in France in 2000. For the same operating year, 466 million meals were served from 4000 outlets by contract catering entrepreneurs in Germany. In the America, it is estimated that foodservice contractor managed sales reached US$24.8 billion and that social caterers gained an additional US$3.7 billion and self-operated non-commercial foodservice US$32.6 billion (NRA 2001). In 2004, there are over 20000 contract foodservice provider establishments in the UK, generating almost £7000 million turnover (Annual Business Inquiry 2004, cited in people 1st 2006b).

As a result of industry consolidation sought by globalisation and the power of branding, the contract foodservice industry tends to be dominated by a few big players. Notably, they are the UK-based Compass Group, Sodexho, a French company and ARAMARK in the USA. The small number of leading players suggests that the competitive action of one company will directly affect the profitability and market share of others (Baum 1995). Hence, even though there is room for smaller players to personalise their services and grow their businesses, the expansion is very much constrained (Haywood et al 2004).

The restaurant sector also forms a significant constituent of the hospitality industry. By concept, menu and target market, restaurants can be categorised to fine dining restaurant, theme restaurant, casual dinner houses, ethnic restaurant, family restaurant, grill/buffet, fast-food restaurant, sandwiches/bakery and coffee/snacks (Ball & Roberts 2004; Chon & Sparowe 2000). It was estimated that, in 1997, there were 8.1 million restaurants, generating US$704 billion and employing 48 million people, according to a survey with a sample of 103 countries (IHRA 1998). Similarly, the restaurant trade is very fragmented with a wide diversity of outlets in most countries. In the UK, there were about 64,560 restaurants with a turnover reaching approximately £19 billion and the workforce of over half a million people in 2004 (people 1st 2006b).
2.3 Characteristics of the Hospitality Industry and Management Challenges

2.3.1 The Nature of Hospitality Product and Services

Since hospitality activities are inter-related, Edwards and Ingram (1995) argued that hospitality operations must take into account the very nature of hospitality products and service. Hospitality is “the provision of accommodation, food and drink for people away from home for reward” (Medlik 2003, pp vii). The hospitality industry primarily focuses upon the provision of the three core services of food, drink and accommodation.

Management face the challenge of managing service quality. Differing from product, a service has the following characteristics (Albrecht & Zemke 1985; Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, & Wanhill 1993):

- The guest is part of the production process, thus it is difficult to distinguish between production, sale and consumption of the product;
- Hospitality products are perishable, thus cannot be stored for later consumption;
- Hospitality products rely on the human element for their delivery, thus they cannot be demonstrated, nor can be trialled;
- The value of a hospitality product is frequently internal to the customer, owning nothing tangible once the product has been delivered;
- A hospitality experience often cannot be shared, passed around or given away to others;
- The receiver and deliverer of a hospitality product frequently interact with each other in a relatively personal way;
- The quality of hospitality service is controlled by monitoring processes and ensuring positive attitudes of all staff;
- Bad hospitality service cannot be replaced;
- The more spontaneous and personalised service, the greater the value in the guest’s eyes;

Intangibility, perishability and inseparability are three characteristics which separate tourism products from other products (Cooper et al 1993). For example, as Ball et al (2004) pointed out that a complete meal experience is the most important intangible element of a restaurant product. It is affected by a range of factors such as speed, comfort, service and dine style etc. Indeed, physiological and psychological comfort and security (Nailon 1982)
are also defining features of tourism product and services. They form an important component of a hospitality experience.

People interaction is the very essence of the industry (Stutts 1999). Lashley and Morrison (2000) suggested that hospitality is "a social phenomenon involving relationships between people" (p. xvi). By nature, hospitality operations are open, in that customers input and interact with employees in the service delivery process. The quality of product and service is subject to variability and interpretation as the delivery is evaluated on the basis of demand and expectations of the guest and often requires a relatively personal interaction between the deliverer and the receiver. Therefore, the behaviour and attitude of people (Lockwood 1993b) are critical to the quality of hospitality product and services. As such, it creates distinguishing characteristics of service related to organising, staffing and commanding, compared with manufacturing (Bowen & Ford 2004).

Therefore, to manage service quality, hospitality managers need to appreciate the nature of a service and be capable of responding to the needs of customers, staff and other stakeholders, promptly and building appropriate social interactions with them. As the customer's perception of service quality is directly linked to the attitude, knowledge, skills of front-line staff, management should be responsive to staff (Mahesh 1993) and customers. Management is there to assist the front-line staff members who provide a better service to guest (Albrecht et al 1985; Baum 1995; Mahesh 1993). Mansfield's (1990) four principles in the development of customer care within tourism companies have also highlighted the challenges that hospitality management faces. These principles are:

- Commitment to the principle of customer care must originate from senior management in an organisation.
- Customer care involves everyone in the organisation, including not only all operational staff but also those in managerial positions.
- The cycle of achievement is formed by caring for the staff, caring for the customers and business success form. Improving the experience of the employees encourages a better service and a better experience for guests and eventually more customers are obtained.
- It must be recognised that customer care is a long-term continuous process.
2.3.2 Multi-Culture Perspective

Hospitality firms often operate in a multi-culture environment. Therefore it is important to understand multi-culturalism and its effects on businesses. This understanding can enable hospitality managers to manage the business sensibly (Jayawardena 2001).

2.3.2.1 Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity can be explained by four dimensions developed by Hofstede (1980), which are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism and masculinity-femininity. Power distance measures the interpersonal power as perceived by the less powerful of the two. High power distance reflects traditional boss-subordinate relationships in the hospitality industry, particularly hotel and catering (Baum 1995). In Northern European countries, power distance is relatively smaller, compared with that in Southern Europe. Power distance in an organisation is featured with steep hierarchies, autocratic, directive management, special status symbols, privileges for senior staff and ambivalent attitudes of employees to management (Leeds, Kirkbridge, & Durcan 1994). Uncertainty avoidance reflects the extent to which uncertainty cause discomfort in people. It is, thus, important to avoid uncertainty.

Collectivist culture reflects the need to form groups, seeking harmony at work, emphasising group decision-making. On the other hand, in an organisation that is dominated by individualistic culture, the emphasis is placed on individual identity, achievement and decision-making. Extreme individualistic culture may be problematic for hospitality businesses because many activities require team work so as to satisfy the needs and wants of customers.

In masculinity countries, such as Germany, Greece and the UK, characteristics include male stereotypes, for instance competitiveness, individual advancement, profit, assertiveness and action-focus. By contrast, feminine attributes include warm relationship, caring, nurturing and corporation. Given the caring culture of the guest-employee relationship in the hospitality business, the industry shows the tendency towards female values. Hofstede's theoretical model provides a framework for appreciating cultural diversity. However, it should not be used as a precise programme for managing people from different cultures and nations (Baum 1995).
"Context" is another useful concept in explaining culture diversity. It indicates the extent to which the massage given by a person is explicit (Hall & Hall 1990). According to Hall et al's study, Americans, Germans and other Northern Europeans are low context people, taking explicit, clear, written forms of communication. By contrast, Japanese, Chinese and Southern Europeans exchange information verbally and implicitly, thus tend to be better informed than low context people. This notion has implications for negotiating with customers, staff, suppliers and other stakeholders that hospitality managers frequently perform. Customers from higher content societies may assume that an agreement has more than what is written. Moreover, given the migratory trends of labour, in particular in Europe, low context management are increasingly dealing with workers for higher context societies. The potential for misunderstanding is considerable. Written instructions on how to perform a job may be regarded as an efficient way of communication to a low context manager. However, this approach may be seen as threatening by higher context workers (Baum 1995).

2.3.2.2 Managing Cultural Diversity

Hospitality managers face the challenge of managing cultural diversity of guest. To meet the requirements of customers in a multi-culture marketplace, hospitality companies develop new products. Baum (1995) pointed out that although produce service design and marketing response is important in dealing with the cultural and national differentiation, the ability of the organisation's personnel to respond flexibly and with appreciation of the diversity of customers' needs is more significant.

In addition to this, hospitality managers also face the challenge of managing cultural diversity of business climate, the workforce, as well as the culture distance between the parent corporation and the local community in which the business unit is located. Hofstede's (1980) and Hall et al's (1990) theories may be of useful in understanding cultural diversity. However, generalisation derived from the typologies must be treated with caution because an individual may not fit into the general attributes identified for his/her cultural group (1995). Thus, "the management of these dimensions of diversity in the tourism and hospitality industry must at all times be sensitive to individual behaviour and needs as well as the norms of a group" (Baum 1995, p. 176).
2.3.3 Structural Characteristics

What hospitality managers do is affected by the structure of an organisation (HEFCE 2001). The structure of a firm in the hotel sector is influenced by two key factors, which are high fixed investment costs and the possible divorce of ownership of assets from the operation. Figure 2.1 illustrates the main sources of capital and property arrangement and the forms of affiliation. Hotel development can be funded by using local, international and/or government sources. Many hotel operations have a mix structure of capital resources. Hotel chains in the USA and West Europe have been more willing to invest their capital to expand business, while hotels in East Europe and Asia rely more on business partnerships (Slattery 1996).

How hotels are operated is the other structural variable in the hotel sector. In this context, the development of hotel chains has been an important feature. Peng and Littlejohn (1997) regarded hotel chains as multi-units, being operated under a same organisational system that allows for coherent policies and a common strategy. They claim that the linkage between hotel units and corporate functions is to add value to each other through ownership or contractual relationships.

![Figure 2.1: Capital/Operation Mix in the International Hotel Sector](chart)

**Figure 2.1**
Capital/Operation Mix in the International Hotel Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital/finance</th>
<th>Local funds (Personal sources, loans, pension funds and institutions, stock market)</th>
<th>International sources</th>
<th>Government sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Property arrangement</strong></td>
<td>Own – lease/rent – equity investment or partial ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affiliation/operation type</strong></td>
<td>Single unit or chain</td>
<td>Autonomous owner – consortium – franchise – management contract – government/agency operation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While some chains have direct control over the capital assets and operations, others may have complicated capital structure coupled with various forms of operation. Other types of affiliation, which can also be applied in other tourism organisations, include (Littlejohn 2004):

- **Consortium member**: Hotels agree to corporate in order to gain corporate benefits. Membership is considered based on the fit of the applicant to the consortium’s objectives and the hotel’s ability to subscription and operational requirements.

- **Franchising**: By “buy-in” a specific style of operation from the owner of the operation format (e.g. the franchisor), the hotel (e.g. the franchisee) is given a licence to operate in the franchisor’s name and in return for the payment of a royalty fee. The design of the business is still owned by the franchisor.

- **Management contracting**: The hotel owner reaches an agreement with a hotel operator who will manage the hotel on their behalf, in return for a management fee.

- **Government/agency operation**: A government or its agencies own the hotel. The operation, however, is often contracted out to a hotel operator.

The structure of the restaurant industry can also be analysed by ownership. There are three patterns of ownership structure, namely independents, chains and franchises (Ball et al 2004). Independent restaurants are owned by individuals or proprietors who are also involved in daily operations of the business. Most often, each property is operated with little or no relationship with other properties. Independent restaurants tend to be small, but they dominate the worldwide market for restaurant food. There are also multiunit restaurant businesses, in which context a company owns and operates a number of restaurants that have different concepts, menus and target markets.

A chain restaurant has two or more outlets normally owned by a company and is marketed on a corporate basis. The individual restaurants on the chain are identical to each other in terms of their target market, menu and concept. Chains may be owned by franchise, management companies or family-owned. A major factor in the growth of many fast-food and some other types of restaurants has been franchising. UK has been regarded as the “gateway” to Europe by most of American fast-food franchisors (Ball et al 2004). There are more American franchise units in the UK than the rest of Europe combined (Baum 1995).
In the contract foodservice industry, there are three main styles of contracts between the caterers and their clients. When agreeing on the cost plus management fee arrangement, the client pays the actual cost of food, supplies, labour and other direct costs, plus a management fee. The second style is known as "profit and loss", in which situation costs on services are pre-determined. The operator assumes greater risk but also possibility of higher profits. The partnership-style of agreement is emerging in recent years. It allows both parties to share risks, rewards and control, working together in invest in facilities, attract customers and sharing costs and profits.

The capital-operational relationships of a hospitality company, especially hotel, have impact on its managers' work. When the hotel operator is also the owner of a hotel, or a restaurant, the management team must be capable of managing their capital resources as well as day-to-day operations. However, in the context of management contract, the management's priority is to manage the business effectively, working within the budget, so as to meet the expectations of the owner. Such variations in capital-operation combination directly affect the content of managers' work and thus have implications on management competencies and management development. Hospitality managers need to be able to appreciate how their organisation is structured and operated and then prioritise her/his work accordingly.

2.3.4 Human Resource Management

The hospitality industry faces a number of problems, such as the high level of labour turnover and low qualified workforce (people 1st 2006c). The continuing problem of high level of labour turnover results from various factors, such as long operational hours involving shifts, low pay and young workforce. Many people who work in the industry are drawn from the secondary labour market (e.g. using the industry on a short-term basis such as students, housewives and school leavers) (Boella et al 2005). They are prepared to accept low pay since they may not be the primary breadwinner and the unsociable working hours may fit well with the rest of their lives. The high level of labour turnover raises the challenge of training the workforce to the standard and sustaining it.

Moreover, human resources in the hospitality industry, as a whole, are poorly qualified. Training and qualifications are central to the challenges holding back the hospitality industry (Turl 2004). For instance, the levels of job-related training within the UK hospitality industry are generally lower than the UK average, except the hotel industry whereby 25% of the
hotel workforce participated in some kind of training in 2005 (people 1st 2006b). Almost 40% of the workforce in the UK hotel industry hold National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 1 and entry level, or no qualifications, while only 27% have NVQ Level 2 qualifications (people 1st 2006b). The hospitality services workforce is the lowest qualified of all the hospitality industry. 16% of the workforce do not hold any qualifications; and a further 30% hold only NVQ Level 1 and entry level qualifications (people 1st 2006b). The lack of training and development often results in internal skills gaps (LSC 2005).

The management population, which is 27% of the workforce in 2004, represents the second largest group in the hospitality, leisure, travel and tourism sector (Dickerson, Homenidou, & Wilson 2006). 16% of hotel and accommodation managers and 14% of publicans and managers of licensed premises have no qualifications at all in the UK (people 1st 2006e). Vacancies for managers are more difficult to fill than is normal across the UK economy as a whole. 61% of the vacancies are hard-to-fill due to a lack of applicants with the required skills (people 1st 2006c). This can result in the employment of under qualified individuals, such as functionally good staff who might not have necessary managerial competencies or may not have been given adequate management training.

People are the most valuable asset in the service sector (Poon 1993). Hospitality organisations heavily rely on their human resources to deliver quality service to create competitive advantage. Therefore, hospitality managers face two main challenges: developing their staff continuously and repeatedly and developing themselves. They need to recruit, select, develop and retain committed, competent, well-motivated employees who focus on offering quality services to the customers. Service employees need more skills and knowledge in order to become part-time marketers.

They also face the challenge of developing themselves. For the management population in general, 54% of managers are lacking managerial skills and this deficiency is followed by technical and practical (39%), communication (37%) and customer handling skills (37%) in the UK (LSC 2005). The skills shortage problem in the hospitality management population places more pressure on organisations and the industry to up-skill the managers. Hospitality managers need to continuously develop their competencies, as well as help their subordinates and workers develop their potentials.
2.3.5 The Changing Environment

To meet the changing needs of customers, hospitality organisations continuously develop new products. In the North America, hotel companies have developed a wide range of hotel brands. Adopting segmentation approach, products are designed according to different travel purposes, customer requirements and market-service level. Some companies take a more sophisticated approach to expand their product offerings through a mix of ownership/operating methods. In contract foodservice, many catering firms increasingly become active in selling directly to customers in places like transportation terminals, leisure and entertainment centres, department stores and shopping malls. Some major firms are also diversifying their product lines, covering housekeeping, maintenance, security, laundry, assets and property management and so on as value-added services (Haywood et al. 2004). Because of the highly fluctuating demand cycles and propensity for change in the business environment (Baum 1995), hospitality managers are demanded to face uncertainty. They need to be flexible and proactive in dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity.

2.4 Summary

The characteristics of the hospitality industry have denoted critical challenges that hospitality managers face in both operational and strategic management. The service-driven nature of hospitality products demand the management and the workers to be customer-focused and to respond to uncertainties promptly with culture sensitivity. In the daily operations, managers also need to have commercial awareness, ensuring profitability. Managing financial and human resources successfully is critical for those who need to make strategic decisions for the organisation. The key managerial challenges are in the areas of:

- managing service quality;
- managing culture diversity;
- managing operations;
- managing people and themselves.

It was suggested that in order to face the challenges, hospitality managers need to:
• Appreciate the nature of a service and be capable of responding to the needs of customers, staff and other stakeholders promptly and building appropriate social interaction with them;
• Be capable of understanding cultural diversity and be sensitive to individual behaviour and needs;
• Develop their own potential and that of their subordinates and workers;
• Understand the business objectives and prioritise their work accordingly.

This chapter provided a baseline on which hospitality managers’ work can be understood. It is suggested that the unique characteristics of hospitality product and services and those of industry structures would influence hospitality managers’ work, which can be different from managers in other industries. To verify this claim, an effort is made in the following chapter to explore the nature of managerial work and investigate, to what extent, the claim stands.
Chapter 3
Managerial Work

3.1 Introduction

Many textbooks on hospitality management (Brotherton 2003; Powers & Barrows 2003) try to tell students that if they are to pursue a career in the management of a hospitality business, they need to know how to plan, organise, command, coordinate and control (e.g. POC). However, one may question “Is POC what hospitality managers really do? How useful is this theory to training managers?”. With these questions in mind, this chapter revisits some celebrated studies of pioneering scholars in the field of management and highlights the characteristics of the hospitality managers’ work. It aims to establish an integrated conceptualisation of managerial work and initiate new ideas on how hospitality managers can be better developed. Reviewed studies are selected based on their contributions to the debate on the nature of managerial work in general and their potential impacts on management learning and development initiatives. This group of studies provides a foundation for a more contextualised discussion of hospitality managers’ jobs.

The chapter first explores the conceptual meanings of “manager” and “management”. This is followed by a discussion on what managers’ work is all about. An argument is then put forward that managerial work constitutes formal and informal aspects. Implications of the formality on developing managers are also discussed.

3.2 Who Are Managers?

A manager is the person who is “in charge of an organization or one of its subunits” (Mintzberg 1975, p. 54). Management can be described at several hierarchical levels. This is reflected in the definitions of four words given in the Chambers 21st Century Dictionary. “Supervisor” is used to label “someone whose job is to oversee a task”, which represents
the managers at the bottom of the hierarchy (Chambers 1996, p. 1419). At a higher level is the “manager”, who is in overall charge or control of a commercial enterprise, organization, project” (Chambers 1996, p. 833). Directors are senior managers of a business firm, as defined by the same source. A Managing Director, also known as Chief Executive Officer, is a director “in charge of an organization and its day-to-day running, often carrying out the decisions of a board of directors” (Chambers 1996, p. 833).

A similar hierarchical structure of management is also seen in the “Corpus of Management Excellence” developed by the Institute of Hospitality (formerly Hotel and Catering International Management Association) to set management standards. The Corpus outlines three levels of management in the hospitality, leisure and tourism industry, namely supervisory, operational and senior management. It proposes that first line managers are those who are responsible for the daily running of a department or small unit, implement procedures, make short term plans and take decisions that affect the daily business only. Roles at the operational management level include taking responsibility for long term decisions and planning, budget setting and initiating actions. The senior management is responsible for corporate or strategic planning and policy making. Their role is to direct operations and business policy (HCIMA 1998).

In the hospitality industry, managers at the supervisory level may have job titles such as Shift Leader, Assistant Reception Manager and Marketing Executive. At the higher level are unit managers and area or regional managers. A unit manager has responsibilities for a restaurant, hotel, pub, club or catering outlet. One may see job titles such as Food and Beverage Manager, General Manager and Executive Chef. An area or regional manager looks after the operations of multi-units that are located in different places. At the corporate level, there are specialised functional managers, for instance Corporate Finance Executive, Marketing Director and Human Resource Director. Functional managers are also seen in a business unit that has multiple operations and a complex organisational structure, such as a five-star hotel.

Mintzberg (1996) challenged this conventional view of management, arguing that an organisation does not have top and bottom, but inner and outer. He pictures an organisation as a circle (Figure 3.1), where the outer edges represent people who are connected to the world and the inner are those disconnected from it. Around the outer edge is the group of people who develop, produce and deliver products and services. They have
the knowledge of daily operations with complete clarity, but in a narrow way. In the centre of the circle is the central management consisting of managers who can see widely all around the circle but not clearly, because they are distant from the operations. In between are the middle managers, or informed managers, who can see the outer edges and "swing around and talk about" the operations to those at the centre (Mintzberg 1996, p. 61).

Most people are hired initially to perform a set of specialised tasks (Peterson & Van Fleet 2004), such as working at the front desk as a receptionist in a hotel or a waiter/waitress in a restaurant. They are then promoted to managerial positions because of their competence in performing the specialised tasks, for example promoted from a receptionist to a supervisor in charge of day-to-day operations at the front desk. This type of career progression is commonly seen. In fact, it has been conceived that a prerequisite for promoting an individual to a managerial position is the person's possession of some level of technical competence (Maimon 1986; Peterson et al 2004). Managers are usually knowledgeable about the specialised tasks that they have responsibility for, so that they can manage well.
3.3 Managers' Work

There have been many studies giving descriptions of what managers do or should do (see Table 1). Back in 1916, Henri Fayol introduced POC3 to label what managers should do (cited in Tate 1995). Building upon his theory, many scholars have expanded the knowledge and developed "functionalist" management to describe managerial work. It sets out various functional areas of management that future managers are expected to do and suggests that is what managers should do in practice.

From the early 1970s, new behaviour oriented management theories started to emerge. Celebrated studies include those written by Henry Mintzberg (1973; 1975), Rosemary Stewart (1976a), John Kotter (1982) and Watson (2001). These studies provide abundant empirical evidence on what managers actually do and the patterns of their work. Some authors started to question the usefulness of the conventional management literature, arguing that the conventional literature fails to explain what managers actually do (Mintzberg 1975).

In spite of the ongoing debate about managerial work, there appears to be two distinctive approaches. One approach is focusing on the job at a micro level. Studies by, for instance, Fayol, Mintzberg and Sayles provided descriptions about what managers do or should do. In general, the content or elements of what managers do are to a great extent similar, as explained by both the functionalist (Gulick & Urwick 1937; Mahoney et al. 1965) and behaviourist management literature (Luthans 1988; Mintzberg 1973; Sayles 1964).

Researchers have developed their own concepts and categories to describe managerial work, as shown in Table 3.1. There is apparent overlapping of classifications. For instance, Sayles (1964) conceptualised managerial work by putting it in organisational processes (Hales 1986) and identified managerial behaviours, which include participation in external work-flows via relationships with, for example, trading, servicing, advising, auditing, stabilising, innovating, monitoring and leadership. Sayles’ classifications of managerial behaviours are implicitly overlapped with Mintzberg’s (1973). Managers scan, process and disseminate information by interacting with subordinates, peers, their bosses and external stakeholders. They monitor work process and business environments and initiate new courses of action to take the business forward.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management Literature (by year)</th>
<th>Description of Managerial Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henri Fayol (as cited in Tate 1995)</td>
<td>POC(^3) (e.g. planning, organising, commanding, coordinating and controlling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Gulick et al 1937)</td>
<td>POSDCORB (e.g. planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hemphill 1959)</td>
<td>Providing non-operational staff service, supervision, internal business control, technical aspects of products markets, human, community and personal, long-range planning, exercise of authority, business reputation, personal demands, preservation of assets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sayles 1964)</td>
<td>Participation in work-flow via relationships with trading, servicing, advising, auditing, stabilizing and innovating, monitoring and leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mahoney et al. 1965)</td>
<td>PRICESS (e.g. planning, representing, investigating, negotiating, coordinating, evaluating, supervising and staffing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Pheysey 1972)</td>
<td>Trouble shooting, planning, briefing subordinates, conducting meetings, reviewing subordinates' progress, interest in personal problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mintzberg 1973)</td>
<td>Interpersonal roles (figurehead, leader, liaison), informational roles (monitor, disseminator, spokesman), decisional roles (entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Luthans et al. 1988)</td>
<td>Communication (exchanging information, paperwork), traditional management (planning, decision making and controlling), networking (interacting with outsiders and socialising/politicking), human resource management (motivating/reinforcing, disciplining/punishing, managing conflict, staffing and training/developing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ferguson and Berger (1984) used Mintzberg’s theory to investigate the work of restaurant managers. However, like other authors (McCall & Segrist 1980, cited in Carroll and Gillen 1987; Shapira & Dunbar 1980; Snyder & Wheelen 1981; Weick 1974), they experienced difficulties in applying Mintzberg’s roles classification as they found the categories were “neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive” (Ferguson et al 1984, p. 30).

This fragmentation in classifying what managers do or should do reflects diverse views on the phenomenon of managers’ work (Dann 1990). However, Hales (1986, p93) believed that this “degree of discontinuity, even inconsistency” hinders the further development of this research area. He pointed out that this discontinuity and inconsistency may be partially due to bewildering shifts between tasks, activities and behaviours (Hales 1986). Fulfilling a task requires the execution of a range of activities. Behaviours are observable from carrying out the activities. Some authors focus on tasks that involve performing a range of activities while some place emphasis on specific activities.

For example, for a manager to plan, s/he will need to communicate with others to obtain information face-to-face or via telephone, to process/evaluate information and then make
decisions. One may agree that planning is a task which cannot be achieved without carrying out activities like receiving and processing information, in which the manager may read an industry report, or have a telephone communication with his peers. He suggested that the “role” concept may be a way forward (Hales 1986 and 2001). This has received support from Fondas and Stewart (1994).

Some scholars believed that the diversity is attributed to methodological artefacts (Fox 1991; Martinko & Gardner 1985). As pointed out by Fox (1991), diarists like Stewart and others, are unable to obtain tasks that fall outside the diarising whereas observers such as Mintzberg can only capture the tasks performed during the period of observation. Hence, one may question whether all descriptions about what managers do or should do have actually given the whole picture of the nature of managerial work. Snyder and Wheelen (1981) have given a clear view on this matter. To borrow their words:

“to understand managerial work, it is absolutely essential to view managerial activities in their totality. One must not focus on the individual activities alone because this will inevitably lead to a different view of reality”

(Main 2002)

The other approach is more dimensional, meaning bringing in other variables such as organisational, economic, cultural and hierarchical. For instance, Hales (1999) gave a causal explanation of the commonality of managerial work by linking it to the social systems in which managers are located. Other examples include Stewart’s (1982) and Hemphill’s (1959) studies. This system-wise approach reflects the increasingly acknowledged significance of viewing managerial work in its totality. Indeed, if only looking at observable micro-behaviours, a full understanding of managers’ work can hardly be achieved (Martinko et al 1985).

A number of scholars have made an effort to integrate diverse concepts from different studies and reconcile evidence of managerial work (Hales 1999; Kotter 1982; Stewart 1989). In his “What do managers do? A critical review of the evidence”, Hales (1986) summarised what has been achieved based on his extensive review of the management literature, highlighted the key failings or problems and suggested what could be done to overcome these issues. Dann (1990) gave a brief periodic description of the developing research subject and the similarities and differences of various studies by pioneering scholars. Still, it seems to be the case that everyone is telling their own stories.
However, Carroll and Gillen (1987) have taken a rather fresh perspective in which they embrace the merits of others' works, providing a big picture of what managerial work is all about. Adapting Carroll’s et al approach, a conceptual framework is proposed as shown in Figure 3.2. It bridges notions of both approaches to the subject, providing a holistic view of managers’ work.

3.3.1 About Managers’ Job

As suggested in Figure 3.2, the way that managers approach their work is similar. Kotter (1982) claimed that they follow the process of agenda setting, networking building and getting networks to implement agendas. He described “agenda” as a set of loosely connected goals/objectives and plans that address the manager’s responsibilities in the long, medium and short-terms. For hospitality firms, there are mainly three kinds of objectives that management must be concerned with, which are to ensure that the guest feels welcome, that facilities work for the guest and that the operation will continue to provide a service while also making a profit (Powers et al 2003).

The notion of responsibilities is shared by Hales (1999) and Watson (2001). Managers’ responsibility is the defining characteristic of managing (Hales 1999). It is central to the rationale of all managers’ work regardless of their functions and levels (Watson 2001). Responsibilities are one of the pressures on an individual manager to give attention and priority. Watson continued that they are driven by managers’ roles at the “local” level which can be away from the issues of long-term corporate survival.

Typically, agendas include a range of financial, product/market, organisational and personnel issues. This has been long studied and discussed in conventional “functionalist” management literature. Examples include Gulick and Urwick’s (1937) POSDCORB (e.g. planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting) and Mahoney et al’s (1965) PRINCESS (e.g. planning, representing, investigating, negotiating, coordinating, evaluating, supervising and staffing) (see Table 3.1). This stream of management is seen as classical management thinking, which still has great influence on management education.
To accomplish the emerging agendas, the manager develops a network of relationships with people who s/he feels are needed. These people can be bosses, subordinates, peers, financial sources, customers, suppliers, competitors, the government, the press and the public. In the process of pursuing their goals, managers also process information. Indeed, in their examination of Mintzberg's 10 roles, Shapira and Dunbar (1980) revealed that these roles can be grouped into two groups: one representing information generation and transmission and the other is concerning the formulation and execution of decisions. These two groups of roles have demonstrated well the information input-output nature of managerial activities (Shapira et al 1980; Weick 1974).

Moreover, they process information through a variety of communication means, such as negotiating with external customers, networking, directing and monitoring subordinates' work and politicking with bosses. These interpersonal interactions are reciprocal, meaning
the manager fulfils the goals of the people in her/his network who in turn help the manager to realise her/his goals (Kotter 1982). The manager uses the network to implement the agendas by exercising interpersonal skills, budgetary resources and information to influence people and events directly and indirectly.

In the process of pursuing their goals, managers carry out a variety of activities. Based on their research, Luthans et al. (1988) provided a classification of managerial activities as outlined in Table 3.1. They categorise 12 activities into 4 groups, which are communication, traditional management, networking and human resource management. Their work demonstrates a convergent approach, joining both classical and modern management thinking.

Hemphill (1959) discussed the "managerial" and "technical" elements of managers' work and identified 10 position elements including providing non-operational staff service, supervision, internal business control, technical aspects of products markets, human, community and personal, long-range planning, exercise of authority, business reputation, personal demands and preservation of assets. Similarly, Pheysey (1972) outlined trouble shooting, planning, briefing subordinates, conducting meetings, reviewing subordinates' progress and interest in personal problems. They believe that identifying what managers do is of use to those responsible for designing management courses and argue that the description of a manager's job is a valuable guide in the development of management ability.

Based on his intensive observation of managers' behaviours, their diaries and documents, Mintzberg (1973) identified 10 inseparable roles of managers, which are further classified into three groups as listed in Table 3.1. He claimed that managers perform a variety of tasks and their work can be characterised by brevity, variety, superficiality and verbal communication (Mintzberg 1975). With all the obligations and pressures they are under, managers have to respond to changes and problems promptly, instead of being reflective, rational and systematic thinkers as claimed by the classical management school. As a result of this, managers strongly favour verbal communication (e.g. telephone calls and meetings).

Research on managerial work in the hospitality industry has built upon the general framework of management studies (Ladkin 1999). For example, Ley (1980) employed Mintzberg's framework to investigate the relationship between hotel general managers'
roles and the effectiveness of their performance. Ley reported that the characteristics of hospitality managers’ work comprise pace, being constantly interrupted and action with a predominance of verbal communication. Furthermore, less effective managers of similar hotels spend more time on the leadership role whereas highly effective managers allocate more time to entrepreneurial activities. The importance of the entrepreneurial role is supported in the work of Stewart (1982). Ferguson and Berger (1984) also revealed that restaurant managers are constantly interrupted by telephone calls and informal meetings and spend more time on tours than do the general managers in Mintzberg’s study. They pointed out that restaurant managers are in a permanent “interrupt mode” because of the immediate work environment in which they operate.

Indeed, the nature of hospitality managers’ work is attributed to the immediate work environment (Niallon 1968, cited in Dann 1990). Bowen and Ford (2004) argued that because of the immediacy and the nature of hospitality operations being in an open system, hospitality managers must develop the ability to deal with ambiguous and uncertain situations. Ritchie and Riley (2004) identified that the role of multi-unit managers in service organisations in dealing with the unexpected involved containing uncertainty and preventing it from rising up the management hierarchy. Thus, some question the practicality of applying classic management functions (e.g. planning, organising, coordinating and controlling) to hospitality managers.

Nonetheless, whichever activities a hospitality manager carries out, they should shape the organisation as a whole to bring about its long-term survival. Management, thus, is a strategic exchange. Watson (2001) claimed that for this exchange to be effective, an organisation must require its managers to take a more corporate, as opposed to “local” conception of their role. This role adjustment - from local to corporate - is affected by the organisational structure and culture.

Truly, what managers do is affected by a variety of factors. Stewart (1976b) pointed out that every managerial job makes demands that the manager has to perform in addition to the specialist content of the job, while it also provides some opportunities for the incumbent to conduct a task of her/his choosing. Managers have choices to perform a task differently. However, this is limited by the constraints derived from both inside and outside of the organisation.
Stewart’s ideas are shared by Hales (1999), who argued that managers’ responsibilities are shaped by the resources, cognitive rules and moral rules of the social systems in which they are located and the way in which managers “draw upon and reproduce these resources and rules in their work practices” (Hales 1999, p. 347). Hence, the commonality of managerial work reflects how all managers feel obligated to engage in organisational routines and reproduce the resources and rules due to the ambiguity and subjectivity of managerial work.

Hales’ (1999) responsibility-resources-rules framework partially corresponds to Stewart’s demand-choice-constraints notions. Hales focused on the similarity of managerial work more whereas Stewart emphasised the variations of managerial work – the variations of managerial work exist not only across various management levels, but also within each of the levels. Both authors recognised that both the conventional management theories and the role theory developed by Mintzberg have placed too much emphasis on the commonality of managerial work.

What hospitality managers do is affected by factors within the social systems in which they are located. Managers in the hospitality industry face a more uncertain and complex work environment due to its unique service characteristics, compared to those working in manufacturing industries (Winata & Mia 2005). This complexity is coupled with cultural differences of business climates and environments (Kriegl 2000; Shay & Tracey 1997) and managers’ personal values (Groschl & Doherty 2006) and attributes (Elizur 1984; England 1967; Sosik 2005).

Dann (1991) has studied the linkages between corporate culture, strategy, the managerial divisions of labour and the pattern of hotel managers’ work. He argues that strategy in the hospitality industry is often centred in the relative degree of decentralisation or centralisation (e.g. corporate culture). This in turn influences how managers’ effectiveness is to be measured and managerial divisions of labour. Consequentially, hotel managers choose which tasks to emphasise, such as more entrepreneurial activities in an extensively decentralised corporate and how to undertake them. Dann suggests that the patterns of hotel managerial work concerning service and quality assurance tend to be similar, given that quality assurance checks are usually supported by a high degree of centralisation. His study reaffirms Stewart’s explanation concerning the variations of managers’ work in general.
Hospitality businesses often have distributed business units. Management structures and the functions of unit managers may vary considerably across the industry. The size and complexity of a hospitality business unit affects what managers do (HEFCE 2001). A large hospitality corporation with multi-site units, such as contract catering, requires more unit managers who are hands-on and who focus on daily operations with multiple skills. Its specialist managers, for instance finance and marketing managers, often work at the regional and corporate levels. However, in a business unit that operates a wider range of functions, such as a large five-star hotel, unit management are increasingly required to focus on long-term strategy, product and market development (HEFCE 2001) and specialist managers are often needed within the property.

To summarise, the classic management school focuses on the managerial functions (e.g. POC, POSTCORB and PRINCESS) that managers are expected to be responsible for and generally regards management roles as universal across industries. Works by Hemphill (1959), Pheysey (1972) and Sayles (1964) provided the descriptions of various managerial behaviours while considering other factors as well, e.g. job elements and organizational processes. Mintzberg’s (1973), Kotter’s (1982) and Luthan et al’s (1988) studies describe managerial work in an isolated manner. They recognise the variation of managerial behaviours across the management hierarchy, but much of the attention is given to the similarities of management roles.

This view of universality and commonality of managers’ job is challenged by Stewart (1967) and Hales (1986). What managers do is significantly different due to a variety of factors, or in Stewart’s (1967) words “constraints” and “choices” and in Hales’ (1986) words “resources and cognitive and moral rules”. This means that another aspect of managerial work is “negotiable”. The negotiation occurs between the incumbent and circumstances s/he is in. Agreeing with what other authors promote, Watson (2001) and Hales (1986) also emphasised the importance of responsibilities that managers face. This mirrors the stance of the classic management literature.

Research on managers’ jobs and behaviours has been described as “highly insular in perspective” (Dann 1991, p. 23) and criticised for lacking in a good theoretical base and sound methodological approach (Hales 1986; Martinko et al 1985). However, in spite of the diverse views on managerial work, there seem to be some general agreements, as outlined below:
Managers perform a variety of tasks and deal with a wide range of people and large volume of ambiguous information;

The pattern of their work can be characterised by brevity and superficiality;

Managers have various responsibilities, which are shaped by a wide range of factors, such as organizational structure and culture, resources, cognitive and moral rules;

Managers’ roles differ across the levels of management and industries;

The role of hospitality managers is attributed to the immediate work environment.

### 3.3.2 Knowledge Base and Skills

As suggested in Figure 3.2, while the performance of managers is reflected by the degree of progress in achieving the goals, the effectiveness of managers’ performance is underpinned by their competencies (Katz 1955) and capabilities to use their knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding appropriately and effectively in familiar and focused specialist contexts as well as in new and changing circumstances (Hase, Cairns, & Malloch 1998; Stephenson 1992).

“Competency” or “competencies” are what a manager must personally possess, such as a characteristic, motive, trait, skill, aspect of one’s self-image, or body of knowledge the person has, in order to be able to demonstrate competence or competences in the job (Boyatzis 1982; Tate 1995; Winterton & Winterton 1999). One should not confuse it with the job-related concept of competence which means what is required in performing a job. It is derived from examining the role.

Spencer and Spencer’s (1993) four-layer iceberg model (see Figure 3.3) provides a visual means in differentiating various forms of individual competency. The bottom two layers concerning personal characteristics, values, standards and morals are difficult to assess directly. The top two layers are concerned with transferable skills, observable knowledge and skills that relate to work activities, which can be acquired through professional and technical training initiatives.

Similarly, “capability” is regarded as the integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding used appropriately and effectively in familiar and focused specialist context as well as new and changing circumstances (Stephenson 1992). Hase, Cairns and
Malloch (1998) viewed it as an integration of specialist skills, self-efficacy and appropriate values consisting of the elements of a mindful openness to change, self-management of learning potential and a problem-solving approach. Therefore, the defining characteristic of being capable as a manager is the capability of autonomous learning and development in a changing business environment (Stephenson 1992).

**Figure 3.3 The Iceberg Model of Competency**

| Observable knowledge and skills that related to work activities |
| Transferable skills, such as communication and problem solving skills |
| Values, standards, morals and how the person relates to the social and political expectations of the organisation |
| Personal characteristics, such as motives, self-image and commitment to results |

Source: Adapted from Spencer and Spencer (1993)

Knowledge and skills are an integral part of competency as well as of capability. The possession of a manager's knowledge and skills is more important than his/her personal characteristics in the delivery of effective management (Katz 1955 and 1974; Mintzberg 1975; Peterson et al 2004). Skills are abilities to do something, differing from propositions about skills and procedures which is part of proposition knowledge (Eraut 1994; Ryle 1949). They can be developed by doing (Katz 1956).

Knowledge is information in use (Sallis & Jones 2002). Information becomes knowledge when people process it into a form by which they actively use it. Knowledge is broadly defined as theoretical and practical understanding (Eraut 1994). In contrast to Eraut's broad definition of "knowledge", Bloom regarded it as a taxonomy category, stating "Frequently knowledge is the primary, sometimes almost the sole kind of, educational objective in a curriculum" (Bloom 1965, pp28). Eraut focuses on the nature of knowledge whereas Bloom looks into the variety of educational objectives, among which is the acquisition of knowledge or information.

There are different forms of knowledge. Table 3.2 lists some classifications of knowledge proposed by various authors. For instance, Ryle (1949) distinguished "knowing-that" from
"knowing-how". Polanyi (1967) introduced the term "tacit knowledge" to describe the knowledge that people know but cannot tell. Gibbons et al. (1994) drew distinction between "disciplinary knowledge" and "transdisciplinary knowledge". 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>The types of knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ryle (1949)</td>
<td>knowing-that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakeshott (1962)</td>
<td>technical knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polanyi (1967)</td>
<td>explicit knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbons et al. (1994)</td>
<td>disciplinary knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eraut (1994)</td>
<td>propositional knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eraut (1994) used "propositional knowledge", "process knowledge" and "personal knowledge" to explain the nature of professional knowledge. The former underpins or enables professional action. It comes closest to Oakeshott's "technical knowledge", Polanyi's "explicit knowledge" and Gibbons et al.'s "disciplinary knowledge". Personal knowledge, such as memories of cases and problems which have been encountered, reflected upon and theorized with varying significance to current practice, informs professionals' judgment. It highlights the part of professional knowledge which is impressions, gained from experience and only partially understood.

In essence, the general agreement is that part of knowledge is codified and teachable. It is technical, governed by the, largely academic, interests of a specific community. It is homogenous by nature, hierarchical and preserved in terms of its organisation (Gibbons, Limoges, & Nowotny 1994). On the contrary, the other form of knowledge is socially accountable, transdisciplinary and heterogeneous by nature. Its organisation is heterarchical and transient. To recognise the existence of tacit knowledge in practice does not imply that codified knowledge is irrelevant to such environments (Eraut 1994). Dienes and Berry (1997) examined criteria by which knowledge might be regarded as implicit and argued that implicit knowledge is often relatively inflexible in transfer to different domains and that resulting knowledge from implicit learning are often relatively robust. Implicit learning occurs when attention is placed on specific items instead of underlying rules.

However, Eraut (1994) criticized the common distinction between codified technical (or theoretical) knowledge and implicit practical knowledge being not only unhelpful, but misleading. Hence, he proposed a framework of management knowledge which is comprised of the following six categories:
• Knowledge of people: knowing about people;
• Situational knowledge: knowing the situation in which managers find themselves;
• Knowledge of educational practice: all policies and practices;
• Conceptual knowledge: perceptual framework e.g. the set of concepts, theories and ideas that one has stored in his/her memory consciously and it is ready for use;
• Process knowledge: knowing how e.g. managerial processes which include knowledge about what needs to be done and possessing and using practical and routinized skills;
• Control knowledge: knowing self, such as self-awareness and sensitivity, self-management and self-development.

He argued that these categories are interdependent and that a management task often involves more than one category of knowledge. For instance, when acquiring knowledge of people and situated knowledge, information is filtered and shaped by a perceptual framework e.g. conceptual knowledge.

A knowledge base that a manager has is an individual collection from a much larger public and propositional knowledge (Eraut 1994). It is influenced by knowledge encountered in management development, by personal interest and experience and by social interaction with others such as fellow managers. Only a portion of the collected knowledge is being used in practice e.g. action knowledge.

It is important for managers to possess a set of core skills that enable them to discharge the functions of management and thus accomplish business goals. Katz identifies a hierarchy of managerial skills, namely technical, human and conceptual skills. Many studies in this field of research have built on Katz’s work (Peterson et al 2004). Sandwith’s five-domain competency model (1993) is a classic example. This model advocates conceptual/creative, leadership, interpersonal, administrative and technical domains.

Sandwith views the human skills advocated by Katz as consisting of three dimensions (i.e. leadership, interpersonal and administrative domains) (see Figure 3.4). The assumption is that the essential activity of managers is decision making – a process of choosing suitable responses according to “perceived factors”...”with reference to the acquired knowledge and skills outlined in the five domains” (Sandwith 1993, p. 46). The descriptions of the domains (Peterson et al 2004; Sandwith 1993) are as follows:
• Conceptual/creative domain: the cognitive skills and abilities to generate new ideas based on the understanding of existing information and knowledge;

• Interpersonal domain: effective interaction with others, such as dealing with conflicts and negotiating deals;

• Leadership domain: turning thoughts to productive actions, managing attention, meaning and trust;

• Administrative domain: the personnel management and financial management aspects;

• Technical skills: the use of specialised tools, methods, processes, techniques or knowledge.

Figure 3.4 Katz's and Sandwith's Competency Domains

According to UK's “National Occupational Standards for Management and Leadership”, managers need to know about managing self, providing direction for the area of responsibility and for the organisation, facilitating change, working with people, using resources and achieving results (MSC 2005). In the report on “European Management Skills in the Hospitality Industry” (Lockwood et al 1993a), an effort is made to develop a competency framework for European managers in the hospitality industry. As can be seen in Table 3.3, hospitality managers need to know about managing operations, managing the business, managing people and managing themselves. These areas of knowing can be broken into 15 sub-areas as given in the table.

The importance of human skills, as opposed to technical skills, has been increasingly recognised (Tas 1988; Tas et al. 1996). Okeiyi et al (1994) investigated the importance of
food and beverage companies' expectation of hospitality management graduates from the hospitality practitioners, educators and students perspectives. This study reported that human relations and managerial skills are rated most important whereas technical skills are less important. The same trend is also seen in the study by Tas et al (1996). They find that although technical and administrative domains are more numerous, the competencies are not rated as important as those of the conceptual/creative, interpersonal and leadership domains.

Table 3.3 Functions Performed by Hospitality Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Area</th>
<th>Sub-areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing operations</td>
<td>Day-to-day operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Specialist/technical areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing a crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the business</td>
<td>Managing business performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing strategic decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing legal complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing people</td>
<td>Managing individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing external contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing personnel administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal management skills</td>
<td>Making presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interpersonal skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using computers in management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lockwood (1993a)

Katz (1974) argued that the degree of relevance of the skills varies between supervisors, managers and executives (Katz 1955, 1974 and 1986). At the low level of the management ladder, technical and human skills are particularly needed. As one moves up to a higher level of management, technical skills become less important. Instead, the effectiveness of the person, as a manager, increasingly depends on his/her human and conceptual skills. At the top level, coordinating and integrating all the activities and interest toward the common goal becomes the most important for successful management.

In the hospitality industry, managers at different levels require a different mix of knowledge and skills. For example, unit managers of a hospitality firm require a mix of interpersonal skills, commercial skills and technical skills while multi-unit managers need to develop more intellectual skills in order to be able to take a broader view of the business (HERCE 2001). Kay and Russette (2000) studied the hospitality management competencies at entry and middle managerial levels within the front desk, food and beverage and sales functional area.
They identified 18 essential core competencies, which lie in all Sandwith’s (1993) domains apart from the administrative and discover that “working knowledge of product-service” and “adapting creatively to change” are essential competencies for all the managers studied. It is also reported that middle-level front desk and sales managers need more competencies than the same level food and beverage managers. Wilson, Murray and Black (2000) highlighted the importance of possessing skills to deal with financial issues among contract catering managers.

A recent study by Kay and Moncarz (2004) suggested that, in addition to human skills, competencies in information technology, financial management and marketing play a significant role in hospitality managers’ success. Thus, they argue that educational institutions and training providers should cover these areas and equip the future managers with the required knowledge and skills. Chung-Herrera et al (2003) researched on hospitality leadership looked into eight factors - communication, critical thinking, implementation, industry knowledge, interpersonal skills, leadership, self-management and strategic positioning (see Table 3.4). They identified 28 dimensions under the heading of these factors and 99 specific behavioural competencies that future leaders would need to possess.

Table 3.4 Leadership-Competency Model for the Lodging Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Critical thinking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking with impact</td>
<td>Strategic orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating open communication</td>
<td>Decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active listening</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written communication</td>
<td>Risk taking and innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry knowledge</td>
<td>Implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and industry expertise</td>
<td>Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Directing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building networks</td>
<td>Teamwork orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing conflict</td>
<td>Fostering motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embracing diversity</td>
<td>Fortitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Embracing change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership adaptability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self management</td>
<td>Strategic positioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and integrity</td>
<td>Awareness of customer needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management</td>
<td>Commitment to quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility and adaptability</td>
<td>Managing stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self development</td>
<td>Concern for community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International hospitality companies often operate in the culture of the host nation and are also affected by the nation’s economic value system. Managers in such organisations work in a context where the host country culture and the needs of a diverse customer base must be appropriated and catered for. Their success abroad, to a great extent, depends on the availability of qualified managers who are able to export, translate and maintain their companies’ operational standards and service consistency overseas (Kriegl 2000; Workman 2004). Intercultural competence and international etiquette can be considered more important than functional and technical skills for managers working in the international hospitality industry (Gannon 2003).

Responding to the growing believe that successful expatriate adaptation depends on how well s/he can learn from experience in overseas assignments (Avril & Magnini 2007; Porter & Tansky 1999; Spreitzer, McCall, Jr., & Mahhoney 1997). Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) integrated research on factors for successful expatriate adaptation to a new culture with experiential learning theory and suggested 7 essential and 2 developmental competencies for learning from cross-cultural experience, which are building relationships, valuing people of different cultures, listening and observation, coping with ambiguity, translating complex information, taking action and initiative, managing others, adaptability and flexibility and managing stress.

Shay and Tracey (1997) reported that people skills and adaptability, flexibility, tolerance, emotional maturity, industry experience and self-confidence are the most desirable attributes for expatriate managers. Iles suggested that an international manager is required to possess a range of core competencies which are understanding the cultural differences, communicating across the differences, acknowledging stereotypes, valuing differences and gaining synergy from differences (Iles 1995). According to a study by the Cornell Hotel School, interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, flexibility and adaptive leadership and motivation are the most important skills for international managers (Gannon 2003). It is generally agreed that building a manager’s cross-cultural skills is more consequential than developing their functional and technical skills in an international hospitality organisation than in any other international business context (Kriegl 2000; Shay et al 1997). This is because, by the nature of hospitality business, managers must be able to demonstrate high levels of interpersonal skills in a context where the host country culture and the needs of all customers and employees are understood and catered for.
3.4 The Formality of Managerial Work

It is suggested that a hospitality manager’s job may be viewed in two parts. One aspect is formal, including the core elements of the job e.g. managerial functions described in the conventional management literature. They are the official responsibilities that managers have for their position, thus they are formal in nature. The other part, on the contrary, is informal. It refers to the phenomenon that managers can, to some extent, choose what tasks to perform and how to perform it or have it carried out and what they do is subject to change. These two aspects are integral parts of managerial work. The balance between formality and informality shifts as circumstances change.

The idea of the formality of managers’ work is closely related to Stewart’s (1976b) notion of “demand”, Kotter’s (1982) “agenda setting” and Hales’ (1999) “responsibility” and “rules”. Part of what they do is demanded and driven by their responsibilities tied into their positions, which are essentially to pursue certain managerial functions. This formal aspect may be characterised by predictability, perpetuity and programmability (Figure 3.2).

“Predictability”, the researcher means that part of a manager’s work can be declared in advance on a reasoned basis. A managerial task usually involves performing a range of activities in a certain sequence in order to meet an objective of managerial functions e.g. procedures. Procedures are established methods to carry out a task, thus are designed or determined in advance and expected to follow. For instance, when a hotel manager monitors the quality of guest rooms, s/he will go through a standard procedure ensuring that all rooms are serviced in such a way that they meet the conditions outlined in corporate policies and comply with health and safety regulations. The manager then gives feedback to staff accordingly. The result of the inspection is finally reported to the General Manager.

Procedures are developed to guide work processes, which implies the repetition of the following of procedures. For example, to ensure the profitability, a catering manager controls the cost and selling price, estimates the demand and evaluates the financial gap between the output and input and so forth. The series of activities form a procedure that the manager has to follow day by day. Since part of a manager’s job is predictable and repeatable, this part of management knowledge can be codified and programmed so that
others can refer to it. The programmed knowledge can be learned, generalised and applied in different situations.

The idea of the informality of managers' work reflects Steward's (1976b) "choice" and "constraints" and notions in Mintzberg's (1973) and Kotter's (1982) research. The defining characteristics are variability, volatility and variety. Managers work in a constantly changing environment and often find themselves in a situation of ambiguity, uncertainty and conflicts (Schön 1983). As a result of this, they often need to make a decision on what needs to be done and how to get it done. Therefore, what they do is subject to variation and lack of consistency.

"The wind is blowing from all directions" (Diamond 1993, p. 10). Part of managerial work is about dealing with the unknown and unexpected. As Mintzberg (1973) revealed managers often have to make decisions promptly, responding to immediate turbulence. It is particularly important to recognize the volatile nature of managerial work in the hospitality industry. This is because service is the dominant element of hospitality products. Immediate response is critical to the production, delivery and quality of a service.

In order to cope with variability and volatility in their job, managers have to adapt different prescribed roles to carry out diverse activities that are considered suitable to that given moment. This approach to their work is informal by nature. The "variety" dimension implies the freedom and flexibleness of a manager's job. It is closely related to Steward's (1976b) notion of "choice".

There have been other classification schemes conceptualising the nature of work activities, such as routine versus non-routine and programmed versus unprogrammed (Simon 1965). Some managerial activities are routines, in particular procedures. Routine in the workplace may increase productivity, but are not efficient in inventing new responses to daily task demands. On the other hand, non-routine activities create a demand for learning because new ideas are needed to deal with the unknown derived from the new situation, although it does not always happen.

What managers do involves non-routine activities. The occurrence of a new situation may lead to a marginally different or completely new approach in which unprogrammed activities occur. It is because there is not a tried-and-true method available to handle the problem or
because the new situation deserves a customised response (Schön 1983; Simon 1965). When the demand for learning is not pursued, managers simply replicate the response to other similar experienced situations. Thus, this programmed activity is only an automatic response. For Jarvis (1987), there is no learning involved, or in Jarvis’ terminology “non-learning”.

The concept of programmed activities is different from the notion that formal managerial work is programmable. By programmability, the researcher means that some management knowledge can be codified explicitly. It can be referred to and learned by others. It is learnable – an absolutely opposite position to “non-learning” in programmed activities. Compared with routine managerial activities, unprogrammed activities hold knowledge that is tacit and typically resides in the context. Hence, it is difficult to describe, share and generalise, but is still learnable.

It is suggested that the interaction between hospitality managers’ jobs and their competency development can be explained by using joint continuums of work and management development. As illustrated in Figure 3.5, one extremity of the work continuum is the formality which is predictability, perpetuity and programmability. The opposite symbolises the “variability-volatility-variety” nature of managers’ jobs, standing for the informality. The vertical continuum represents the forms of managerial learning and development. The top end stands for cognitive learning which is often seen in management education delivering codified, explicit management knowledge. The other end is more about learning through practising, which suits managerial skills acquisition.

As the job’s formality intensifies, the manager requires more knowledge on the management functions that are codified. The explicit management knowledge (Raelin 1997; Spender 2004) can be better acquired through cognitive learning. This, however, does not mean that skills are the less important requirement of the job. Instead, the incumbent also needs to develop a set of core managerial skills that are transferable, such as delegating tasks, communication skills and specialised skills required to manage a specific business function. People learn a skill by practising it repeatedly over time. Therefore, if the incumbent is to perform the formal aspect of managerial work effectively, s/he must develop necessary competencies through cognitive and practical learning.
What managers do is shaped by the social systems in which they are located, including the institutional system and those of national and regional. In other words, part of managerial work is subject to the changing environment. As the informal nature of the work increases, the manager will need to use his/her skills to evaluate the environment and respond to it accordingly in a meaningful and sensible manner, such as deciding courses of action. Managers may need to employ different strategies to acquire critical managerial skills through practices over time. Indeed, skilled managers reflect-in-action, responding to turbulent situations by building and trailing a strategy and experimenting with alternatives for dealing with it (Schön 1983 and 1992).

Such experiences enable the accumulation of tacit or implicit management knowledge that is often not codified but exist in practice. However, the importance of explicit management knowledge cannot be underestimated. It provides the fundamental rationale enabling sound analysis to produce actions that lead to the best possible results. To put in another way, both skills strategies and educational knowledge are essential in this case because they serve as the foundation that allows the jobholder to interact with the work intellectually so that s/he can make the right decisions for the organisation.
3.5 Summary

In summary, this chapter has reviewed the nature of managerial work, discussed the issues of what hospitality managers do, why they do what they do, how they do their work and what enables them to work effectively. The performance of a manager is underpinned by the knowledge and skills s/he possesses. These accounts shed light on the way forward for management development.

Due to the complex nature of managerial work, the developmental process of hospitality managers should be facilitated through different learning means. Planned and structured management education and training programmes make a good vehicle for delivering explicit management knowledge and, to some extent, managerial skills. Classical management thinking provides a fundamental framework for management development. The understanding of what managers do at the micro-behavioural level is certainly helpful for educators and trainers who can develop training activities that aim to enhance specific skills.

The merits of formal, structured management education and training are indeed undeniable. However, the informal aspect of managerial work requires the incumbent to engage with what s/he does and reacts to changing environments sensibly and intellectually. These types of competencies often come from managerial experience because it requires managers to acquire implicit management knowledge that exists in practice. Management education and training programmes may not be able to address this form of knowledge effectively.

Furthermore, each element of managerial work is unique and the level of its formality changes constantly. The incumbent needs to adapt herself/himself to this changing nature of the job and develop a balanced competency mix. Therefore, management development initiatives must allow for all forms of learning and developmental activities, which will be explored in Chapter 5, at all times so that the manager has all possible opportunities for her/his professional development. In addition to formal management development activities, organisations may also need to consider other supplementary educational solutions that can help managers to deal with the unexpected effectively. This may be of considerable importance for international hospitality managers who are in the business that is
characterised by being service-driven and immediacy. Whatever learning and development activities are used in management development initiatives, they must comply to appropriate learning approaches in order to achieve optimal learning outcomes. Learning theories provide valid and useful grounds for identifying the suitable approaches. Hence, the next chapter will review key learning theories.
4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks into how managers develop their knowledge and skills through learning activities. The purpose of this study is to establish an understanding of the nature of managerial learning and development. The chapter firstly discusses what is learning and how people learn. The discussion provides a fundamental ground for appreciating how managers learn which is explored in the following section. The accounts shed light on how hospitality managers develop by engaging with learning activities.

4.2 About “Learning”

“Learning” has been viewed from different perspectives. There are mainly seven different types of orientation to learning, namely 1) behaviourist, 2) cognitive, 3) humanist, 4) constructivist (including cognitive constructivism (Piaget 1973) and social constructivism (Vygotsky 1978; Wenger 1998)), 5) contextual (including experiential learning theories), 6) knowledge-based, and 7) transformative. This section reviews learning theories and discusses the nature of learning.

4.2.1 Defining “Learning”

“Learning” has been defined differently in different theoretical schools of thought. Behaviourist learning theories (Hartley 1998; Skinner 1973) define learning as a relatively permanent change in behaviour or in behavioural potential that results from experience. This view is, however, challenged by some. Changes in behaviour are not necessarily resulted from experience that involves learning (Smith 2005). Jones (1994) also argued that learning does not necessarily mean change and that even when learning results in a
change, it is not necessarily behavioural in nature, but affective, structural or physical in nature. Vygotsky (1978) pointed out that behaviourist learning theorists in general use “learning” to describe the process of gathering and transforming knowledge.

Cognitive learning theorists (Bruner 1977; Gagné 1985) view learning as an internal mental process of understanding and internalising the concepts and facts about the world. Emphasising people’s affective and cognitive needs (Maslow 1970), humanist learning theories regard learning as a personal act to fulfil potential (Rogers & Freiberg 1994). This point of view on learning has greatly influenced studies on adult learning (Apps 1987; Jarvis 1995; Rogers 2003). Learning is also seen as a process of interaction/observation in social contexts by constructivist learning theorists (Bandura 1977b; Lave & Wenger 1991).

Hence, learning is not a unitary concept. Depending on which perspective one views it from, learning can be a behavioural change resulting from experience, or an internal mental process, or a form of self-actualisation, or a process of social interaction. In order to start the discussion on this subject, the researcher adapts the definition that learning is the interaction of the learner, the sociocultural context in which the learning is set, the process involved (Merriam & Cafarella 1999) and the task or content of learning (Rogers 2002). It carries some kind of change in skills, cognitive patterns, motivation and interest and ideology (Lewin 1937). Or, change in the five domains that Gagné (1972) suggested which are motor skills that require practice, verbal information (e.g. facts, principles and generalisations), intellectual skills that help in using knowledge through applying discriminations, concepts and rules, cognitive strategies (e.g. self-managed skills required to define and solve problems) and attitude.

4.2.2 An Overview of Learning Theories

To summarise the nature of learning in such a short space undergoes the danger of oversimplification. However, it does not stop the researcher from talking about what “learning” is about. Table 4.1 outlines the ideas of core learning theories.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Assumptions and Claims</th>
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| **Behaviourist Learning Theories** | - Knowledge is true, independent of people.  
- Much of human behaviour is determined by external stimuli (Skinner 1954).  
- People’s thoughts, feeling and intention play little role in human behaviour (Kirsch, Lynn, Vigorito, & Miller 2004).  
- Learning can only be inferred from behaviour (Gregory 1987). |
| **Cognitive Learning Theories** | - Knowledge is independent of people.  
- The engagement of the mind is active in processing data.  
- Information is processed in a number of stages: sensory input, temporary storage and active processing, encoding and relatively longer/permanent storage and output in the forms of problem solving, reasoning and language (Sadler-Smith 2006).  
- Humans have the capability to learn e.g. intelligence.  
- Intellectual development is only possible when intelligence is used and stimulated throughout life.  
- Human beings have internal maps (Korzybski 1958) and use them to make sense of outside world (Bateson 1972a). |
| **Humanist Learning Theories** | - It is the learner’s actions that largely create the learning situation.  
- Learners are active, searching for meaning and the fulfilment of goals that they set for themselves.  
- Motivation to learn comes from within (Maslow 1970).  
- Learning is the active engagement of the learners with the surroundings and themselves (Rogers 2002). |
| **Social Learning Theory** | - Social influences can affect an individual’s feelings, thoughts and actions through cognitive, vicarious, self-regulative and self-reflective processes.  
- While environment influences the individual’s learning the person can exercise control over the environment.  
- People learn with others as well as from others through observational learning (Bandura 1977b). E.g. reciprocal determinism.  
- Internal factors, such as self-efficacy (Goldstain 1993), expectancy and motivation (Vroom 1964), can be crucial in deciding the extent to which people are willing to engage in learning. |
| **Situated Learning Theories** | - People learn by participating in activities with others in the community of practice.  
- By being in legitimate peripheral participation situations, learners learn the language, attitudes, values and practices (Lave et al 1991).  
- Newcomers are required to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practice of a community.  
- Learning support is provided through the form of “scaffolding”, e.g. cooperation of more expert peers. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assumptions and Claims</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiential Learning Theories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Experience forms the basis of learning.</td>
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<td>• Learning from current experience creates the needs for learning.</td>
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<td>• Learning is accomplished by critically analysing experience and acting based on that analysis (Freire 1972; Schön 1983).</td>
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<td>• Learning proceeds in a cycle of concrete experience, critical reflection on experience, abstract conceptualisation and action which leads to further critical reflection (Kolb 1984a).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Action is part of the learning process instead of the outcome.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Constructivist Learning Theories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• All knowledge is contingent and provisional.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge is not something that exists outside people's mind.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge cannot be transferred (Rahman 1993), but can be constructed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Humans create the world and manipulate it instead of responding to external stimuli and knowledge (Kelly 1955).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transformative Learning Theory</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning is using a meaning that people have already made to guide the way that people think, act, or feel about what is being experienced.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Meaning is an interpretation of an experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Personal meaning systems are strengthened through experience that refocuses and extends one's expectation about how things are supposed to be.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reflection on assumptions is central to development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Transformative learning insights in greater integration of the cognitive dimension of learning (Mezirow 1991).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge-based Learning Theories</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge is &quot;the interaction of information with the human mind that gives it meaning and purpose&quot; (Sallis et al 2002, pp8).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Both workplaces and educational institutes are sites of knowledge production (Boud 2001).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Knowledge has different forms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hence, access to and acquisition of the knowledge varies.</td>
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Behaviourist psychologists such as I. Pavlov (1849-1936) and B.F. Skinner (1904-2001) believed that human processes were automatic and that any higher-order cognition, if existed at all, was only a consequence of actions instead of a cause (Kirsch et al 2004). Learning is regarded involving little thinking and is observed to be a change in behaviour. Behaviourist learning theories have made a great contribution to the understanding of human learning; however, they fail to appreciate the role of internal factors, such as feelings, attitude and motives, in shaping learning (Sadler-Smith 2006). Nonetheless, the validity of the theories, such as stimulus-response and reinforcement, underpins approaches to learning in other schools of thought.

In contrast to the behaviourist view, cognitive theorists argue that learners are actively involved with problem-solving, seeking out new information and drawing on past experience to gain understanding (McKenna 1995a). Learning is regarded as an internal purposive thinking process concerned with perception, organisation and insight. Gestalt psychologists advocate that humans are capable of organising and integrating what is perceived into Gestalt, an overall pattern, using four laws of perception which are similarity proximity, closure and continuity (Child 1986). They argue that when a problem is solved by the restructuring of the component parts insight learning occurs. This insight to the problem resolution can then be transferred and repeated in similar future situations.

Discussions around cognitive learning reflect the information process, e.g. input-processing-output (Anderson 1990; Broadbent 1958). Bruner (1966) suggested that knowledge is constructed by relating the incoming information to a frame of reference that is previously acquired. The frame of reference contains three modes of representation, namely enactive (i.e. a habitual set of actions), iconic (i.e. imagery representation) and symbolic (i.e. transformation of the iconic imagery into a symbolic system such as language).

Cognitive learning theories advocate that mental models are indispensable to the process of learning and understanding. As Norman (1977) argued, in all cognitive systems there is an internal model of the environment, of their self and of others, within which intelligent interaction between humans and the outside world can be exercised. Johnson-Laird (1983) suggested two levels of internal map modelling, which are the actual construction of working model in the mind and the possibility of constructing a working model about a working model. In his view the first level is always limited. The outcome of cognitive learning is often demonstrated through, for example, a better understanding of a subject, the ability
of solving problems or the use of language. Cognitive approach to mind is thus all about processing information, storage and drawing internal maps whereas behavioural learning theorists treat human’s mind as a black box (Le Doux 1996). It endeavours to explain the mental process of human learning.

Like the behaviourist approach to learning, cognitive learning theorists also recognise that learning occurs at different levels and that not all learners attain to higher levels of learning. Furthermore, they appreciate the existence of affective learning and argue that in that learning goes through different stages as well. For example, Bloom (1965) suggested a series of steps in cognitive and affective learning, as outlined in Table 4.2. Nonetheless, cognitivism is still a field for further advanced investigation. It is recognised that an overall theoretical framework for explaining how people process information and construct their internal maps is still absent (Van Dijk 1997).

Table 4.2 The Steps of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive learning</th>
<th>Affective learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The recall and recognition of knowledge</td>
<td>- Receiving stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Understanding the material</td>
<td>- Developing awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The application of comprehended knowledge in isolated situations</td>
<td>- Being willing to receive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Exploring each new situation by analysis of its constituted components and synthesis into new concept</td>
<td>- Responding willingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- (the learner) assessing the value of the new knowledge linking to the realisation of his/her goals</td>
<td>- Valuing the concepts and processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Conceptualising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Organising the values into own value system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bloom (1965)

Humanist theories of learning are concerned with feelings and experiences, leading to personal growth and individual fulfilment (McKenna 1995b). In contrast with the stimulus-response mechanism in the behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, this strand of theories advocates that motivation for learning comes from within. Maslow (1970) argued that lower level needs must first be partially satisfied in order to ascend to self-actualisation and thus to fulfill the maximum potential for personal growth. His theory of motivation and hierarchy of needs have made a significant contribution to the humanist approach, and emphasises learners’ urges and drives towards more autonomous and self-managed learning. The importance of realising self-set goals exceeds that of exercising learning materials (Knowles 1984). Carl Rogers advocated that when learning involves both thoughts and feelings, it becomes pervasive and makes a difference in the behaviour,
attitude and possibly personality of the learner (Rogers et al 1994). Humanist theories have provided a foundation for the debates on adult learning and continuing professional development (Megginson & Whitaker 2003). Furthermore, humanist learning theorists emphasis that people learn by engaging with the world around them as well as with themselves, which mirror the notions of social learning theory.

Social learning theory emphasises the importance of active engagement of learners with their environment, imitation and internalisation of value systems acquired from others. According to the theory, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: “from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed and so later occasions this coded information services as a guide for action”, argued Bandura (1977b, pp22). He emphasised the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes and reactions of others in learning. It recognises the role of stimulus-response mechanism, also points out that much of learning is based on the need to communicate and cooperate with others (Bandura 1977b; Schutz & Luckmann 1974; Vygotsky 1978). Vygotsky’s (1962b) introduced theory of the zone of proximal development, proposing that people learn more through a collaborative dialogue with a more learned other. Social learning theory advocates that meaning itself comes from understanding the world of everyday life which is “fundamentally intersubjective” (Schutz et al 1974, pp16). Within the domain of social learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) talked about situated learning whereby learning occurs in legitimate peripheral participation situations, e.g. on the edge of communities of practice. There are also discussions about work-based learning. For instance, Boud and Solomon (2001) and Gray (2001) talked about the nature of learning at work.

In transformative learning theory, learning is a process of construing “a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of an experience as a guide to awareness, feeling and action” (Mezirow 1991, pp35). The way that an experience is defined, understood and acted upon is influenced by both meaning perspectives and meaning schemes. Meaning perspectives are “rule systems of habitual expectation (orientations, personal paradigms)” (Mezirow 1991, pp61). They generate meaning schemes which are made up specific knowledge, beliefs, value judgements and feels that form interpretations of an experience. According to this theory, meaning perspectives are structures of largely pre-rational unarticulated presumptions, hence often resulted meaning schemes are distorted views of reality. Therefore, transformative learning theorist advocate that people learn in order to change
the structure of their expectations (Bateson 1972b; Berkson & Wettersten 1984; Cell 1984; Mezirow 1991).

Transformative learning occurs when meaning perspective and schemes are added to, extended, or changed. This can be achieved through a reflective assessment and critique of the presuppositions which meaning perspective and schemes are based upon. Hence, the term of “meaning perspective” is applied to the organising role of the cognitive structure which is a core concept in cognitive and constructivist learning theories. Mathison and Tosey (2008) argued that the emergence of new meaning perspectives can be catalysed by mindfulness, through attention to detail by using all senses. Like contextual learning theories, transformative theory also focus on the nature of the events one experiences whereby learning is by-products of the transaction between individual and context. Understanding of an experience lies in the interfaces between psychological, problem-solving, linguistic, social and cultural processes (Mezirow 1991).

All learning theories highlight the role of experience in learning. Taking this notion further, experiential learning theorists (Freire 1972; Kolb 1984a) have developed a framework of learning cycle to explain the process of learning from experience (see Table 5.1). They believe that people learn by critically reflecting upon their experience. When critically reflecting upon experience the learner will search for new knowledge and experience and then select appropriate ones to judge the present experience by. This exercise is a powerful way to make sense of experience (Rogers 2002; Schön 1983). If this stage is about asking questions, abstract conceptualisation is about generating general principles from specific cases so that the new insight becomes usable in other contexts. The theory advocates that learning is effective when the learner actively engages with his/her context and attends to all the stages.

Experiential learning theory proposes two basic structural dimensions of the learning process. The first dimension, which incorporates research in neurophysiology (Feigl 1958), is dialectical processes of knowing by apprehension and knowing by comprehension to make sense of an experience. Knowing through apprehension is “a registrative process transformed intentionally and extensionally by appreciation” whereas knowing through comprehension is “an interpretive process transformed intentionally and extensionally by criticism” (Kolb 1984b, pp103). The former is about grasping experience via direct apprehension of immediate concrete experience. The latter is about understanding the
experience through indirect comprehension of symbolic representations of experience. The second dimension of the learning process includes dialectically opposed modes of transforming experience: intentional reflection and extensional action. This dimension emphasises the dilemma between the learner engaging with the experience intellectually and intentionally and actively involving in actions so that new meaning can be created. This notion is built on Jung's (1960) work on epistemological aspects of introversion and extraversion. The recent development of experiential learning theory embraces the social dimension of learning (Kolb & Kolb 2005). They proposed educational learning space principles to enhance experiential learning in higher education.

According to constructivist learning theories (Dewey 1933; Piaget 1973), knowledge is not an objective reality to be discovered. Humans have internal cognitive structures, which are patterns of physical or mental action that underlie specific acts of cognition. People create personal constructs from own feelings, ideas, memories, evaluations about events, place and other people and cultural background, then manipulate these constructs in order to learn what is happening. Piaget introduced the complementary processes of assimilation and accommodation to explain how people's cognitive structures change (Ginsburg & Opper 1969). In the process of assimilation, what is perceived in the outside world is interpreted based on the person's existing cognitive structure. In the accommodating process, the person's cognitive structures change in order to make sense of what is being confronted. This notion of internal cognitive structures has strongly demonstrated the commonality between constructivist learning theories and cognitive learning theories. In that humans actively build their internal models or representations of the world of their experience.

However, constructivist learning theories reject the notion of information processing in learning. In the constructivist view, learning is not about discovering the truth. It is about the construction of new perceptions. Hence, the focus has shifted away from establishing the validity of knowledge to constructing what works for one in a specific situation. Indeed, as Charles Handy commented (quoted in Ball 1991, pp29):

[in management] “Learning is not finding out what other people already know but solving our own problems for our own purpose by questioning, thinking and testing until the solution is part of our life”
“Learning” is not just about learning. It is also about learning something. The learning discourse is uncompleted if the object of learning is omitted from the discussion. Fitting well in this place, knowledge-based learning theories (Eraut 1994; Gibbons et al 1994; Oakeshott 1962; Polanyi 1967; Ryle 1949) put the focus on what is learned, which have been discussed in the previous chapter.

4.2.3 The Key Components of Learning

Each school of thought seems to suggest university in learning. However, it appears to the researcher that there is no consensus about learning. While all learning theories are valuable and espoused with vigour, each of them explains “learning” from different perspectives. Therefore, it will be naive to ascertain any one theory is closer to telling the “truth” of learning than any other based on the current state of knowledge and understanding of the subject. Instead of choosing one theory over another, a conception of learning is proposed (see Figure 4.1), based on the researcher’s own understanding and interpretation of studies in this area.

If accepting that there are four elements in learning (e.g. the learner, process, context and contents), learning can be said as the learner engaging with his/her mind, with the contents of learning and with the surrounding environment that includes objects and people, through some forms of learning process. There have been many studies that focus on the learners. In addition to behaviourist and cognitive learning theories, research on adult learning has, largely, put the attention on learners who are mature with various experiences behind them and are analogical thinkers (Rogers 2002). In the case of work-related learning, there is a dilemma between being a learner and a worker. The roles are not always well distinguished, which results into extra tensions and processes for the learners to manage and even causes identity ambiguity (Boud & Solomon 2001).
Moreover, personality theories emphasize the personal attributes of individuals. Scholars in this strand argue that learning depends on an individual's perception of the subject and that of self. If a learner feels that a subject is far away from his/her self-centre, s/he will have greater difficulties in learning. This view is very much mirrored Norman's (1977) notion about
learning modelling in people's mental world. Some scholars suggested that some learners are high-achievement oriented whereas others are anxious about failure (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lovell 1953). Those high-achievement oriented individuals experience "approach motivation" which drives the engagement in activities. The latter, on the other hand, experience an "avoidance motivation".

There are also studies investigating how personality styles, e.g. extrovert versus introvert and fatalist versus self-confident, can affect the level of learning (Houle 1961). Kolb and others have also suggested preferred learning styles, arguing that every person develops one or more preferred learning style through experience (Honey 2005; Kolb 1984a; Rundle & Dunn 1999). However, Rogers (2002) made the critic that the danger of applying such knowledge in education is to categorise the learners which may not be helpful in teaching practice.

Furthermore, learners approach to learning differently. "Cognitive learning strategy" is a concept used to understand the differences between learners. By definition, it is student-generated thoughts or actions by which they intend to guide or control their cognitive activities in a learning task in order to achieve particular learning goals (Weinstein & Meyer 1986). Harvey and Knight (1996) identified the surface learning whereby there is hardly any linkage with related sets of concepts and meanings. In other words, the learning experience is very much being disconnected. The deep learning (Biggs 2003) occurs when the learner allows the current knowledge and understanding to be modified in order to accommodate new ideas and materials. In doing so, the learner's cognitive structure, which can be viewed as an adaptable network of what is already known, can guide and organize the assimilation of further ideas. This is also named "transformative learning" which is seen as the most advanced stage in learning (Moon 1999).

Between these two is the strategic learning, which is only evident when the learning is to be assessed; therefore there seems to be somewhat disputed (Entwistle 1997). However, Ramsden (1992) argued that this group of learners were not only motivated by deep interest and being effective, but also the need to be efficient in dealing with their workload. Moon (1999) suggested that the most effective approach to academic learning is that where the learner takes a deep approach but, at same time, is aware of strategies for gaining high marks. The rationale behind all these discussion is that the application of appropriate cognitive strategies can empower learning (Pintrich & De Groot 1990).
Context-based studies, including the social learning theory (Lave et al 1991), situated learning theories and researches into work-based learning, draw attention to the importance of social factors in learning. In line with the notions of social learning theory and situated learning theories, studies on work-based learning hold the belief that the workplace provides a learning field where the work/learner often draws problems, undertakes assignments or experiments to find solutions to the problems (CEDEFOP 2004; Gray 2001).

Learning and work maybe reinforce each other, even in many instances the activities can be shared (Boud et al 2001). They are different in nature nonetheless. As Boud and Solomon (2001) suggested, work and learning drive to different goals. Work is about generating products and services that the organisation offers either now or in the future. For a hospitality business, work is often producing the service at the moment when a customer requests it through the interaction between the employee and the guest. On the other hand, learning is directed towards the acquisition of knowledge or the capacity (Stephenson 2001) to obtain further knowledge. Essentially, work-related learning often involves the development of knowledge and skills to improve present practices or processes or to develop practices and processes for the future, or to transform the organisation leading to new kinds of activities.

The third element of a learning experience is the contents or tasks of learning. In managerial learning, knowledge about management is usually divided into managerial functions such as planning, controlling etc. For Eraut (1994), this is just one type of management knowledge. Another important point in Eraut’s (1994) discussion about management knowledge is that all these forms of knowledge are learned or acquired in different ways. For example, he suggested that knowledge about what needs to be done in management can be learned intellectually whereas practical skills can only be acquired and developed through practice with feedback. Moreover, in his view, situated knowledge is normally acquired by being in the situation while learning about people is often unintentional and is a by-product of encounters that have other purposes.

Many learning theories have extensively discussed the process of learning. As stated previously, constructing meanings is central to the understanding or sense-making of what is going on. Cognitive learning theories have talked about constructing internal models of
what people are exposed to whilst social learning theory has discussed constructing the understanding in a socio-cultural context.

Vygotsky (1962b) talked about the distinction between mental processes that are at lower level, such as elementary perception and attention and those at higher level including verbal thought, logical memory, selective attention and reasoning. He argued that the higher level is social in origin, self-regulated and the result of conscious awareness rather than an automatic response to external stimuli. It is mediated primarily through language. Hence, a collaborative dialectic process between a learner and a more learned other can engineer learning by shifting the learner’s zone of proximal development. This denotes the constructivist nature of learning through social interactions.

The emphasis on social interaction and collaborative educational dialogue and interventions characterise social constructivist learning theories compared with cognitive constructivism (Piaget 1973), although both share many ideas about conceptual development. This difference has implications on instructional design. Cognitive constructivism views development and instruction are entirely separate processes. On the contrary, Vygotsky (1962b) regarded the influence of instruction a very important source of change in shaping conceptual development.

Reflecting upon experience is another way of sense-making. Borrowing Moon’s (1999, pp10) words, reflection can be seen as a mental process “with either a purpose or an outcome or both, which is applied in situations where material is ill-structured or uncertain and where there is no obvious solution”. Hence, reflection appeals to be related to thinking and learning. Dewey defined reflective thought as “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the ground that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” (1933, pp9, referenced in Mezirow 1991). The thinking can be critical leading to revolutionary outcomes (Argyris & Schön 1974; Boud, Keogh, & Walker 1985; Kolb 1984b; Mezirow 1991; Schön 1983), but can also be hermeneutical reflection (Gadamer 1976) i.e. standing back from the situation, examining it and making decisions.

Indeed, as Schön (1983) identified, professionals often find themselves engaged in situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict which require them to conceptualise the situation and search for solutions creatively. In such a situation, they draw
on their own practical experience whilst reflecting on what they are doing (e.g. reflection-in-action). This exercise gives rise to experiments to find solutions through trialling (e.g. reflection-on-action). In the discourse of adult learning, adult learners often call upon existing knowledge and experience and the accumulated experience of others to identify possible similarities that may indicate a solution (Rogers 2002).

Schön's work has made a great contribution to the understanding of how professionals think and learn in actions. It has also encouraged further debates on reflection. Some scholars argued that Schön had overlooked the effect of time frame on the reflection exercise (Eraut 1994; Greenwood 1993; Hatton & Smith 1995; Moon 1999). The construct of time frame provides a useful means to rethink about reflection. For instance, Van Manen (1991) described "anticipatory reflection" which refers to reflection involved in the anticipation of an event.

Kolb (1984a) viewed critical reflection on experience a step bridging a concrete experience and conceptualising abstract concepts in the experiential learning cycle. His notion is, however, critiqued by Moon (1999) who pointed out that Kolb, as well as Schön, failed to explain the relationship between reflection and learning explicitly. Thus, Moon proposed that there are three areas in which reflection is involved in learning as listed below:

- The initial learning, including making meaning, working with meaning and transformative learning;
- The process of representation of learning;
- The upgrading of learning from surface learning to deep learning.

She suggested that reflection could play a role of cognitive housekeeper in the initial learning and could create the deeper and better-quality meaning in the representation of learning. Moreover, reflection could provide for a means of integrating learning into the cognitive structure and relating it to previous knowledge in the upgrading of learning.

Mezirow (1991) suggested that reflective thinking can be a critical view of the content of an action, or of the process of an effort, or of assumptions about the content or the process. Content reflection involves reflecting upon what has happened e.g. the content of an action or effort. Process reflection is concerned with how that has happened e.g. the method or procedure of the effort. These two kinds of reflection can play a role in thoughtful action by allowing people to assess what is known about taking the next step in a series of actions
and consider whether future action is needed (Mezirow 1991). He maintained that premises are special cases of assumptions and that premise reflection involves the process of theoretical reflectivity. Such reflection may result in critique of epistemic, social or psychological presuppositions.

In contrast to Mezirow’s emphasis on the nature of reflection, Boud et al (1985) placed their focus on reflection in learning through experience. They argued that reflection involves a series of elements that may not occur in sequence, which are association, integration, validation and appropriation. Association is relating new data to what is already known. Integration is seeking relationships among the data. Validation involves determining the authenticity of ideas and feelings that have resulted. Appropriation is internalising knowledge, making it one’s own.

4.2.4 The Reflection on the Learning Journey

Reflecting upon the journey of learning about learning is considered useful in making sense of what learning is by linking the theories with the reality of learning. Indeed, as Raelin (1997, pp564) said, “Theory makes sense only through practice, but practice makes sense only through reflection”.

To put it in a time frame perspective, the researcher reflected upon her research aim, which is to identify how management learning may be facilitated by new technologies and anticipated that engaging with learning theories would be a perquisite so as to gain an understanding of what learning is about. In the journey of researching for the “truth” about learning, the researcher was faced with choosing between various acts of knowing. This constructivist learning process also involves critical reflection upon codified knowledge of learning, views of people who are in the learning context on learning, own thoughts about the concept and personal existing conceptual frameworks developed from previous learning experiences.

In the process of learning about learning, the researcher constructs internal maps of learning, as presented in Figure 4.1 and Figure 5.1, based on her understanding and interpretation of others’ work on learning. The cognitive maps were constantly reconstructed every time when critical reflection was made. With regard to Johnson-Laird’s
(1983) comment on internal map modelling, the map presented in Figure 4.1 is relatively easier to construct as opposed to that in Figure 5.1.

Figure 4.1 is the actual construction of a working model of learning, whereas the working model of management development (MD) (Figure 5.1) demonstrates the researcher's effort in integrating other concepts into the conception of learning and making sense of MD. Linking with the cycle of experiential learning, this new model of MD provides a conceptual framework upon which the researcher will be reflecting when the next research activity is carried out.

The learning process has been transformative. Reflecting upon the reflection on the learning experience, the researcher re-considers the nature of knowledge and ontology of the world. It has made the researcher shift her views on the reality away from positivist thinking and towards a constructivist provision accepting the provisional nature of knowledge. This reflection exercise encourages the researcher to assure her belief, with more confidence, that any of the learning theories is NOT better than one another in telling the “truth” of learning. While they are all valid and useful in explaining how people learn, the truth of learning has yet to be fully understood. Therefore, a holistic approach is needed to best describe the nature of learning based on the current state of understanding of learning.

4.3 How Do Managers Learn?

As discussed above, learning involves the content, process and context in which the learning takes place. In the case of managerial learning, the content of learning is all about management knowledge and skills discussed in Chapter 3. Learning has happened when managers can demonstrate that they know something that they did not know before, including facts, insights and realisations and/or when they can perform something that they could not do before (Honey & Mumford 1992a). Most managers learn what they do from performing managerial tasks and are primarily motivated by effective achievement of those tasks (Burgoyne & Hodgson 1983; Davies & Easterby-Smith 1984; Mumford 1997). Hogen and Warrenfeltz (2003) argued that managers who lead modern organisations need to be engaged in a persistent learning process due to continuous changes in both the economy and technology, as well as changes in the speed of change.
Akin (1987) claimed that the learning process starts with one or both of two conditions, which are the need to know and the sense of role that may be taken from any of a variety of sources external to the person or, internally, self to be fulfilled. Pressure for change within an existing job or caused by taking up a new position triggers the recognition of the need to learn and the occasion of learning (Mumford 1997). Managers develop primarily through confrontations with novel situations and problems, such as taking demanding assignments (Davies et al 1984).

The way that how managers learn can be explained by using the learning theories discussed above. They learn from their daily management practice (Hay 2004; Hill 2004). Experiences are a base that managers draw on when learning occurs. In Burgoyne et al’s study (1983), it is revealed that, for the majority of interviewed managers, the learning took place when they responded to a particular situation by drawing on their similar experienced situation. Managers respond to a new situation by constructing and testing a conception of the situation and experimenting with alternative ideas for dealing with it (Schön 1983).

The notion of experiential learning is also reported in Mumford’s research — many managers “learn by looking back over events consciously” (Mumford 1997, p232). He continued that such reviews differ in terms of the extent and depth. Four approaches are identified as follows:

- Intuitive – managers learn unconsciously from experience;
- Incidental – the learning is conscious but it occurs in an informal way;
- Retrospective – managers learn much more consciously by reflecting upon what has happened and reaching conclusions;
- Prospective – managers plan to learn before an experience.

These approaches are not mutually exclusive. Though some learn from one approach in preference to another, most take at least the first three.

McCall et al (1988) developed a framework to explain how managers learn from experience. Focusing on self-directed learning of managers, the framework is based on choice points arranged in three phases, which are awareness of one’s shortcomings, acceptance of responsibility and diagnosis of deficiencies and remediation. Awareness can occur as a result of a crisis or a negative experience. When s/he decides to change, a diagnosis is performed.
to analyse shortcomings of knowledge, skills, experience and personal and situational limitations. If the manager decides to act, s/he can choose to build new strengths, anticipate what will be required for new situations, compensate for her/his own weaknesses, or change herself/himself. In self-directed learning, managers have control over both learning objectives and the means of learning (Mocker & Spear 1982) and have explicit intention to learn and are conscious of learning taking place (Mumford 1997).

Social interaction is a critical component of the learning process (Lave et al 1991; Vygotsky 1978). Most of the learning to manage occurs on the job “in tacit culturally embedded ways through people’s work, within organisations, groups and other communities of practice” (Fox 1997, p35). Managers learn from interacting with people around them, such as boss, mentor, network contacts, subordinates, clients and customers. As Marsick and Watkins (1990) commented, by examining how they interact with others in a team/group, managers gain multiple perspective of a situation which encourages reflective learning and re-constructing their understanding or interpretations of the situation. Moreover, Cheetham and Chivers (2001) pointed out that interacting with clients and customers can also provide managers with rich resources of learning.

**4.4 Summary**

Key learning theories were described briefly. They are all valid and useful in explaining how learning occurs from different perspectives and provide a fundamental means to understand how managers learn. Hence, to best understand the nature of learning, one ought to take a holistic approach embracing all theoretical grounds of learning. As demonstrated in research on managerial learning, how managers learn is a complex process.

The literature reviewed has demonstrated that learning is a complex process and that a full understanding of human learning has not yet been achieved. However, they provide a good baseline on which management development initiatives need to be built to maximise the learning outcomes. The next chapter will look into different methods used in management development.
Chapter 5

Management Development

5.1 Introduction

Having looked into what hospitality managers do and different ways of learning, this chapter discusses methods employed in developing managers. In the search for a solution to develop hospitality managers more effectively, an appreciation of activities involved in management development is needed. Thus, the objective of this chapter is to establish an understanding on what management development is all about.

In the area of hospitality management development, many authors have paid their attention to the career path of hospitality managers (Akrivos, Ladkin, & Reklitis 2007; Anderson 1991; D'Annunzio-Green 1997; Harper, Brown, & Irvine 2005; Ladkin 2000a; Ladkin & Juwaheer 2000; Williams & Hunter 1992). However, research into the mechanisms for developing hospitality managers seems to be limited. Gamble and Messenger (1990) discussed how professional qualification initiatives could help UK hospitality managers to improve their standards of expertise. Jones (1990) suggested that the concept of management competences (Constable 1988) may provide a framework to move management training forward by linking it with recognised professional qualifications in the hospitality industry.

Tesone (2004) discussed how hospitality managers may enhance their leadership self-awareness by using knowledge with experience through a reflective process. Nonetheless, it has been revealed that while in-house programmes continue to offer internal development, formal hospitality management education also plays a very important role in developing managers for the industry (HEFCE 2001). The source also identified that competency profiles have been well established and applied to develop managers in hospitality organizations, in particular large corporations.
It appears that there has been much attention given to the role of planned and structured formal learning (e.g. hospitality management education and training) in helping hospitality managers develop their managerial competences and capabilities. However, managers learn through a variety of ways. Thus, there is a need to re-consider how hospitality managers may be developed more effectively in a more holistic perspective.

The rest of the chapter is organised in five sections. “Management development” has different meanings to different people. Hence, the definition of the concept for this research is described first. This is followed by an explanation of a variety of MD methods. In the third section, a classification of four forms of MD is proposed. The forth section links the formality of MD with the formality of managers’ work. An argument is put forward that, in addition to formalised learning, informal MD also provides opportunities for the development of management. Moreover, as suggested in literature, formal learning promotes the acquisition of explicit knowledge whereas informal learning supports the gaining of implicit knowledge. Therefore, it is proposed that the formal aspect of hospitality managers’ work may be better acquired through formal MD and that the informal element may be better developed through informal learning. The chapter ends with a summary.

5.2 Defining “Management Development”

Although management development has been defined differently by many authors, there seems to be two main themes. The first sees MD as a system that draws on input from economic and organisational environments, such as government policies and organisational diagnoses and produces outputs in the forms of, for instance, productivity (Mabey et al. 2005), training systems (Mabey 2002; Ramirez 2004) and career succession (Storey 1989). From this perspective, Ashton et al (1975:5) defined MD as “a conscious and systematic decision-action process to control the development of managerial resources in the organisation for the achievement of organisational goals and strategies”. Lees (1992) regarded MD as a system of corporate activities with the goal of improving the managerial capabilities in the context of organisational and environmental change. For Burgoyne (1988), MD is the management of managerial careers in an organisational context.
The other theme focuses on the variety of mechanisms and techniques for managerial learning. For many, this is seen as what MD is all about (Storey 1989; Storey 1990). In this domain, MD was traditionally defined as any attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through planned and deliberate learning processes (TSA 1977). Even this definition is open to challenge from various authors. In the human resource management literature, the issue of expanding individual's potential through conscious and unconscious learning processes for a future role in the organisation is often articulated (Garavan 1997).

Development and Learning involve closely related processes (Vygotsky 1978). The former describes the gradual, progressive and relatively permanent changes in the nature of learning over time (Kayes & Kayes 2003). Watkins and Marsick (1992a; 1992b) believed that learning and development embrace informal and incidental learning processes alongside formal development. Likewise, Mumford (1997) pointed out that often managers learn through unplanned and informal activities and that planned, dedicated and structured formal managerial learning is just one aspect of MD.

Thus, MD is concerned with improving managers' performance in their current positions and preparing them for greater responsibilities in the future through learning processes, including management education (ME), management training (Collins, Buhalis, & Peters 2003) and other developmental activities, such as job-rotating, project work, mentoring, coaching, self-managed learning and so on (IoM 1994). The present study uses this definition as its purpose is to understand how learning activities can facilitate managers' professional development. It regards MD as learning about management, of which purpose is to encourage debate and challenge the nature of the organisation and the individual so as to improve managerial effectiveness (Mumford 1997).

5.3 Management Development Methods

Organisations often draw on different means to develop their managers. In their study, Garavan et al (1999) presented a variety of MD methods with their advantages and disadvantages. These mechanisms are regenerated in Table 5.1. While all these methods are structured by educators, HR professionals and/or organisations, some MD activities are
focused at the individual, such as coaching, whilst some are focused at the group, for instance group training and project group.

### Table 5.1 Management Development Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action learning</td>
<td>Learning to take action involves actually taking action. The best form of action for learning is work on a defined problem of reality to managers themselves. It is a problem-based as well as social learning process. Managers learn with and from each other in the project group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development</td>
<td>Counselling service for employees to manage their own careers within the organisation. May involve courses, private consultations, vocational testing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>On the job, job specific, individualised instruction and assistance by supervisors and/or trainers. It involves improving the performance of someone who is already competent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
<td>Outside trainers to help design, run and assist in evaluation of programme practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>Personal development help for employees in their personal concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External development programmes</td>
<td>Managers sent to outside courses, for special training and/or academic degrees. Trainers are external to the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group training programmes</td>
<td>In-house, systems wide, small group oriented training, e.g. Managerial Grid, Transactional analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-house development programmes</td>
<td>Courses organised by internal or external trainers and conducted internally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International assignments</td>
<td>Secondments across national boundaries. An area of management development that is likely to become more prevalent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job rotation</td>
<td>Involves shifting managers and potential managers systematically through various jobs to develop skills, technical expertise and perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning contracts</td>
<td>A formal commitment by the learner to work towards a specific learning goal with an identification of how the goal might be achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>Assigning more senior managers to assist new managers in growing into jobs. It is about relationships rather than activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational role analysis</td>
<td>Clarifying managers' roles within the organisational context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor management development programmes</td>
<td>Programmes designed to develop such skills as leadership, self confidence, self awareness through a variety of experiences including outdoor physical challenges, on rivers, lakes and in the hills and mountains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer relationships</td>
<td>Supportive peer relationships designed to provide information, confirmation, emotional support, feedback and friendship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance review</td>
<td>Involves regularly scheduled appraisals of employee job performance. Generates growth plans for individuals in terms of competence and responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondments</td>
<td>Temporary assignments, usually within other organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self development group</td>
<td>Involves a group of managers in a series of meetings to discuss personal development issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars/workshops</td>
<td>Teach-each-other events for pooling experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task force/project group</td>
<td>Cross departmental groups that study organisational problems and/or carry out special assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training centres</td>
<td>An organisation-oriented training facility usually restricted to in-house training.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Garavan et al 1999)
Different learning approaches can match different business needs. Harrison (1997) said that training in organisation development processes helps the organisation to respond to emergent challenges and business needs while coaching, mentoring, self-development and continuous learning help to ensure an ongoing matching between business needs and work performance. Nonetheless, instead of simply listing various MD methods, it would be more useful if they were grouped according to certain criteria to provide an overall view of the diverse MD activities.

Efforts have been made to categorise different MD methods (see Table 5.2). Molander (1986) classified MD activities in terms of the style in which they are introduced and the level at which they are focused. The style may be prescriptive or consultative. MD activities may be focused at an individual, a group or an organisation. For some, learning is seen in two dimensions, namely pedagogical (trainer-led) and androgogical (Mocker et al 1982) learning activities (Snape et al 1994). Marchinton and Wilkinson (1996) created four categories of MD methods by combining the learning dimensions of trainer-led and self-directed with the focus dimensions of individual and group learning. Winterton et al (1999) commented that this classification may be more meaningful than Molander’s prescriptive and consultative styles. The MD methods outlined in Table 5.1 seem to be able to fit in the classifications of prescriptive-consultative and pedagogical-androgogical, as exemplified in Table 5.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.2 Management Development Methods Classifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Androgogical</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4 The Formality of Management Development

Management development can also be conceptualised according to the degree of its formality. However, due to the use of different criteria, classifications of formal and informal learning vary between authors. For example, Marsick et al (1990) regarded that formal
learning is institutional. However, Mumford (1997) suggested that a formal MD process can be related to development activities planned by the individual, changes in job and job content, developmental activities off the job and/or within the job, such as counselling, coaching and mentoring which are informal learning for Marsick et al. Moreover, Marsick et al (1990) expressed that informal learning is predominantly experiential and non-institutional and can be planned. They continued that incidental learning is one form of informal learning. On the contrary, for Mumford (1997), informal MD is accidental processes and are not planned in advance. In other words, he sees informal MD is predominantly incidental learning –

(Informal MD) “a by-product of managerial tasks, the dynamic nature of managerial priorities, changes in the working environment and changes in colleagues and bosses, which will provide new opportunities and stimuli” (Mumford 1997, p50)

Therefore, there is a need to clarify the meaning of formal and informal MD here. Formality can be judged based on the extent to which a learner has control over the learning objectives (Mocker et al 1982), the intentionality and explicit of the learning (Marsick et al 1990), the structuring and organisation of MD activities and the venue where it occurs (Mumford 1997). For example, Mocker and Spear (1982) distinguished informal learning from formal and nonformal learning. They suggested that in nonformal learning, which involves performing organised activities that take place outside the formal educational system, the institution controls the means of learning while the learner controls the objectives.

Marsick et al (1990) argued that in formal learning, the learner’s primary intention is to learn things and thus s/he is more conscious about the learning. This view is shared by others such as Mumford (1991) and Rogers (2003). In addition to this, Mumford (1997) discussed who plans and structures a MD activity and where it takes place. He suggested that a MD method can occur within, or outside, a managerial activity.

Based on foresaid criteria, it is suggested that informal MD includes incidental learning and integrated learning whilst formal MD embraces formalised and less contextualised learning and formalised and de-contextualised learning. Incidental learning has the lowest degree of formality while formalised and de-contextualised learning has the highest degree of formality. Compared to incidental learning, integrated learning has a relatively higher degree of formality but is less formal than formalised and less contextualised learning. Table 5.3
summarises the defining characteristics of four MD forms. Detailed accounts about these various forms of MD are provided in the following section.

**Table 5.3 Characteristics of MD Forms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidental Learning</th>
<th>Integrated Learning</th>
<th>Formalised, Less Contextualised Learning</th>
<th>Formalised, De-contextualised Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Often occur within managerial activities</td>
<td>Occur within managerial activities</td>
<td>Often away from managerial activities</td>
<td>Away from managerial activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit intention is task performance</td>
<td>Explicit intention is task performance and development</td>
<td>Explicit intention is development</td>
<td>Explicit intention is development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No clear development objectives</td>
<td>Clear development objectives</td>
<td>Clear development objectives</td>
<td>Clear development objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstructured in development terms</td>
<td>Structured for development by boss and/or subordinate or the manager</td>
<td>Structured by HR professionals or external consultants</td>
<td>Structured by educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not planned in advance</td>
<td>Planned beforehand or reviewed subsequently as learning experiences</td>
<td>Planned beforehand or reviewed subsequently as learning experiences</td>
<td>Planned beforehand or reviewed subsequently as learning experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Marsick et al (1990), Mumford (1997) and Rogers (2002)

### 5.4.1 Formal Management Development

Formal MD is regarded as developing managers through planned and structured activities with clear learning objectives which occur outside managerial activities. The learning is intentional and explicit. The term of “formal MD” used here corresponds with Mumford’s (1997) Type 3 MD e.g. planned processes. It is the combination of the management education zone and management training zone (Mintzberg 2004). Management education is considered having a relatively higher degree of formality than management training provision does. It is because the former promotes de-contextualised learning whereas the latter enables a more pragmatic approach in terms of the focus of learning content and where learning events take place.

#### 5.4.1.1 Formalised and De-contextualised MD – Management Education

Education is defined as any planned series of incidents, having a humanistic basis, directed towards participants’ learning and understanding (Jarvis 1995). It is associated with learning activities that aim at developing the knowledge, skills, moral values and understanding
needed in all aspects of life (Fox 1994), leading to increased freedom by encouraging many ways of thinking (Rogers 2002).

Management programmes in education are pre-planned, structured and usually with clear development objectives, offering formalised and de-contextualised learning. They are often about theories and concepts rooted in educators, offering general knowledge and emphasising conceptual thinking and analytic skills (Fox 1997). It is criticised that many management educators have become increasingly insular: “we define and study our problems, based on limited interactions with people other than ourselves” (Kenworthy-U'Ren 2005, pp356). Moreover, management programmes in education are often driven by educators and held in educational settings, thus unable to provide a real business environment for learners to practise and master managerial skills (Mintzberg 2004). He maintained that what have been taught are connected to practitioners but not practice.

5.4.1.2 Formalised and Less Contextualised MD – Management Training

Training is “the use of systematic and planned instruction activities to promote learning” (Armstrong 2006, p575) with the aim of helping people to acquire and develop the skills necessary for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily and thus satisfying the current and future manpower requirements of the organisation. The learning goals of training are often specific and narrow, suggesting there is a “right” way to do something or “right” ways of working things out (Rogers 2002). Training continues to be a part of many organisations, offering increasingly diverse subjects of learning (Bell & Kravitz 2008).

5.4.2 Informal Management Development

Compared with formal learning, informal learning has following defining characteristics (Hager 2001; Marsick et al 1990):

- Less predictable as there is no formal curriculum or prescribed outcomes;
- Often implicit learning (even though the learner might be aware of the learning outcome);
- Often collaborative and/or collegial;
- Highly contextualised;
- Informal learning is predominantly experiential.
Informal MD occurs much more frequently than formal MD in the workplace (Cheetham et al. 2001; CIPD 2005). Burgoyne and Hodgson (1983) analysed 37 episodes of managerial work and identified that managers learn “naturally” through their managerial actions. Enos, Kehrhahn and Bell (2003) found that managers with high levels of proficiency learn managerial skills mostly from informal learning and transfer learning more frequently. Marsick et al. (1990) suggested that the success of informal learning depends on the ability of the individual to frame the problem appropriately.

5.4.2.1 Integrated Learning

Integrated learning is regarded as a form of informal MD here. It is a phase bridging incidental MD and planned MD. Integrated MD occurs within managerial activities with clear learning objectives, a form of acquisition learning. In their research on how children acquire their first language, Cenoz and Genesee (Cenoz & Genesee 1998) revealed that the acquisition learning uses the ordinary life world as its context and employs exploration and experimentation, trial and error, copying and practising. At the workplace, acquisition learning is task-related and highly contextualised (Rogers 2002). Examples of this type of MD are action learning, international assignment and mentoring.

Integrated MD can be planned and structured by boss and subordinate (Mumford 1997) and indeed by managers themselves. As Rogers and Freiberg (1994) suggested learning can significantly influence behaviour when it is self-directed and self-appropriated. The learning is effective when managers initiate and sustain learning on the job (McCall, Jr., Lombardo, & Morrison 1988; Mumford 1997).

The learning is explicit. The intention of integrated MD is performing the task as well as development. Sometimes learners/managers may not be fully conscious of the process of learning, because they are focused on the task. However they acknowledge the learning by recognising the developed capability of, such as, performing it.

Mumford (1997) suggested that an integrated managerial learning model may be designed by going through four steps:

1. To facilitate retrospective learning by asking a manager to recall previous managerial work or process from which s/he has learnt something;
2. To widen his/her vision about the kind of activities that may have provided opportunities for learning;
3. To link the learning to prospective learning by asking the manager whether s/he can see any similar or different learning opportunities that may arise in the future;
4. To ask the manager to make a plan on how to take advantage of these future opportunities and subsequently review the extent to which s/he has benefited from them.

By going though the steps, learning and managerial work are integrated. As Mumford pointed out, the primary focus is placed on managerial activities not learning opportunities, thus to put the learner in the centre. Another effect of such a process is the transformation of implicit learning to explicit learning. Because of this increased consciousness of learning, the effectiveness of the learning is enhanced.

5.4.2.2 Incidental Learning

Incidental learning is unintentional, a by-product of another activity. Stokes and Pankowski (1988) defined it as the learning that takes place by chance while one is engaged in another activity which can be a task accomplishment, an interpersonal interaction, a trail-and-error experimentation or even formal learning (Marsick et al 1990). For Jarvis (1987), incidental learning is a form of non-reflective learning that is largely reactive. This view is shared by Marsick et al who commented that incidental learning takes place without much conscious reflection. As such, incidental MD cannot be pre-planned and structured. Some examples of such learning are learning from mistakes, internalised meaning constructions about the actions of others and hidden curriculum in formal learning.

Like integrated MD, incidental management learning takes place in the normal course of daily managerial events. However, it differs from integrated MD because it involves a lower level of awareness of learning. In incidental learning, the by-product messages that “are being conveyed are often buried in the interaction” (Marsick et al 1990, pp14). Hence, learner must shift her/his attention to the messages and see them clearly before s/he can learn (Skruber 1987).

Incidental management learning is likely to be most effective because it is drawn directly from managerial practice (Mumford 1997). However, this form of MD is delimited by the nature of the task that encouraged its creation and the work capacity of the individual
(Marsick et al 1990). Hence, they suggested that proactivity (a readiness to take initiative), creativity (going beyond rational analysis of facts) and critical reflectivity (being conscious of all issues and vigorously critiquing them) are the conditions to enhance incidental learning.

Moreover, managers may not be able to take full advantage of this type of learning when s/he is not aware of the learning occurring and is not exposed to all stages of the experiential learning cycle (e.g. concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation) (Kolb, Lublin, Spoth, & Baker 1986). It is because the learning tends to stay at the experiment stage and omits the review stage (Mumford 1997).

5.5 Developing Hospitality Managers

A conceptual framework of management development for hospitality managers is proposed (Figure 5.1). The researcher argues that there are a variety of methods for developing hospitality managers and that they can be broadly grouped into two e.g. formal and informal MD. A formal MD involves learning that is de-contextualised or less contextualised whereas an informal MD encourages integrated learning or incidental learning. These four forms are underpinned by notions of learning theories. In other words, MD activities involve the interaction of the learner/hospitality manager, the context of learning, the learning process(es) involved and the contents of learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informal Management Development</th>
<th>Formal Management Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incidental Learning</td>
<td>Integrated Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formatted, Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contextualised Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formatted and De-contextualised Learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A learning experience
The learner/manager;
The contents of learning/management knowledge and skills;
The context in which the learning is set/learning with and from others;
The learning process(es) involved/constructivist, reflective and experiential learning processes.

Source: the researcher

As discussed above, in formal management development interventions, managers are directed to certain abstricated and theoretical principles e.g. explicit knowledge (Polanyi 1967). However, much of the criticism about ME points to the impracticality or irrelevance of
what is being taught to real managerial practice. Spender (1997) pointed out that many complaints can be traced to the abstraction and de-contextualisation resulting from the separation of process and content. There is an overwhelming tendency in subject-based knowledge to concentrate on content (Margotson 1997).

The principal opportunity facing ME should therefore be to deal more effectively with developing skills in the inter-subjective or cross-functional integration, processes and managerial activities that they are responsible for (Martin & Butler 2000; Weick, Mintzberg, & Senge 1994). Some argue that business schools should provide general transferable knowledge and skills to help students learn about multiple realities, ethics and personal competencies instead of competing on vocational and technical training with the corporate training sector (Raelin 1997; Spender 2004). Ladkin (2000b) reported that despite calls from the hospitality industry for increased management training, traditional food and beverage experience is still important for a career in the industry, and that vocational education is a starting point for hospitality managers’ careers.

Management training courses are normally structured by human resource professionals or external training consultants with specific development objectives serving business agendas. Thus, they are owned more by the developers than managers (Mumford 1997). They provide practical techniques and focus on specific managerial skills that are connected to practice (Fox 1997; Wood 2000). Similar to management education programmes, this type of MD also usually occurs away from normal managerial activities. Thus, it promotes formalised and less contextualised learning. Some methods used in MT are in-house development programmes, apprenticeships, coaching and mentoring. For example, in Jauncey’s (2000, cited in Gannon 2007) research into the job of hotel general managers, it was reported that sampled managers had served long apprenticeships. In a more recent study conducted by Garavan, O’Brien and O’Hanlon (2006) a similar portfolio was revealed. They reported that the majority of their respondents had experienced some fast track managerial development, gaining experience in food and beverage, front office and housekeeping as part of their career development. Both ME and MT offer formalised management learning opportunity. The distinguishing feature between them is that MT courses often have relatively narrower objectives to meet specific business needs of a firm whereas ME programmes focus on general knowledge of management.
Similarly, management training courses have some value in developing managers as well as pitfalls. They provide learners with practical techniques and often take a competency-based approach, oriented to tactical knowledge and job-specific skills. Holmes and Joyce (1993) argued that the concept of competency is potentially very useful because it provides a clear link between management practice and management development. Competency-based management training (CBMT) can work for the interests of organisations (Finch-Lees, Mabey, & Liefgooghe 2005). Winterton and Winterton's (1997) study has also confirmed its business benefits and suggested that it was more likely to improve both individual and business performance when it was linked with organisational strategy.

While the merits of competency approaches in management development are recognised (Burgoyne 1989), they also face a number of critical underlying problems and issues as listed below:

- “Competency” is confusingly defined. It is used for different purposes and subject to personal interpretation and preference (McKenna 1999). This raises the questions of who is the craft person and who is using the competency list (Burgoyne 1989);
- CBMT neglects the social and political dimensions of the construction of competence (Eraut 1994). Skills cannot be abstracted from either the person or the context. CBMT fails to appreciate situational/contextual factors determining how managers behave (Grugulis 1998; McKenna 1999; McKenna 2004) and overlooks group dynamics that affect managers' performance (Jacobs 1989);
- The dilemma of standardisation and diversity of managerial roles raises the question of how universal or generalisable a competency list is (Antonacopoulou & FitzGerald 1996; Burgoyne 1989; Raelin & Cooledge 1995);
- The behaviourist nature of CBMT determines that it emphasises primarily observable behaviours in spite of the advances made in cognitive task analysis (Raelin et al 1995; Ryder & Redding 1993).

Nonetheless, explicit management knowledge codified in formalised learning interventions is disciplinary (Gibbons et al 1994). It can be applied or associated to in the practice of management (Eraut 1994). When a situation is complex or requires a customised response, unprogrammed managerial activity (Simon 1965) occurs. This creates a non-routine condition for informal and incidental learning (Mansick et al 1990) and a production ground for tacit knowledge. Even in a routine condition whereby managers simply replicate actions
taken in the previous similar situation, such personal experiences can become valuable tacit knowledge which is intangible (Inkster 1987, cited in Marsick et al 1990) and difficult to convey (Polanyi 1967).

Indeed, the total potential managerial learning process is the sum of programmed knowledge and the pursuit of unresolved questions and problems (Revans 1980). Reflecting upon previous discussion on the nature of hospitality managers’ work, it appears that the formal aspect of what they do is predictable, perpetual and programmable, thus lends itself to formal MD. On the contrary, informal MD may provide a fertile ground for the acquisition of informal management knowledge. Planned and structured management education and training programmes certainly prepare hospitality managers with fundamental knowledge and critical managerial skills (Katz 1955), but they may not be able to achieve set development objectives in a situation where managerial work becomes more variable. Therefore, to develop competent hospitality managers effectively, the whole spectrum of management development initiatives must be promoted to enable the acquisition of management knowledge that they need to possess.

5.6 Summary

Management development is all about improving managers’ performance through learning processes. There are a wide range of management development methods. Scholars have developed their own classifications and terminologies to conceptualise managerial learning and developmental activities. Using different criteria, they draw on the similar characteristics of MD methods in order to make sense of the nature of management development. Two key themes have emerged in the categorisation exercises. One approach seems to be supplier-driven, conceptualising MD by the nature of learning content and the type of learning delivery. The typical examples are the MD classifications proposed by Molander (1986) and Snape et al (1994). The other approach appears to be learner-centred, focusing more on learning processes, exemplified by Akin’s (1987) and Mumford’s (1997) studies.

Adapt the formality of learning advocated by Marsick and others, four forms of MD were proposed and discussed. A large volume of studies have demonstrated that many managers learn through performing management tasks in the workplace. This experiential
Learning process means reflective and active learning in a real management context. The proposed classification mirrors the fact that people learn in different ways and through various means.

Given the complexity and dynamic nature of managers' work and how they learn, robust learning mechanisms are required. The key message comes in light is that there is not a single MD method can meet the needs and requirements of managers' learning and development. Hence, the chapter argues that in order to help hospitality managers to improve their effectiveness, they should be exposed not only to all stages of the learning cycle as suggested by Mumford (1994) and Kolb et al (1986), but also the full range of developmental opportunities.

The future of MD will not only ensure that managers create, absorb, transfer and apply knowledge (Thomson et al. 2001), but also provide learning opportunities and resources to enable them to learn effectively both individually and collectively. The greatest challenge that an organisation will face is to create an infrastructure and learning culture to support MD and to allow personal development even when there are priority conflicts. For the HR professionals, the difficult task will be finding solutions to enhance the informal learning that is not currently supported well, or at all. Some of these challenges may be overcome by using technologies. The following chapter will explore various approaches in the application of technologies in learning.
Chapter 6

Learning Technologies

6.1 Introduction

Given the interest of the present research which is identifying how hospitality managers' professional development can be facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICT), an effort is made to understand the role of technologies in learning in this chapter. The objective of the chapter is to identify in which ways learning can be facilitated by ICT based on the literature. The chapter will first explore the concept of “eLearning” and considers issues around eLearning modelling. This is followed by discussions on how ICT tools can facilitate learning. It concludes with a research agenda.

6.2 eLearning

“eLearning” has become a widely known term categorising a form of learning that involves the use of information communication technologies. ICT is an umbrella term that embraces all technologies for the organisation and communication of information. According to Buhalis (2003), information and communication technologies include hardware (physical equipment), software (prewritten instructions of a computer system or an electronic device), telecommunications, netware, groupware (electronic communication tools) and humanware (intellectual capacity of programming). Telecommunication networks allow the transmission of data, images, voices etc. Netware enables a network or an interconnected system of computers, terminals and communication channels and devices.

Laudon and Laudon (2002) distinguished between computer hardware and computer software, which show a consistency with Buhalis’ classification of “hardware” and “software”, storage technology and communications technology. Storage technology includes physical
media for storing data, such as a CD-ROM, or a DVD, or a memory stick, as well as the software governing the organisation of data on the media. Communications technology consists of physical devices and software. It links various computer hardware components and transfers data from one location to another. Thus, it is the combination of Buhal’s “telecommunications”, “netware” and “groupware”. This study adapts Laudon and Laudon’s (2002) classification of information technology and makes distinctions between “ICT application” and “ICT device”. The former refers to software applications, which are pre-programmed to control and coordinate the work of physical equipments, such as virtual classrooms and learning management systems. The latter refers to physical equipments, such as a CD-ROM and iPhone.

6.2.1 Defining “eLearning”

There are a variety of definitions of eLearning. Organisations and academic researchers define eLearning differently according to their own understanding of the term and the specific context in which it is used. For instance, Garrison and Anderson (2003) defined eLearning as networked, online learning that takes place in a formal context and uses a range of multimedia technologies.

In Europe, eLearning is regarded as the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services and remote exchanges and collaboration (EC 2000). The Department for Education and Skills emphasises the idea of learning with technology, stating that if someone is learning in a way that uses information and communication technologies (ICT), they are doing eLearning (DfES 2003). The MASIE Centre, an America-based international e-Lab and ThinkTank specialising in learning and technology, defines eLearning as “learning or training that is prepared, delivered, or managed using a variety of learning technologies and which be deployed either locally or globally” (Masie Center 2003, p10).

“eLearning is not that much about technology, but Learning, using technology” (van Dam 2004, pp 6). It is about learning that is delivered, enabled or mediated using technology (Boehle 2005; Virvou & Alepis 2005). Learning technologies provide learners with options such as time-shifting, place-shifting, simulation and community support which are all about “evolving and increasing the experience level” (Rosenberg 2001, pp 37) and active
engagement of students in knowledge building activities through exploration, reflection and collaborative learning (Learning Technologist 2003). The learning can be formal and informal, or even just simply information-sharing. eLearning is simply one way of how people can learn. In the early days of eLearning, there was a tendency to move toward single-method learning. Learners were given a single and self-contained method of mastering the learning material, which has been proved less successful (Rossett 2002). It has now been realised that eLearning enables effective learning process when incorporating with other learning and teaching mechanisms including combining digitally delivered content with learning support and service (OECD 2005).

eLearning involves the use of a wide range of ICTs through different Internet-based platforms such as the Internet, an intranet, interactive TV and mobile Internet devices. While computer network technology plays an important role in eLearning enabling the delivery of information and instruction to individuals (Welsh, Wanberg, Brown, & Simmering 2003), various forms of electronic media, for instance satellite broadcast, CD-ROM and DVD, are used to provide learning materials (Haven et al 2003; Pollard & Hillage 2001). Some information communication applications, such as blogs, text messaging, online conferencing and whiteboards, are employed to enhance the collaborative and constructivist learning experience.

Therefore, eLearning is, essentially, a learning process which involves the use of a local/extended Internet-based network in a distributed environment and other technologies. The network gives access to information sources and learning opportunities that are supported by a variety of eLearning applications. It can bring a learning experience in synchronous or asynchronous mode, tutorial systems, self-learning systems, or a combination of these elements. This type of learning experience is the function of the interaction of the learner with other learners and instructors/educators and with the learning environment, which contains interactive and multimedia content, distribution media and a range of software tools allowing the learning process to be created and managed. The eLearning phenomenon introduces a new way to think about learning, not new technology for learning.
6.2.2 Modelling eLearning

From different stakeholders' points of view, Beetham (2004) proposed five approaches to modelling eLearning, which are practice, theoretical, technical (ways of structuring representations), organisational (e.g. the institutional and departmental embedding of new technologies) and learning modelling (e.g. models in the learners' perspective). Learning models are usually implicitly taken into account in practice models that learning practitioners tend to use to describe approaches to learning and teaching (McDowall 2004; Mehanna 2004; Twigg 2003). Theoretical models (Conole, Dyke, Oliver, & Seale 2004; Moallem 2001; Ravenscroft 2001) are intended to structure a research programme, explaining or exploring what happens in the learning context. Hence they are, generally speaking, at higher level of abstraction than practice models. For practice models to be pedagogically sound, they need to be informed by theoretical models that have been validated through research. The focus here is theoretical models of eLearning although there may be linkages with other types of models as shall be seen in the following discussion.

Pollard and Hillage (2001) suggested that eLearning can be distinguished at three levels, namely foundation, intermediate and advanced. The first level is the provision of information via ICT in a very accessible and immediate way that enables individuals to extend their knowledge and improve their performance. The second level represents the provision of interactive learning materials and packages designed to facilitate skills and broader personal development. At the advanced level, eLearning is multi-dimensional, integrated with "processes to administer and monitor learning provision and outcomes and to provide learners with different types of support from subject specialists and peers" (Pollard et al 2001, p76).

As suggested by Sigala (2002), web-based learning can be viewed in three eras, which are the automational era, mass learning era and mass customisation era (see Figure 6.1). She mapped the evolution of eLearning practices into two dimension, which are the evolving and changing role of the instructor in designing eLearning environments (the vertical axis in Figure 6.1) and the increasingly dynamic role of learners in determining the design of learning environments (the horizontal axis). She suggested that models in the automational era use the Internet for publishing and disseminating learning materials. This is basically a depository of material. The second era models employ networking and interactive capabilities of the Internet for developing virtual eLearning applications based on
collaborative and constructivist instructions. These models often mimic instructions that have already been exercised in traditional classroom-based education (Sigala 2002). The third type of the models encourages customising and personalising instructions to a large number of learners through fully exploiting Internet capabilities. As eLearning practices evolve from webification to personalised learning, the role of educator in designing the learning environment decreases and the role of learners increases. This process should encourage higher learning effectiveness and higher order skills and competencies development.

**Figure 6.1 Evolution of eLearning Models**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decreasing role of educator in the design of the learning environment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Match instructions to learners’ orientations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Moderate and facilitate learners’ cognitive processes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Webify and re-implement instructor-oriented practices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Passive learner</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assumes roles of a member of a virtual learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Determinant of the learning</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Increasing role of learner in the design of the learning environment**

Source: (Sigala 2002)

Pollard and Hillage's foundation level of eLearning and Sigala's automational era models share the commonality of simple process of information transmit. Similarly, Ravenscroft (2001) described one type of model that usually present brief chunks of information, followed by questions with immediate feedback. These models are underpinned by behaviourist learning theories, emphasising the design of an environment that shape behaviour through learner-system interactions. This form of eLearning model gives little initiative to the learners who hardly had any opportunity for reflection and higher level thinking and reasoning.
Ravenscroft (2001) further distinguished between models based on cognitive constructivism and those underpinned by social constructivism. He pointed out that some eLearning models recognise cognitive differences and allow more learner control but still guiding and structuring the interaction by placing constraints on the learning path whereas some allow learners to create their own mental models by using a computational metaphor. Arguing that these models have overlooked the social dimension of learning he proposed an alternative approach to eLearning modelling which encourages collaborative argumentation to stimulate and support conceptual change and development through directed lines of argument and reasoning.

Although the focus here is on theoretical models, one will find the close relationships between different types of eLearning models. It may be said that Pollard and Hillage's three levels modelling is based on the varying degree of ICT embedded in an institute or department in terms of both information systems integration and the business processes of educational organisations. From an educator's point of view, Sigala (2002) recognised the importance of collaborative and constructivist learning process in education and appreciated the great potential of eLearning in accommodating cognitive differences of learners. Sharing Sigala's view, Ravenscroft (2001) also comprehended the underpinning learning theories. However, he paid more attention on the design of learning systems. These authors have drawn various classifications of eLearning from different views. Nonetheless, their notions provide conceptual frameworks for understanding different ways in which learning can be supported by ICT.

6.3 Facilitating Learning through Technologies

ICTs have been widely used to facilitate and support learning in educational institutions and increasingly employed to supplement training activities in corporations. The question of to what extent ICT can facilitate learning has become one of the core debates around eLearning.
6.3.1 Facilitating the Development of the Learner

Technologies can be used to facilitate learning, resulting in enhanced learning effectiveness. Based on 174 case studies of innovative pedagogical practices using technology from 28 participating countries, Kozma (2003) reported that students are more likely to develop new skills in IT, problem-solving, information management, collaboration and communication. Parkinson and Hudson (2002) suggested that ICTs can bring considerable benefits to learners in their development of both cognitive and affective domains. Chou and Liu (2005) identified that enhancement is evident in the areas of learning performance, computer self-efficacy and learning satisfaction, in the comparison with conventional classroom based learning. In their comparison study, Zudta and Nussbaum (2004) reported that students on a virtual learning programme outperform those without technological support. Riley and Ahlberg (2004) investigated the role of ICT in learning concept mapping and revealed that technologies enhance learning.

Some researchers (Chen & Macredie 2004; Freitas & Neumann 2009; Mitchell, Chen, & Macredie 2005) studied how cognitive learning can be facilitated through good interface design of hypertext system which contains text, data, graphics, audio and video providing a non-linear structure. Learners can move between these inter-linked elements at will in such a system. For example, Freitas and Neumann (2009) demonstrated how the design of user interfaces can be extended from Kolb's experiential learning cycle to support immersive learning in virtual environments. The general argument is that hypertext system provides learners with freedom of navigation so that they can select what information to access and decide how to sequence the information in a way that is meaningful to them (Lawless & Brown 1997). In doing so, learners construct their own individual knowledge structure by cross-referencing related concepts or topics in the subject domain.

The effectiveness of learning in a hypermedia environment is influenced by various factors. It is reported that students with lower domain knowledge of subject content gain more benefits than those with higher domain knowledge (Lawless et al 1997). Learners' cognitive style (Allison & Hayes 1996; Riding 1997) is another influential factor. Research identifies that individuals possessing different cognitive styles perform differently in their information recall exercise when using different hypertexts (Shapiro 1998). Learning can be facilitated when the hypertext architecture is matched to the cognitive style (Graff 2003a; Graff 2003b).
These authors and others believe that ICT can accommodate individual differences in learning, thus has great potential in realising enhanced learner-centred, individualised learning. Salovaara (2005) revealed that students who are involved in computer-supported collaborative learning used more deeper-level cognitive strategies such as monitoring, creating representations and sharing information collaboratively, as opposed to those in conventional learning environment who used more surface-level strategies such as memorization. In another comparison study of online discussion versus face-to-face discussion, it is reported that students who adopt a deep approach to learning through online discussion got better course grades (Ellis, Goodyear, Prosser, & O'Hara 2006).

6.3.2 Facilitating the Learning Process

The focus of discussion around eLearning seems to have moved away from content-orientation and towards the collaborative and constructive aspects of learning that educational technologies can facilitate. The overall agreement is that eLearning has unique potential to support constructive communities of inquiry which is a requisite for higher order learning e.g. critical and creative thinking (Garrison & Anderson 2003) and that computer-supported collaborative learning can increase performance, motivation, achievement, higher-level thinking skills and satisfaction (Alavi 1994). Many scholars investigate how the learning process can be enhanced through the use of technology applications. For instance, Gray (2001) explored the use of web-based materials, search engine, email and interactive forums for experiential action learning. He reported that the combination of action learning and virtual technology creates an effective action learning-reflection cycle, which has the potential for enhancing learning.

Some scholars have investigated how to encourage interactive online engagement so as to facilitate collaborative learning. Computer mediated communication (CMC) can be distinguished in four forms, which are one-alone, one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many (Paulsen 2001). Different techniques can be used to facilitate various forms of CMC (Table 6.1). Those who are in favour of CMC, in particular online chat or online discussion, believe that Internet-enabled communication may promote deeper and more reflective contributions than face-to-face discussion (Walker & Pilkington 2000). They proposed that the absence of visual cues may encourage participants who would not normally contribute in discussion to take part in. It is also believed that the lack of non-verbal interaction may
increase focus on the learning task (Pilkington 2001). Others, however, argued that the absence of such cues makes successful collaboration difficult because non-verbal communication can support social activities that could have impacts on problem-solving and task completion (McKendree, Stenning, Mayes, Lee, & Cox 1998).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMC Type</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
<th>CMC Type</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-alone</td>
<td>Online database</td>
<td>One-to-many</td>
<td>Lectures</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Online journals</td>
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<td>Symposioms</td>
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<td>Online applications</td>
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<td>Skits</td>
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<td>Software libraries</td>
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<td>Online interest groups</td>
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<td>Learning contracts</td>
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<td>Apprenticeships</td>
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<td>Internships</td>
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<td>Correspondence studies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>One-to-one</td>
<td>Simulations or games</td>
<td></td>
<td>Role plays</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Many-to-many</td>
<td></td>
<td>Case studies</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion groups</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Forums</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Paulsen (2001)

Nonetheless, a variety of factors influence the effectiveness of online engagement. Dale (2003) suggested that learners' motivation, skills and confidence are central to the effectiveness of an online discussion forum. Some argued that attention must be given to the design of educational dialogue (Kulik & Kulik 1991; McAlister, Ravenscroft, & Scanlon 2004; Pilkington 2001; Ravenscroft 2001; Ravenscroft & Matheson 2002; Walker 2004). Indeed, as reported, interactive synchronous online discussion that is supported by educational dialogue lead to improved argumentation and collaborative knowledge development (McAlister et al 2004; Walker 2004).

Baker (1994) proposed an interaction design model that made the learner more active by negotiating with the system to decide the dialogue strategy. The prescribing negotiation may not benefit learning if participants spend too much time negotiating what to do at an operational level (Pilkington & Parker-Jones 1996). However, it can provide a base to argue from, stimulating reasoning that leads to the revision and refinement of knowledge (Ravenscroft 2001). Ravenscroft and Pilkington (2002) investigated how to render models of discourse into cognitive tools supporting effective educational dialogue and proposed dialogue games for designing highly engaging, communicative and participative interactions. They argue that ICTs can support and promote learning by designing interfaces that structure discourse and dialogue in a manner that stimulate, support and favour learning. Indeed, according to constructivist learning theories, the development of higher cognitive
processes requires a cooperative interaction between the learner and a more learned other, which may be a human or an intelligent computer system. A collaborative dialectic exchange of information between the two can shift the learner’s zone of proximal development. The challenge is that learner’s knowledge and understanding evolves as the interaction proceeds (Ravenscroft 2001). Therefore, Ravenscroft argued that to achieve effective tutoring dialogue, the focus needs to be given to pragmatic (Madill, Jordan, & Shirley 2000) aspects of the design of eLearning interactions, in addition to syntactic and semantic dimensions.

6.3.3 Facilitating the Learning Context

Many studies have identified the presence of community in an online learning environment. For instance, building upon Wenger’s (1998) social learning framework, Moule (2006) proposed an augmented framework for understanding an online community of practice. According to Wenger (1998), enhance mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire are three essential dimensions of a community (see Table 6.2). Moule (2006) argued that additional facets are required to enhance these dimensions so that an online learning community can be supported. These facets are:

- Technical provision and necessary IT skills are required to enable and support mutual engagement in an online community;
- Joint enterprise in the online community requires the development of trust and support of identity presentation;
- Longevity in the online community is a necessity to enable the functioning of shared repertoire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of community</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutual engagement</td>
<td>The basis for relationships, regular interaction of members who negotiate meaning of practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint enterprise</td>
<td>A process that maintains the existence of community of practice, working towards sharing goals through negotiation which reveals relations of mutual accountability within the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared repertoire</td>
<td>Developed routines, language, ways of working and stories within the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Within an online community, engagement will require online communication and ongoing maintenance through emails, discussion boards and virtual classrooms (Moule 2006;
Pilkington 2001). Asynchronous online communication is potentially enabling more reflective learning. Sustained online communication enables the social construction of knowledge among learners who are at a distance in time and place (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Haag 1995). Learners become active participants in the search for knowledge (Naidu, Barrett, & Olsen 2000). Interaction in an online learning community can be enhanced by transferring the accountability for learning to learners and applying computer technology to provide with opportunity to negotiate when, where, how and what they learn (Tu & Corry 2003).

While the majority of research on eLearning practice is conducted in an education context, there are limited studies focusing on learning and development in the workplace (Bradley & Oliver 2002; Ryu, Kim, Chaudhury, & Rao 2005; Sloman et al 2003; Stacey, Smith, & Barty 2004; Svensson 2004). It is generally assumed that that knowledge can be transferred and applied to eLearning practice in the corporate training context. However, based on her empirical study, Svensson (2004) pointed out that eLearning practice in the workplace faces three major challenges:

- **Expert dilemma** - the time constraints of subject experts make work-integrated eLearning challenging;
- The situated nature of work practice versus de-contextualisation of learning materials - the contents of learning are not always suitable to work situations of organisations;
- **Planning for the unknown** - practices at work change constantly, which makes developing learning materials challenging.

There are also discussions on the uniqueness of adult learning in the workplace. In that, effective learning occurs when the learning materials are closely associated with work practice of the learner. Stacey, Smith and Barty (2004) investigated the tensions between participation of adult learners in an online learning community and their participation in the communities of practice at their workplaces. They reported that participation in the one type of community affects the participation in the other. When the learning tasks are designed to enable negotiation of tasks and collaboration with learners who have similar work issues, enhancing effects occur. Likewise, Ryu et al’s (2005) investigated knowledge acquisition in an enterprise information portal and identified that knowledge acquisition and transformation occur when members communicate to each other about specialized knowledge that links to their actual workplace practices. Moreover, Sloman and Reynolds (2003) pointed out that technology is an important tool for informal learning and team
development in business, leading to new types of virtual learning communities with different objectives, boundaries, demands on the moderator and different measures of effectiveness.

6.4 eLearning for Hospitality and Tourism

As can be seen from the previous discussion, there have been a range of studies on eLearning. Investigations on the use of ICT for hospitality and tourism management studies, however, are limited. Focusing on the student side, Law (1997; 1999) and others believe that computer-assisted instruction can benefit hospitality education, enabling students to improve their computer skills (Lashley & Rowson 2005; Neilson & Gould 1993) and develop problem solving and analytical skills (Kirk & Evans 1990; Sweeney & Oram 1992). From an educators’ perspective, some authors discussed pedagogical underpinnings of eLearning for tourism and hospitality studies (Sigala 2002; Sigala & Baum 2003).

In their survey, Sigala and Christou (2002) revealed that the most reported applications of the Internet were searching for information, gathering industrial data, retrieving articles, reading or downloading homework problems, downloading real-life case studies and syllabus, which fall in the automational era of eLearning exhibited in Figure 6.1. Hence, they call for more innovative use of ICTs for more enhanced instructions in hospitality and tourism management education.

More recently, tourism and hospitality educators are increasingly employing various technologies to help their students to learn (Dale 2006; Flinn & Barday 2006; Taylor 2006). For instance, Taylor (2006) reported how a Blog was used, blended with conventional teaching methods in travel and tourism studies so that students could record their learning and share it with others. Dale (2006) described the use of an ePortfolio system for reflective learning of tourism studies and concluded that a blended approach using technologies can offer a more reflective and deeper approach to student engagement with learning tasks.

While eLearning is being widely used in formal education for hospitality management subjects, some leading hospitality organisations have employed learning management systems to create the infrastructure of a virtual learning environment, introducing eLearning to supplement their training activities (Li et al 2007). Pre-structured learning programmes
can be authored, delivered, monitored and assessed within such an environment. According to an interim report of the Institute of Hospitality, eLearning is being used for technology systems training and management skills training in UK hospitality industry (IoH 2005). The key findings are summarised below:

- The Accor Hotels, Compass Group and Hilton International have been using customised eLearning to train their staff to use internal information systems such as telephone reservation systems, bookkeeping systems and property management systems. An example of innovative technology-based training is a programme called Signature in Accor Hotels, which trains front-line employees to convert room query calls to reservations. This programme exploits simulation technology with a tutor support system that provides the human element in the eLearning process. A trainee on this programme uses the simulation application to answer a test call from the training organisation, respond to the “guest enquiry” and practise to convert the enquiry to room reservation. The programme also allows the trainee to log in the system to listen to the recorded conversation and contact the trainer for advice.

- The Compass Group is exploring eLearning for its business assistants. The majority of this population are catering managers. The Internet technology based training package is to train the managers how to use the company’s information system to record and manage costs and sales. It begins with a classroom-based induction session. The managers on the programme then go through the exercises that have been set up on the intranet to advance their learning. Once they pass the training, they will be using the same system to record financial statistics, which are then transmitted to the data warehouse of the Group for central administration and control. The Group has also introduced a programme called Leadership Lounge, aiming to enhance senior management population’s learning through information sharing and collaboration.

- Hilton International provides its managers with a range of eLearning programmes through its Corporate University portal. In addition to that, about 350 managers can use e-Books facility of the portal to help their learning. Currently, there are around 300 programmes in business skills, 200 in IT skills, 24 in finance, 30 in eCommerce and distribution, 10 in hotel operations and 7 bespoke eLearning courses in marketing. There are also about 5000 e-Books. 350 managers can use this facility to learn more
effectively. eLearning will be increasingly used in the Hilton International. Currently, about 10% of training is eLearning. This will increase to 20-30% in the future.

- The study has also revealed that although the legislative training, such as food and hygiene, health and safety, lend themselves to eLearning due to high staff turnover, it may not be practical for organisations where their operational employees have very limited access to computers. For example, BaxterStorey tried basic food & hygiene training through eLearning. It, however, did not last because there were not enough computers for the operational staff to use. For an international organisation, such as Hilton International, using eLearning for this type of legislative training on a global basis is very difficult due to different legislative requirements across different countries.

6.5 Towards a Research Agenda

It is evident that ICTs can be used as tools to facilitate learning, as demonstrated in the studies discussed above. It is agreed that good practice in eLearning must be underpinned by empirically valid learning theories. Foresaid studies on eLearning tend to focus on the application of principles of one learning theory or another. However, as emerged from the review of the nature of learning outlined in the previous chapter, learning about something is in fact a very complex phenomenon. The complete understanding of how people learn is yet to be realised. Each learning theory is as valid as another, explaining one act of learning. To better appreciate eLearning, one ought to adopt a holistic approach to learning theories.

Moreover, in the research into eLearning, the majority of studies discussed focus on the role of ICT in learning in an educational context while few investigations have looked into eLearning in sectors such as health care (Stacey et al 2004). Li et al (2007) explored how some leading UK hospitality firms adopt eLearning as a supplementary solution to their management development schemes. However, in depth knowledge on how ICT can be used to help hospitality managers learn effectively is still very limited. Therefore, a research agenda is proposed, in the following section, to inquire into eLearning for hospitality professionals, embracing different learning theories.
As mentioned in previous chapters, there is a range of problems in developing managers including those working in the hospitality industry, which are summarised as below:

- Management education programmes have too much emphasis on problem-solving, but not enough on problem finding and integration across functional areas (Porter et al. 1988);
- There is an inefficiency in developing international managers for the hospitality industry (D'Annunzio-Green 1997);
- Managers cannot benefit from informal learning initiatives because this provision is not well supported (Cheetham et al. 2001; Marsick et al. 1990; Watkins et al. 1992b);
- Wrong content has been taught wrongly to wrong people in a wrong place (Mintzberg 2004);
- Hospitality managers are not well prepared to face the challenge derived from a constantly changing and complex workplace (Cho et al. 2000);
- Many management training programmes are not sufficiently developing hospitality managers' abilities to think critically and collaborate effectively (Cho et al. 2000);
- Hotel managers' managerial skills are not sufficiently developed (Ladkin 2000a);
- Many management education programmes are ill equipped structurally and culturally to be sensitive and adaptive to environmental change (Jayawardena 2001).

Given the critical role of managers to the survival and profitability of hospitality firms, research is required to find solutions to develop the management population effectively. Technology may provide a solution to this given that abundant evidence suggesting that learning can be enhanced through the use of technology in educational contexts. Hence, this research aims to identify how management learning in the workplace may be facilitated by new technologies. To work towards this goal, the inquiry has followed the flow of thinking portrayed in Figure 6.2. The first step was to understand the nature of the hospitality industry which is the research context. This was followed by the investigation of what managers do which provides an account on what they need to develop in order to do their job. Having looked into the nature of managers' work, the researcher has identified that hospitality managers' work consists of formal and informal elements. The complex, diverse and dynamic nature of their work demands diverse management development activities that enable the whole spectrum of formal-informal managerial learning which are underpinned by the notions of how people learn advocated in learning theories.
Progressing from the thinking process described above, a conceptual framework is proposed (see Figure 6.3), which needs to be tested through further research. As illustrated in Figure 6.3, the vertical dimension represents the formality of hospitality managers' work. A given managerial task usually consists of both formal and informal elements. A highly formal task is predictable, perpetual and programmable by nature whereas a highly informal task has high variability, volatility and variety (the detailed discussion on this is provided in Chapter 3). To put it in a learning discourse, this dimension prescribes the content of management learning, representing what a hospitality manager needs to develop in order to do his/her job.

The horizontal dimension is a continuum of the formality of management development. It is inter-related to the vertical dimension. In a managerial learning event, the learner/manager interacts with explicit or implicit management knowledge, which exists in a variety of forms such as written words, experimental actions, daily practice or experience from other sources, by undergoing one or more internal mental processes of learning in a context that can be either situated (such as the workplace or a community of management practice), or de-contextualised (e.g. an educational institute).
Diagonally, there is a proposed zone of perceived effectiveness of MD. As suggested in the literature, some types of management knowledge are best learned through certain means. Prescribed management functions, which are codified knowledge about what a manager should do at work, can be acquired more effectively through pre-planned and structured learning activities. By contrast, the informal aspect of their work can be learned more effectively through learning activities that are embedded in their work activities. The learning may be incidental, unintentional and unstructured and probably not even recognised by the learner/manager.

As seen in the studies reviewed in the previous section, a wide range of ICTs have been used to support and enhance learning in educational contexts. In contrast, the range of technologies that have been used in learning in the workplace is relatively small. This may be due to research on this area being very limited. Nevertheless, some examples reported in the reviewed studies include communicating via email, searching and retrieving
information online and through intranets, locating references in bibliographic systems and electronic journals, downloading learning resources, reading online CD-ROM and DVD-based learning materials, taking interactive tests and so on. In the context of management learning, it is proposed that some ICT tools may comply with conditions of formal MD, thus are more suitable than others in supporting a specific form of learning about management. This means that such ICT tools should appear differently in the zone of perceived effectiveness in Figure 6.3. Based on literature review, the following propositions are brought forward:

Proposition 1: Learning management system may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning and that of formalised de-contextualised learning. A learning management system is a software application that is used to deliver, track and manage learning, such as WebCT and Blackboard. Many colleges and universities in the UK have adopted this kind of system to deliver courses to students on campus and those in long distance education (DfES 2004), which include industry professionals who are enrolled on educational programmes. In the early adoption of LMSs in education, they tended to be used to publish and disseminate learning materials. Sigala (2002) regarded this kind of practice as webification of existing education practice. Many learning management systems have now developed functionalities to enable collaborative learning such as virtual classrooms and online forums. These new functions are increasingly employed to facilitate learning in education (Pollard et al 2001; Sigala 2005; Sigala et al 2003). Li et al (2007) reported that a few large hospitality organisations have employed learning management systems, as a supplementary means, to deliver and manage their training provision. They were mainly used as a tool to disseminate pre-structured learning materials. Application that facilitates collaborative learning through, such as, online discussions was used at the senior level of management in one organisation. Companies are reluctant to permit managers from different organisations discuss ideas through, for example, online forums, because of competition. Hence, it is proposed that learning management systems may be a useful tool to learn codified knowledge that underpins the formal elements of managerial work in company training interventions and education provision.

Proposition 2: Information system simulations may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning. Simulation is an imitation of real life situation or some kind
of process. A simulation application often involves the use of gaming technologies to support, stimulate and inspire activities that are directed towards learning objectives (Sandford & Francis 2006). Sandford and Francis maintained that when bringing the theoretical-supported pedagogy in simulation with motivational elements of gaming, simulations and games converge and create a field for learning to take place. An information system simulation contains pre-programmed step-by-step demonstrations and instructions on how to use a computer system, such as telephone reservation systems, bookkeeping systems, finance management system and property management systems reported in Li’s et al study (2007). Such codified explicit knowledge guides procedures at work, which are company-specific. Hence, such simulations of information systems are more likely in use in company training interventions than in educational institutions. They may be an effective tool for learning of procedures that involve use of company information systems.

**Proposition 3:** Business simulations may be effective in facilitating learning of the informal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised de-contextualised learning. The other type of simulations that is relevant to this study is business simulations, which provide an imitation of workplace situations. They can be designed and programmed through use of educational dialogues (Pilkington et al 1996) to create a realistic decision-making context, so that the user can practise how to respond to issues presented in a safe environment. A business simulation programme can present various factors often found in a real situation that a manager is expected to deal with. What is created in such a simulation reflects the predictable and perpetual aspect of a manager’s work, but it is designed to learn skills to deal with various different situations. Hence, a business simulation may be a good solution for students and employees who wish to progress to a managerial role to prepare themselves for the real business situations.

However, Keys and Wolfe (1990) criticised such business simulations for their lack of generalisability of that learning in the real organisational environment. Thus, it may not be an effective learning tool for managers because they are already exposed to the real changing business environment and deal with various aspects of the work every day. A business simulation programme may create a safe and friendly environment for managers to exercise skills, but what is simulated in the programme is de-contextualised and it does not provide the real and dynamic context of management practice.
Proposition 4: Podcasting may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of integrated learning, formalised de-contextualised learning and formalised less contextualised learning. Podcasts are audio or video recordings in the form of digital files (Altree 2006). A true podcast can provide learning event to large audience by recording and delivering audio broadcasts via some form of “push” technology such as RSS (really simple syndication) feed. In practice, however, sound files on the Internet for an interested party to download are also often referred to as podcasts (Altree 2006). Podcasting can be used to record live lectures, seminars, tutorials or learning activities of students so that students or maybe the managers as well can view the content later. In the context of workplace learning, podcasting may be useful in disseminating management development sessions that introduce codified explicit knowledge such as theoretical principles and management techniques. Managers can watch the podcasts on training courses or during their normal work activities. Therefore, the space of podcasting is expected to stretch across, horizontally, from integrated learning, to formalised less contextualised learning, to formalised de-contextualised learning. Vertically, “podcasting” probably stays on the extreme of high degree of formality of managerial work.

Proposition 5: Virtual classrooms may be effective in facilitating learning of formal and informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that can be codified and pre-programmed and personal understanding of a subject, an issue or an experience in the context of formalised de-contextualised learning and that of formalised less contextualised learning. A virtual classroom is a private online space in an online learning system such as WebCT and Blackboard (Education Queensland 2008). It allows document sharing, thus it can be an effective tool to distribute explicit knowledge that a manager needs to know to perform the formal element of his/her work. It can also enable one-to-many and many-to-many (Paulsen 2001) asynchronous and synchronous interactions. Therefore, it can also be a good tool to facilitate exchange of personal opinions and experiences, some of which the manager may find useful in helping him/her deal with a work situation. Like classroom-based learning, sessions are fixed to specific times. Moreover, virtual classrooms require a sound card, headphone and microphone to be fully effective. Many require a special plug-in which may not be acceptable within an organization’s IT environment. Therefore, they are probably more suitable to facilitate formalised de-contextualised learning as opposed to formalised less contextualised learning. However, it is claimed that virtual classrooms are excellent for tailor-made introductory training courses (Ashridge 2009).
Proposition 6: Search engines may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal and informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that can be codified, pre-programmed and made explicit in the context of integrated learning and that of incidental learning. The World Wide Web is an enormous set of interlinked hypertext documents that contain text, videos, images and other multimedia. Its global connectivity creates a gigantic virtual library of knowledge. A search engine is a programme that, when running, makes connection to many thousand of websites, retrieving and indexing web pages from these sites (Curtis & Cobham 2002). It is provides a direct link to public domain knowledge. Educators suggested that search engines perhaps represent most strongly the shift to new pedagogies (Gray 2001; Sigala & Christou 2002) and that there are opportunities to push learning to the point of demand given that they are increasingly integrated with local and network search tools (Graff 2003a; Lawless et al 1997). However, any search engine is only as good as the data it searches and the capability of the search to use good search terms. As a search engine can lead the user to the diverse, rich public knowledge base, it may be a good tool for managers to find different knowledge to do both the formal and informal aspects of their job. The learning may take place along side their work activities e.g. integrated learning, in which process it is also possible to learn something that was not planned and expected e.g. incidental learning.

Proposition 7: Blogs may be effective in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the context of integrated learning. Blogs can be multimedia and also linked into other blogs and content, making it a staple of multi-threaded content approaches (Branum 2001). There are two basic forms of blogs namely free-style and filter-style. The former focuses more on the internal world of the blog author (Ozawa 2001) whilst the later is featured with linking to sites and/or articles that the author believes worthwhile for the reader. Blogs can give instant access to expert knowledge and updates (Branum 2001). However, they are highly personalised and often carry opinion and can be an overwhelming source of unstructured information (Muwanga-Zake 2008). Blogs are excellent for capturing individuals’ knowledge (Taylor 2006), though they depend wholly on individual authors sharing their knowledge. Therefore, blogs may be a good tool for managers to seek instant opinions of experts or experienced individuals on certain unexpected issues, which represent the highly informal element of managerial work. Such learning is expected to occur within managerial functions.
Proposition 8: Community websites may be effective in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the context of integrated learning and incidental learning. A community website, such as a wiki, is essentially a dynamic resource which different groups can maintain and add to. It is a good vehicle for constructing and maintaining knowledge bases (Jonassen et al 1995; Naidu et al 2000). It permits asynchronous online communication on a many-to-many basis (Paulsen 2001), which enables more reflective learning individually and collectively (Moule 2006). Similar to blogs, content held on a community website reflect a personal point of view on a subject, an issue, or a live experience. This kind of personal knowing may find its place in influencing managerial tasks that deal with unexpected, volatile situations. These tasks represent a low degree of formality of manager's work. Community websites may encourage self-direct exchange of personal understandings and management practice. Thus, they may be an important tool for integrated learning and team development in business.

Proposition 9: Web conferencing may be effective in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the context of integrated learning. In a web conference, all participants sit at their own computers and are connected to each other through the Internet. Some features of a web conferencing include live video via webcam or digital video camera, real time audio communication, recording for future reference and text chat. MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger and Skype are some applications that enable such a web conferencing. Web conferencing enables one-to-one, one-to-many and many-to-many synchronous discussions (Paulsen 2001). When both audio and video are enabled, non-verbal communication becomes possible, which enhances interactive online engagement leading to successful collaborative constructive learning (Pilkington 2001; Walker et al 2000) and contributes to problem-solving and task completions (McKendree et al 1998). Web conferencing can be used to conduct synchronous meetings bringing managers in distributed units together online to discuss various unexpected issues and find solutions, which again represents the low degree of formality of managerial work.
Proposition 10: Email may be effective in facilitating learning of the informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the contexts of integrated learning and incidental learning. As a major communication channel, email allows asynchronous and just-in-time exchanges of messages on a basis of one-to-one and that of one-to-many (Paulsen 2001). It can be used as a direct channel to learners to provide individual support through various levels of interactions such as tutorial and metacognitive (Harri-Augstein & Thomas 1991). Yu and Yu (2002) also reported that incorporating email into the learning process can promote student cognitive growth. However, a key element of learning content may be overlooked in the inbox, or even missed, lost or deleted without being read. In this connection, Kramarski and Ritkof (2002) suggested that learning is more effective when email interaction and instruction that encourage metacognitive learning are combined, as opposed to the sole use of email interaction. Hence, email may not be an effective tool for learning of codified, explicit management knowledge, but may be a useful tool for coaching that involves the exchange of personal knowing to support learning. This also means that the contents of learning may be more associated with the informal aspect of manager’s work, similar to blogs, community websites and web conferencing. In terms of the learning context, such coaching is likely to take place within managerial activities e.g. integrated learning. Furthermore, as said above, email is a major communication tool in business; hence diverse information is transmitted via this channel. This raises a potential for email to be a good tool to encourage incidental learning.

By investigating how hospitality managers perceive the effectiveness of MD that involves the use of eLearning tools, solutions for developing hospitality managers more effectively may be identified. If an eLearning tool is considered suitable for holding and disseminating certain type of management knowledge and to comply with a certain managerial learning type more properly than others, it would appear in the zone of perceived effectiveness. Therefore, to develop and test the framework, further research needs to look into three areas, which are: core knowledge and skills that hospitality managers possess, how they have learned that and the role of technologies in their learning. The next chapter will explain research processes undertook to tap into these areas.
Chapter 7
Research Design

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how the research agenda established in the previous chapters will be pursued. Crotty (1998) suggested that there are four questions a researcher needs to consider in designing a research proposal. They are concerned with the epistemology that informs the research, the theoretical perspectives that lie behind the methodology in questions, the methodology that governs the researcher’s choice and the use of methods and methods. Building upon Crotty’s ideas, Creswell (2003) discussed three elements of inquiry central to the design of research, which are alternative knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry and methods. Adopting the design process suggested by Creswell, this chapter presents a series of decisions that the researcher has made on the knowledge claims that underpin this inquiry, the research strategy and the methods to use. It will also discuss how the methodological choice can address the demands of the research aim and objectives.

7.2 Research Aim and Objectives

This study aims to identify how management learning can be facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs). To reach the aim, the researcher chooses to study learning experience of managers in the hospitality industry, which will be explained in detail later in this chapter. The aim leads to three research questions:

1. What do hospitality managers need to learn?
2. How have they learned them?
3. What is the role of technologies in their learning?
To find the answers to research question 1, Chapter 2 explored the characteristics of the hospitality industry and discussed how they impose challenges to hospitality managers. Those managerial challenges, to some extent, reveal what hospitality managers ought to do. The nature of their job is further elaborated on in Chapter 3. It is identified that what hospitality managers need to learn to be able to do their job consists of the formal elements and the informal elements.

In relation to research question 2, the following objectives are set out:

- Research objective 1: To understand the participants’ perception of learning about managing the business;
- Research objective 2: To explore the nature and dynamics of managerial learning;
- Research objective 3: To compare and contrast managerial learning across cases;
- Research objective 6: To develop explanations of how hospitality managers learn to manage the business.

With regard to research objective 1, it is learned from the literature (Chapters 3 and 4) that both the concepts of “management” and “learning” have different meanings to different people. Hence, it is critical to establish the understanding of the subject’s perception of “learning to manage” so that further interpretation of his/her accounts can be kept closely to the original meaning. Based on the review of managerial theories (Chapter 3) and learning theories (Chapter 4) and discussions on management development (Chapter 5), it is gathered that learning is a complex phenomenon and that learning may be analysed by tapping into four key elements e.g. the learner, the learning content, the learning process and the learning context. However, the literature does not provide evidence on the nature and dynamics of managerial learning. Therefore, research objective 2 is to explore this.

Again, based on the literature review (Chapter 4), people learn differently. This is also reflected in studies on management development. As mentioned in Chapter 5, a variety of methods have been used in management development practice to meet individual needs in learning. Hence, it would make sense to tap into commonalities and differences of individual learning of the participants e.g. research objective 3. The final outcome of research question 2 is to develop explanations of how managers in the hospitality industry learn to manage the business. This is labelled research objective 6.

To be able to answer research question 3, the objectives below are to be achieved:
• Research objective 4: To identify relationships between managerial learning, knowledge and the use of technology;
• Research objective 5: To explore perceived effectiveness of technology in their learning.

As said above, it is believed that the four key elements of learning can provide a means to investigate the role of technology in learning. In this research, "the learner" is the individual participating general managers. "The learning content" is the "knowledge" that the subjects learn. Chapters 2 and 3 have provided theoretical evidence on this. "The learning process" displays the way that learning takes place, which can involve both internal and external processes of information processing based on learning theories reviewed in Chapter 4. "The learning context" is the way that management learning and development is delivered, which can be formal and informal (Chapter 5). Regardless which type of management development, for the initiatives to be effective, educational instructions must follow theoretical propositions advocated in learning theories. In other words, effective management development e.g. the learning context must be underpinned by the process of learning. This is regarded as "managerial learning" in this study. Therefore, to identify the role of technology in management learning (e.g. research question 3), one ought to find whether there is a relationship between technology and knowledge applied by managers and whether there is a relationship between technology and managerial learning (e.g. the learning context that is underpinned by the process of learning). Research objective 4 is set to address this.

According to knowledge-based learning theories (Chapters 3 and 4), both educational institutions and workplace are knowledge generating grounds. Some type of knowledge is better acquired by going through a formal learning process in education in colleges and universities whereas some is better obtained through practising in the workplace - a less formal learning process. In the review of research on eLearning in Chapter 6, one message that comes out strongly is that some technology applications can enhance learning. Thus, if what knowledge-based learning theories hold is true and if technologies can enhance management learning, then one would expect that some technology applications are suitable to disseminate certain type of knowledge and to comply with a certain type of managerial learning than others. This can be established by gathering subjects’ perception of the effectiveness of learning that involves the use of technology. Hence, research objective 5 is set to explore this.
7.3 Alternative Knowledge Claims

Social science can be conceptualised in terms of four sets of assumptions related to ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology (Burrell & Morgan 1979). Ontology refers to the nature of reality. Epistemology is concerned with how one might begin to understand the world and communicate this as knowledge to others. Associated with the ontological and epistemological issues, human nature is about relationships between the knower and the known. Methodology is about the means in which one gains knowledge about the world. The debates within the four strands are summarised in Figure 7.1.

All human beings are “guided by highly abstract principles” (Bateson 1972b, pp 320). When approaching their subject, all social scientists have explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated (Burrell et al 1979). When researchers start a project, they have certain assumptions about what is knowledge, how they will learn and what they will learn during the inquiry. This may be called knowledge claims (Creswell 2003) or a paradigm (Burrell et al 1979; Guba & Lincoln 2005), which are often regarded as frames of reference for research. Borrowing Creswell’s (2003, pp 6) words:

"Philosophically, researchers make claims about what is knowledge (ontology), how we know it (epistemology), what values go into it (axiology), how we write about it (rhetoric) and the process for studying it (methodology)."

There have been enormous discussions about knowledge claims, or paradigms. Table 7.1 outlines the philosophical characteristics of seven paradigms. The constructivist knowledge claim underpins the present research. Prior to explain the reason, individual paradigms are explored here. A positivist views the world as being independent of human cognition and people’s behaviours are determined by the social environment. The reality might be understood through the identification and examination of the relationships of its constituent elements by using methods in the natural sciences. A positivist management research may show the following key features (Johnson & Duberley 2006):

- Its aim is generally to identify causal relationships that explain regularities in human social behaviour;
- The method of the natural sciences is adopted, which implies preoccupations with internal and external validity, reliability and operationalisation;
The subjectve approach

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Nominalism</th>
<th>Ontology</th>
<th>Critical realism</th>
<th>Realism</th>
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<tr>
<td>The social world is simply a product of people’s mind, made up of names, concepts and labels used to structure reality.</td>
<td>Transcending both ontological extremes through recognising both the social conditions and the human construct consequences of reality.</td>
<td>The social world is a real world, made up of hard, tangible and relatively immutable structures.</td>
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**Epistemology**

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<th>Anti-positivism</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
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<tr>
<td>The social world can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the studied activities.</td>
<td>The social world can be explained and predicted by identifying constituent elements and the relationships between them.</td>
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**Human nature/axiology**

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<th>Voluntarism</th>
<th>Determinism</th>
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<td>Human beings are completely autonomous and free-willed.</td>
<td>The situation in which a human being is determined by his/her activities.</td>
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**Methodology**

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<th>Ideographic</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Nomothetic</th>
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<td>Letting one’s subject unfold the nature and characteristics during the investigation process.</td>
<td>Employing both qualitative and quantitative methods.</td>
<td>Applying systematic protocol and technique derived from the natural sciences.</td>
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Source: Bhaskar (1975), Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Creswell (2003)

- The researcher is independent of what is being studied, acting as an observer;
- Human beliefs and interests are exclusive to the knowledge;
- Research is concerned with producing accounts that correspond to an independent reality.

Post-positivists consider that there are multiple realities. Events are subject to interpretation. Hence, the world can never be fully understood (Guba 1990). While recognising the views of positivist, they are also aware of the shortfalls of nomothetic research techniques. As a result of this, post-positivists employ multi-methods and triangulation to overcome the shortcomings of methods used and to produce a holistic understanding and explanation (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). However, post-positivist methodology is often belittled for its lack of standard of judgement (Dougherty & Pfaltzgraff 1997).
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ontology</strong></th>
<th><strong>Epistemology</strong></th>
<th><strong>Axiology</strong></th>
<th><strong>Methodology</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positivism</strong></td>
<td>Naïve realism, &quot;real&quot; reality, apprehensible</td>
<td>Dualist/objectivist; findings true</td>
<td>Determinism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Post-positivism</strong></td>
<td>Critical realism, &quot;real&quot; reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible</td>
<td>Modified dualist/objectivist; critical tradition; findings probably true</td>
<td>Determinism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pragmatism</strong></td>
<td>Critical realism, local and specific realities; pragmatic</td>
<td>Critical subjectivity in consequences of actions; problem-centred; real-world practice oriented</td>
<td>Contextualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conventionalism</strong></td>
<td>Relativism, knowledge derived from/determined by the socially sanctioned conventions</td>
<td>Subjectivist</td>
<td>Voluntarism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocacy/Participatory</strong></td>
<td>Participative reality, subjective-objective reality; co-created by mind and given cosmos</td>
<td>Critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with the world; co-created findings</td>
<td>Voluntarism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructivism</strong></td>
<td>Relativism, local and specific to-constructed realities</td>
<td>Transactional/subjectivist; co-created findings</td>
<td>Voluntarism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical theory</strong></td>
<td>Historical realism, virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values; crystallised over time</td>
<td>Transactional/subjectivist; value mediated findings</td>
<td>Voluntarism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Creswell 2003; Guba et al 2005; Johnson et al 2006)
Positivism has dominated the field of management research for many years. However, this often results from an attempt to copy the natural sciences or sometimes “a naïve and unreflecting empiricism which expects to explain everyday phenomena in such a way that underlying productive mechanisms can be identified” (Whitely 1984, pp 387). Positivist management research has been criticised for the neglect of the need for relevance (Johnson et al 2006). Often, when focusing on causal relationships of specific elements, the propositions being tested do not reflect the complex situation in which managers are.

In a pragmatic paradigm of inquiry, knowledge is believed to derive from actions, situations and consequences. Focus is given to finding solutions to problems. Thus, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods. Pragmatist researchers are not constrained by research techniques and procedures. They “look to the “what” and “how” to research based on its intended consequences” (Creswell 2003, pp 12). Taylor and Edgar (1999) pointed it out that the majority of hospitality research is problem-orientated, focusing upon a particular problem in organisations.

Conventionalist researchers see scientific statements as creations of the scientists which are taken to be true. Scientists’ subjective apprehension of reality often derived from, or determined, by the socially sanctioned conventions determines the acceptability of a scientific statement. The truth or falsity of statements is not determined by the observations of empirical data because a theory-neutral observational language is not available. Johnson and Duberley (2006) remarked that the views of conventionalism implies that management knowledge and authority and management practices cannot be established. Hence, they claim that critical theory may provide an alternative approach to management research.

Critical social science develops a specific form of critical thinking. It can be described in four aspects (Alvesson & Deetz 2001):

- Identifying and challenging assumptions behind ordinary ways of thinking and acting;
- Recognising beliefs and actions influenced by history, culture and social positioning;
- Imaging and exploring extraordinary alternatives;
- Being appropriately sceptical about any knowledge.

Critical theorists reject the idea of theory-neutral observational language; instead, they hold the belief that knowledge is underpinned by values and interests and are not encouraged to reproduce cultural traditions and conventions. Moreover, they deny the constructive, interpretive nature of empirical material and argue that data is an outcome of interpretation.
and construction. In other words, critical theorists construct data to interpret through negotiating, checking meaning with participants and deciding what to write down ( Alvesson et al 2001).

The aim of critical theoretic approaches to management studies is generally to "understand how the practices and institutions of management are developed and legitimized within relations of power and domination" (Johnson et al 2006, pp 123). Critical theory provides a framework for examining the political nature of management and organisations. The interest of this research is management learning at the individual level e.g. personal learning experiences, thus critical theory is not suitable in this study.

Advocacy/participatory researchers believe that inquiries needs to be connected with politics and a political agenda. They argue that structural laws and theories imposed by post-positivists do not fit marginalised individuals and groups and fail to adequately address issues of social justice (Creswell 2003). Participatory paradigms show the following features (Creswell 2003; Kemmis & Wilkinson 1998):

- It is assumed that the inquirers proceed collaboratively so that participants will not be further marginalised as a result of the inquiry, e.g. participants may help design questions, collecting data etc.;
- Participatory action is dialectical and focused on initiating changes in practices;
- The aim is to create a political debate and discussion so as to bring out changes.

Participatory researchers argue that the constructivist stance does not pay enough attention to how to help marginalised individuals. However, Guba and Lincoln (2005) viewed this paradigm as embedded in constructivism.

The researcher seeks to articulate the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research paradigm of constructivism. Constructivism holds the following assumptions as summarised by Crotty (1998) and Guba et al (2005):

- Meanings are constructed by human beings;
- People engage with the world and make sense of events based on their historical and social perspective;
- There is no "truth", but various acts of knowing;
- Knowledge is not an objective reality to be discovered, but can be constructed;
- The basic generation of meaning is always social.
The social world is constructed by human beings. Both “management” and “learning” are socially constructed concepts and mean different things to different people. Advocators of conventional management school of thought view management in various functions such as Henri Fayol and others (Gulick et al 1937). Scholars with contemporary management thinking talk about management by using words such as managerial behaviours and activities (Hales 1999; Kotter 1982; Mintzberg 1973; Stewart 1967). Some even question how much of what managers do is actually managerial (Hales 1986; Mintzberg 2004). In this research, management is considered a professional practice (Eraut 1994) consisting of formal and informal elements. Hence, the reality of “management” has multiple meanings.

Likewise, “learning” is also viewed in different ways, as discussed in Chapter 4. Behaviourist (Hartley 1998; Skinner 1954; Skinner 1973) and cognitive learning theorists (Bruner 1977) talk about learning as something leading to changes in behaviours and cognition e.g. the outcome of learning. Cognitive constructivists (Bruner 1977; Piaget 1973), however, speak of learning as a process of internal modelling of what people are exposed to in order to make sense of the world. Social learning theory (Bandura 1977b; Lave et al 1991; Vygotsky 1978; Wenger 1998) puts focus on social interactions in learning. Recognising the values of different learning theories, a holistic approach to the concept of learning is taken in this research.

As knowledge about management and learning exists in a social context, it can only be achieved and understood by being in that pragmatic situation. In the present research, the context in which hospitality managers work and learn is important to the inquiry because, based on the literature review, it influences what they do at work and in turn, shaping what they learn. Therefore, the researcher needs to visit the work environment of participating managers to seek an understanding of the setting, what they actually do and what technology that they use in the workplace.

This recalls the paradigm of pragmatism. It appears that the underpinning constructionist philosophical stances of this study are mixed up with those of the pragmatist knowledge claim. Indeed, Creswell (2003) and Denzin et al (2005) pointed out that the boundaries of the paradigmatic traditions are not always clear-cut in research practice and that philosophical concepts are interlinked in determining a research methodology. The researcher believes that knowledge has multiple perspectives and meanings are
constructed through pragmatic social interactions with the subject. The practice of management is eclectic and pragmatic. Managers draw on knowledge from a variety of fields, ranging from sociology to statistics (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe 1991; Johnson et al 2006). With regard to "learning", each learning experience is unique to the subject. It is personal, highly situated and contextualised. The meanings of "knowledge" and "learning" are contextualised. To retrieve them, the researcher needs to expose to or be taken to the "scene".

As advocated in the constructivism paradigm, meaning is hidden, but it can be brought to the surface through deep reflection (Schwandt 2000). This reflection can be stimulated through interactive dialogue between knower and respondent (Ponterotto 2005). To enable such a dialogue, the researcher will use open-ended questions to capture participants’ views and experiences and to co-construct findings from dialogue with participants. However, it needs to be recognised that, in the phase of data collection, participating hospitality managers work at a rapid pace with more power than the researcher. The subjects have the power to choose the length of time for the social interactions with the researcher and depth of messages that they want to convey. Indeed, as suggested by Easterby-Smith et al (1991), managers prefer to communicate favourable messages through concentrated interviews instead of long questionnaires or in-depth interviews. Therefore, when raising an open question, efforts must be made to ensure that the subject is answering the question.

It also needs to be recognised that the outcome of the research will be affected by other two issues. One is the pragmatic nature of ontology of knowledge. The participants’ contextualised interpretation of management practice and learning will affect the research outcome. Two is the researcher’s own values and belief on management practice and learning phenomenon, which will also influence the way in which data is constructed for interpretation.

7.4 Research Strategy

At a more applied level, inquirers need to bring the choices of assumptions about knowledge claims and choose or develop inquiry strategies (Creswell 2003). A research strategy provides a specific direction for procedures - a plan of action linking methods to outcomes.
As such, it governs the inquirer's choice and use of methods. Its main purpose is to help to avoid the situation whereby the evidence does not address the research questions raised initially (Philliber, Schwab, & Samsloss 1980).

There are a variety of inquiry strategies (see Table 7.2). Denzin et al (2005) mentioned action research, clinical research and others. Yin (2003) has spoken about surveys, experiments, archival analysis, histories and case studies. Creswell (2003) suggested that some strategies are often associated with quantitative research and others are frequently used in qualitative research. For instance, experiments and surveys are often seen in quantitative research. Ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological research and narrative research are frequently applied in qualitative research. Sequential, concurrent and transformative procedures are more associated with research that has a mix of qualitative and quantitative approach. Case study is considered appropriate for the present research. The subsequent section details the strategy and discusses the reason for the decision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies of Inquiry</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case studies</td>
<td>Investigating in depth a programme/process, an event/activity, or individual(s) (Stake 1995).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrent procedures</td>
<td>Converging quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of a research problem (Creswell 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnographies</td>
<td>Researching in a natural setting over a long period of time and the research process evolves contextually responding to the lived realities (LeCompte &amp; Schensul 1999).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiments</td>
<td>Random assignment of subjects, nonrandomized design, single-subject design (Keppel 1991).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounded theory</td>
<td>Deriving a theory of a process/action/interaction grounded in participants' views (Strauss &amp; Corbin 1998a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative research</td>
<td>Studying the lives of individuals, the views of the researcher's life is combined with those of participants in the collaborative narrative (Clandinin &amp; Connelly 2000).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenological research</td>
<td>Identifying the &quot;essence&quot; of human experiences concerning a phenomenon through extensive and prolonged engagement (Moustakes 1994).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequential procedures</td>
<td>Expanding the findings of one method with another method (Creswell 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Use of questionnaires or structure interviews for data collection with the intent of making generalisation of findings (Babbie 1990).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformative procedures</td>
<td>Using theoretical lens to guide the study and diverse methods with a focus on action solution (Mertens 2003).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4.1 Strategy of the Inquiry: Case Study

By definition, a case study is an empirical investigation which focuses on a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context” when “the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin 2003, pp13). Case study research can be used to generate new theory and test existing theory. It is best suited to the examination of why and how contemporary and real-life phenomenon that cannot be manipulated by the researcher occurs (Hartley 2007; Stake 1995; Yin 2003).

When choosing a research strategy, three conditions need to be considered which are the form of research questions, extent of control over behavioural events and degree of focus on contemporary as apposed to historical events (Yin 2003) (see Table 7.3). Questions of this study are concerned with how hospitality managers learn what is required in their job and in what ways ICT applications facilitate their learning. Thus, the study is both exploratory and explanatory. Furthermore, the research focus is on their living experiences over which the researcher does not have any control. Thus, case study is preferred strategy for the present research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Strategy</th>
<th>Form of Research Question</th>
<th>Requires Control of Behavioural Events?</th>
<th>Focuses on Contemporary Events?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival Analysis</td>
<td>Who, what, where, how many, how much?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How, why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A research design is a logical model of proof (Nachmias & Nachmias 1992), linking the data to be collected and conclusions to be drawn to the initial research questions. It is a blueprint of research dealing with problems of what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results (Philliber et al 1980). A research strategy comprises the logic of design, data collection techniques and specific data analysis methods (Yin 2003). Following Yin’s suggestion, the subsequent sections detail the plan of action.
**7.4.2 Case Design**

The research employs a multiple embedded case approach (Yin 2003). Compared with single case methods, a multiple case design can produce more compelling evidence. As such, the research is more robust. Moreover, embedded design can overcome problems in the holistic approach. During the course of a case study, the nature of inquiry may shift in which implemented research design is not appropriate for the questions being asked any more. Embedded design allows for a set of sub-units, hence to increase the sensitivity to the slippage (Gray 2004b; Yin 2003).

The sub-units in this research are business unit managerial positions and individual business unit managers. The purpose of focusing on the positions is to find out the core responsibilities that the jobholders have. When investigating how hospitality managers learn, individual managers are the unit of analysis. A major disadvantage of embedded design is that the case study “focuses only on the subunit level and fails to return to the larger unit of analysis” (Yin 2003, pp45). However, this is not considered as a problem in this inquiry because the interest of research is how hospitality managers learn, rather than the perspective of organisation as a whole.

Yin (2003) suggested that the replication logic needs to be followed in case study, in that facts and conclusions for the first case need to be considered to be information needing replication by other cases. As stated in section 7.4.4, the two selected organisations are hotels of which operations are considerably different from that of the other two sampled contract foodservice providers. This variation is likely to have effects on what hospitality managers learn and probably the way in which they learn. Therefore, the researcher adapts a modified replication approach. This means that the researcher will study one hotel and one contract foodservice organisation spontaneously and then review the research strategy before conducting further case studies.

**7.4.3 Sampling**

The research employs purposive sampling, which is also known as purposeful sampling and judgement sampling (Bernard 2000). It is described as an approach in which cases studied are selected “purposely to permit inquiry into and understanding of a phenomenon in
depth” (Patton 2002b, pp46). The inquiry seeks to understand the phenomenon of how hospitality managers learn and the role of technologies from the perspectives of the participants. It is important to select a sample from which the researcher can learn most. Hence, purposeful sampling is considered suitable to this study.

"The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (Patton 2002b, pp230). The disadvantage of this approach is that the researcher may overlook a vital characteristic or may be subconsciously biased in selecting the sample (Gray 2004b). There is a range of different purposive sampling strategies, such as critical case sampling and criterion sampling (Patton 2002b).

Critical case sampling strategy is applied in the selection of the four hospitality organisations for the study. In a critical case sampling, selected case or cases, is deemed to be crucial (Gray 2004b). All selected organisations are large corporations, two of which represent the hotel sector and two represent the contract catering sector. These two sectors are selected for this study is because they have the highest level of concentration of large players, of which competitive efforts can influence the hospitality industry. Large players are likely to have sufficient resources to provide management development for their managers, within which technology-mediated provision may be developed. This is indeed reported in Li’s et al (2007) research on eLearning in the UK hospitality industry. The selected four organisations are considered as the industry pioneers in employing technologies in developing their managers; therefore, they are critical gateways in understanding the role of technologies in hospitality managers’ learning. The restaurant sector is not included in the sampling. This is because having engaged in a research project in eLearning for the hospitality industry, the researcher understands that it is very unlikely that managers in this sector are using many different information and communication technology applications in their workplace. Therefore they would not be good informants providing an insight into the role of technology in managerial learning.

The level of their eLearning employment varies among these organisations (Li et al 2007). For instance, a corporate-wide eLearning infrastructure is available to all levels of managers in Hotel H whereas in Hotel A the eLearning provision is available to some managers at the business unit level. Although the variation of their eLearning adoption exists, it is likely that all their managers are exposed to some kind of eLearning provision, hence are “good informants” (Flick 2006) of learning with technologies. This varied eLearning application may
also imply that some participants may be more experienced with commonly used learning technologies, or even have some experience with advanced technology applications, than others. This may allow for a greater view of different technologies used for learning and development purposes to emerge.

In addition to that, managerial roles and working environments across different sectors differ (HEFCE 2001; people 1st 2006d). What a general manager in a hotel does can be significantly different from what a catering manager does. Working environments and pressures in different sectors also vary. This may affect the way in which hospitality managers learn. Hence, it was decided that two hotel organisations (e.g. corporate H and A) and two contract foodservice providers (e.g. corporate C and S) are selected for the study. The selected four international corporations from the sectors are key players in the UK hospitality industry. As such, an understanding of how their managers learn will be critical in encouraging new thinking on how to develop hospitality managers more effectively and thus the industry can benefit from it.

Within each selected organisation, participating managers are selected based on the logic of criterion sampling (Patton 2002b). Knowledge requirements vary across different levels of management within an organisation (Katz 1974). The research chooses to study the business unit management level which shares similar managerial practice. By focusing on the same management level, the study endeavours to understand how sampled managers learn about managing their units. Moreover, what managers need to know is influenced by the size and structure of the business units they are responsible for (HEFCE 2001). Given that hospitality organisations in European countries are predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises (EC 2003; people 1st 2006a), managers in hotel business units that employ 50-249 workers and contract foodservice business units that employ more than 10 workers are sampled. Such an approach would ensure a certain degree of participant homogeneity, which would make it faster to reach data saturation (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson 2006).

7.4.4 Methods of Data Collection

The mixed methods of documentation, observations, interviews and concept mapping were employed to collect data. The first three are most commonly used sources of evidence, among others, in doing case studies (Yin 2003). The job descriptions for General Managers

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were first obtained from the Regional Human Resource Directors of sampled organisations. They are written records outlining detailed requirements of the position and generated by the organisations, so they have the strengths of being stable, unobtrusive and exact as a source of evidence (Yin 2003). Job descriptions were studied prior to the field work to identify key responsibilities of the job holder.

As stated in the beginning of the chapter, one of the research objectives was to understand the meaning of learning about managing business. To achieve this, an understanding of managing business was considered as a prerequisite. Therefore, observation was used to understand the meaning of “responsibility” in the real life of managing. The method was also useful in gathering data about the use of technology in their workplace and learning that took place alongside work activities. As Yin (2003) stated, observation was useful in providing additional information about the topic being studied and also a powerful means to understand the actual uses of technologies. The initial plan was to observe five managers of Hotel A and five catering unit managers of firm C.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with all participants in their workplace. For each participant who had been shadowed, the interview was carried out at the end of the observation. The primary aim of this method was to understand how they learn. During the interviews, the participants were invited to draw a map of one of their learning experiences. The twenty in-depth interviews enabled the researcher to gain rich and illuminative data about their personal learning experiences. At the end of the interviews, the participants were asked to provide their CVs, which can be critical in providing information about their education background and previous work experience.

7.4.4.1 Observation

There are four approaches to observation, namely overt, covert, participant and non-participant observations (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill 2000). The research adopts an overt and non-participant observation approach. Observation involves “the systematic viewing of people’s actions and the recording, analysis and interpretation of their behaviour” (Gray 2004b, pp239). Direct observations can cover events in real-time and the context of event (Yin 2003). This method has been used by many scholars to collect evidence of what managers do (Kotter 1982; Mintzberg 1973; Stewart 1976b). However, this method is
time-consuming, selective and reflexive whereby event may proceed differently because of being observed (Creswell 2003).

With the participants' permission, the researcher took photos of their workplace to capture what their work environment is like. This type of data can be useful in helping the researcher to understand the contextual nature of participants' experiences and behaviours. Then, field notes, one of the most widely used ways (Gray 2004b), was used to collect observational data. Field notes develop out of an analytic process of capturing and remembering detail mentally, recalling mental notes and jotting them down and producing more comprehensive filed notes (Bailey 1996). They are derived from all possible data through the researcher's mental constructs, understandings and interpretations (Gray 2004b). Components contained in field notes include primary observation that has no explanations or analysis of observations on people, their surroundings, behaviours and conversations, reflection and recall, pre-analysis data of ideas and inferences, impressions and personal feelings and forward planning. A template is developed for collecting observable data as shown in Table 7.4. The key things that the researcher wanted to capture were:

- tasks and managers' behaviours involved in their pursuit of a specific core responsibility,
- observable learning and developmental activities and
- the use of technologies for work and learning purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time in:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location:</td>
<td>Time out:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>Ideas and inferences:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impressions and personal feelings:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forward planning:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4.4.2 Interview

Part of "responsibility" is not observable, including tasks undertaken outside of observation time, tasks happening beyond the immediate observed environment and applied knowledge existing in managers' mind. Moreover, participants' past learning experiences and opinion on the effectiveness of ICT application in their learning cannot be observed either. Therefore, interview was used to capture such data.

Interviewing allows the inquirer to see the research topic from the interviewee's perspective (King 2004; Patton 2002a). A qualitative research interview has the "purpose of gathering descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena" (Kvale 1983, pp.174). It enables the researcher to make the unobservable perspective knowable and explicit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things.</td>
<td>Increasing the salience and relevance of questions, matching the interview to individuals and circumstances.</td>
<td>Generating less systematic data, thus difficult to organise and analyse data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance; sequence and wording of questions are decided in the course of the interview.</td>
<td>Increased comprehensiveness of data; logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed; interviews remain fairly conversational and situational.</td>
<td>Flexibility in sequencing and wording questions can lead to substantially different responses, thus reducing the comparability of responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking all respondents the same series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories.</td>
<td>Increased comparability of responses, reduced bias.</td>
<td>Little flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Fontana et al (2005) and Patton (2002a)

Qualitative interviews have various forms (see Table 7.5). In general, differentiation can be made between informal conversational interview e.g. unstructured interview, semi-structured interview and structured interview (Gray 2004b; Patton 2002a). They all have their strengths and weaknesses as described in Table 7.5. An interview can be conducted in
a form of one to one in-person, or through telephone communication, or in a group (Creswell 2003; Fontana & Frey 2005).

The research employed semi-structured interviews since the researcher had an overarching topic, which was how hospitality managers learned. As Lee (1999) commented this method was preferred when there was a specific topic with targeted issues. Furthermore, the method permitted open-ended questions, thus rich data could be obtained while pursuing the targeted issues e.g. the four elements of learning as stated above. It provided the freedom for the interviewer to pursue matters as circumstances dictate an issue.

An interview guide was developed, as outlined in Table 7.6. During the first interview phase, the focus was put on management practice. This would enable the researcher and interviewee to identify and focus on one core responsibility so as to illuminate knowledge and skills required to fulfil the responsibility e.g. the content of learning. The research was then extended to explore participants’ experience of learning the knowledge and skills (phase two of the interview). The areas that the researcher endeavoured to cover include learner-centred factors that may influence their learning, the environment of learning and the process of learning. During the third phase of the process, a list of learning technology applications (see Annex D) was provided as prompts to participants to further identify some of the tools they had used. They were then encouraged to talk about the role of technologies in their learning.

After signing a participant consent form (Annex B), face-to-face semi-structured interview was conducted with each participating manager in his/her workplace. All interviews were tape recorded. Each of them took on average forty-five minutes to complete.

7.5 The Pilot

A pilot study was conducted in September 2007. Its main purpose was to test the proposed methods of observation and interview and through this process to build up the researcher’s confidence and ability in using these techniques. Among five participants in the pilot study, three previously held a managerial position in the hospitality industry. The researcher followed the proposed interview guide (Table 7.6) and conducted interviews with them. The
way in which the interview questions were given was considered logical and appropriate. The participants felt that the questions were clear. They also raised an issue that a working day of a General Catering Manager is less typical than that of a General Manager in a hotel. This, however, can be addressed by asking participating managers to describe what they did yesterday or what they are going to do today. The interview guide was further tested with two more hotel General Managers as described below.

The other two participants are General Managers of a budget hotel chain. The researcher followed them for one day each to observe their work and interviewed them at the end of the day. When entering their offices, the researcher drew a map illustrating the layout of their working environment. Field notes also recorded what was displayed on their notice board, such as "The Indicators of Performance" which cover the areas of people, customer, operations management that the General Manager is responsible for.

Table 7.6 Interview Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am interested in how you learn about managing a hospitality business. First of all, I would like to know about your career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. How long have you been with this company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How long have you been in this position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have you previously had a managerial role?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (if yes) In what area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (if no) How do you come to this position?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 1 - Managerial work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. What is the core responsibility, or responsibilities, of your current position?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If I followed you through a typical day, what would I see you doing? (applicable to managers who have not been observed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Let us focus on the responsibility of ___. What tasks are significant?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probe: Would you elaborate on one of these tasks?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We have talked about a specific responsibility and activities involved. Now, I want to ask you some questions about learning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 2 - Learning experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. With regard to this area of responsibility, how have you learned about it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What are you doing now to increase your understanding of this area?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probe: Learner-centred factors influencing the learning, issues around the learning context, issues around the learning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Overall, how do you view the learning experience?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transition: (no mention of the use of ICT applications)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have told me about one of your learning experiences. Now, I would like to ask you about learning through technologies. Here is a list of technologies used in learning, is there any of them of usef u1 to you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase 3 - eLearning experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Please describe how the technology was used in your learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. What do you think of the effectiveness of the tool in facilitating your learning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. How do you see the role that technologies could play to facilitate hospitality managers' professional development in the future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. Is there anything else you would like to contribute?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the context, the researcher also observed their work activities and behaviours. One of them had a weekly schedule displayed next to her computer. She expressed that by putting it there she could view it very easily so that she could come back to the plan from dealing with other unexpected events. During the period of observation, the researcher witnessed that the managers’ work was constantly interrupted by many other trivial things while they tried to pursue a specific task, such as working on the payroll. Both the accounts provided by the managers and the researcher’s observation correspond what the literature suggested that managers are in a permanent interrupt mode and the pattern of their work is characterised by brevity and superficiality.

The conclusion of the pilot study was that the use of observation enabled the researcher to gain a better understanding of hospitality managers’ work linking management theories with management practice. This enabled the researcher to raise issues concerned with their learning experience embedded in their working activities later in the interviews in a more meaningful manner. Moreover, the researcher felt that knowledge about their working environment was important to the understanding of the means that hospitality managers took for their personal development. To capture such information more accurately and effectively photos may be superior to drawings. Hence, in the main research, the researcher would ask participating managers for their permission to take photos of their offices and premises.

### 7.6 Data Collection

Thanks to the Institute of Hospitality which established initial contacts with selected organisations to encourage participation in the research. Following the successful contacts, formal introduction letters (see Annex A for a sample) were sent to the regional Human Resource Directors to seek their assistance. They provided the job descriptions for General Manager and recommended business units managers who met the set criteria and were willing to participate in the research. Contacts with individual participating managers were made to schedule meetings. Key interview questions were sent to them prior to the meetings (Annex A). Initially, the minimum number of GMs to study within each organisation was set five. The recruitment of subjects with contract catering organisations
went smoothly. However, there had been some difficulties with hotel companies. The Institute of Hospitality made the second contact with companies A and H for their assistance in the research. Finally, seven GMs of company H and four GMs of company A were willing to participate. The data collection process started in September 2007 and finished in May 2008. Table 7.7 illustrates the operationalisation of the research design. Further explanation of this is provided in the following texts.

### Table 7.7 The Operationalisation of The Research Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Codes</th>
<th>Number of Observation</th>
<th>Number of Interview</th>
<th>Number of Job Description</th>
<th>Number of CV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel company A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Director V</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMs A, B, K &amp; L</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel company H</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Director V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMs E, F, N, O, P, T &amp; U</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract catering company C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Director W</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMs C, D, I, J &amp; M</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract catering company S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Director X</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMs G, H, Q, R &amp; S</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Originally, it was planned that each observation needed to be completed in two days. It was thought that one day of observation may not be long enough to gain the understanding of management in the practical world and over two days of shadowing were not necessary. After the first two-day observation exercise with a GM of organisation C, the researcher felt that one day of shadowing was adequate. It was because on the first day of observation, the researcher followed the GM around seeing how he interacted with others and activities he carried out. As a result of this, she was able to link her theoretical understanding of management with practice and thus understand the meaning of managing a business in the real business environment.

During that process the participant talked to the researcher actively, explaining what he was doing, why and how. The content was fruitful, concerning not only managerial activities but also his learning. At the end of the day, the researcher was able to gather a rich picture of the GM's work and some data about his learning. In contrast, the second day of observation produced very limited data. It was also felt that observation was not a very good tool in gaining an insight into how he saw learning because conversation was often interrupted by
working activities. Therefore, the researcher decided to spend only one day to observe a GM's work.

A further three observations with Catering General Managers were performed, which was followed by three observations with hotel GMs. All findings were consistent, reaching data saturation (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Lincoln & Guba 1985). Thus, the researcher stopped using the technique. During the process of shadowing the managers interacted with the researcher actively and provided rich and wealthy data about their work. Hence, a good understanding of managing business in the practice was achieved. In other words, the research objective 1 was partially addressed.

With regard to the interviews, it was considered that the interview guide (Table 7.6) was useful in directing the conversation. The overall sequence of questioning as given in the guide was followed. However, the researcher had to treat each interview differently, adapting herself to each individual manager and the situation. In some cases, a few of interview questions were not asked whereas in other cases new questions were asked. For example, when interviewing the manager who the researcher had shadowed for two days, the researcher had to skip questions 1-5 in Table 7.6 because the manager had told the researcher about his previous experience in management during the observation process. Questions 11 and 13 (Table 7.6) were not asked in all interviews either as when the participants described their learning experiences they often provided the information.

In other cases, new interview questions were raised as a result of the conversation with the participants during observation. For example, in the process of shadowing a participant’s work, the manager mentioned that he believed that there was reactivity and proactivity in his job. As this is considered as a very interesting point, the researcher asked the manager to explain what he meant by that in the interview.

After the first interview, it was felt that a new tool was needed to help the participants to answer questions 9 and 12 (see Table 7.6). It was witnessed that the first interviewee experienced some difficulty at the beginning, in describing where a learning experience started, what happened and where it ended. Therefore, in the following interview, the participant was invited to draw a map to describe what happened, what was his involvement and who else was involved in that experience and then explain the map during
the interview. The drawing provided a visual evidence of how he linked events occurring at a particular time to other events taking place at other times.

This approach has many advantages. It helped him to recall his memory of a learning experience during the interview and to highlight priorities and key factors. Unlike interviews, ideas captured visually at the time allowed him to revise and build his explanation as he talked. Moreover, the researcher recognises that learning is a process of shared interaction. The interview was a learning process in itself for the participant and the researcher. Recorded conversation and drawings offered a way to capture concepts and ideas developed in the shared interactions.

However, the downside of this technique was that the participant tended to focus on concrete activities and the sequence of what he did, which led to generating superficial data thus running a risk of losing in-depth data of what the manager felt about learning. Therefore, interviews were still considered as a crucial tool in the process of data collection whereas drawing of a learning experience was only used as a supplemental method to facilitate the interview process. As such, five GMs were invited to produce a drawing whereby the researcher felt there was a need to use this method to encourage them to focus on their learning experience.

After the first six interviews (three interviews with hotel GMs and three with contract catering GMs), a number of key themes and codes were identified. A working framework was also created (see Chapter 8). To ensure that data saturation was reached, further two interviews (one with hotel GM and one with contract catering GM) were examined in detail. It was found that the key themes remained unchanged and that a few new codes were created but they all linked to the identified themes. The latter point mirrors comments from Guest et al (2006): "The connections among the codes that eventually made up the overarching themes, however, may not have been apparent in the early stages of analysis" (pp78). Thus, it appeared that six interviews were sufficient to reach data saturation, within which meaningful themes, codes and interpretations could be developed. This claim actually echoes similar recommendations made by other researchers, such as Morse (1994) and Nielsen and Landauer (1993), both of which were cited in Guest et al (2006).
The research endeavours to find out how hospitality managers learn and how their learning may be facilitated by ICT applications. To achieve this, the inquirer studied the accounts of learning experience given by the participating hospitality managers. The interest was put on the themes that constituted a learning experience. The researcher wanted to understand what happened in that managerial learning experience, how things occurred and how they think of the learning experience.

Bearing this in mind, a number of qualitative data analysis methods were evaluated for suitability for the research. Conversation analysis and discourse analysis (DA) are two methods, among many others, for analysing text such as interview descriptions. Conversation analysis can be used to investigate the structure and process of social interaction between humans (Peräkylä 2005). Its focus is on the order, organisation, orderliness of talk-in-interaction (Have 1999; Psathas 1995). Hence, it was considered not appropriate for the study.

Among various forms of DA (Peräkylä 2005; Potter & Wetherell 1994), there is an approach which involves the workings of a set of discourses so that institutions, practices and individual can be understood. A principal aim of DA is to reveal the operation of processes how people construct their discourse (Potter & Wetherell 1987). Since the focus of the present research is not on constructive processes of discourse associated with learning, DA was not employed for the study.

Content analysis is a technique for “making replicative and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff 1980, pp21). It involves the making of inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics within data (Psathas 1995; Weber 1990). The characteristics (classes or categories) are created before the data can be analysed; therefore, content analysis is deductive in character. Grounded theory, on the other hand, is inductive, in that there is no a priori criteria assumed (Gray 2004b). Both methods were not considered suitable for the research either. Content analysis gives little space for creating new themes and ideas. Grounded theory works better in generating a new theory, but this is not the intention of this research.
Framework analysis was considered suitable because it is open to change, addition and amendment throughout the analytic process (Ritchie & Spencer 1994). It permitted the research to take a mix of inductive and deductive approach to data and to move back and forth between different levels of abstraction without losing sight of the raw data. Framework analysis enables between- and within-case analysis (Ritchie et al 1994). The technique is a matrix-based approach to qualitative data analysis (Llewellyn, McGurk, & Weinman 2005). Other features of the method include:

- Grounded in the original accounts and observations;
- Allowing methodical treatment of all similar units of analysis;
- Allowing a full review of the material;
- Enabling easy retrieval;
- The analytic process and the interpretation derived from data can be viewed and judged by others. (Ritchie et al 1994)

### 7.8 Research Evaluation

In a constructivist paradigm, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity (Denzin et al 2005; Guba & Lincoln 1989) because of the fundamental difference of their philosophical assumptions. Similar to internal validity, credibility is about establishing the match between the constructed realities of respondents and those realities as represented by the inquirer. Guba et al (1989) suggested some techniques to increase credibility, such as member checks. To establish the credibility of the research, the inquirer had transcriptions of interview data checked by the participants for accuracy.

Construct validity was established by applying data triangulation technique (Yin 2003). Triangulation refers to the “practice of establishing the exact position of a given object by taking readings or measurements from multiple viewpoints” (Clarke & Dawson 1999, pp86). There are four types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory and methods triangulation (Flick 2004; Patton 1987). This research collected data from job descriptions, observations and interviews. By using multiple sources of evidence, correct operational measures for the concepts being studied were established and converging lines of inquiry were developed.
Transferability can be considered as parallel to external validity or generalisability. "In the constructivist paradigm, external validity is replaced by an empirical process for checking the degree of similarity between sending and receiving contexts" (Guba et al. 1989, pp. 241). They suggested that transferability can be established by providing thick description e.g. an extensive and careful description of the time, the place, the context in which hypotheses were found to be salient. However, Payne et al. (2005) pointed out that this only deals with the sending end. They concluded that in spite of increasing efforts in engaging in generalisability through using a variety of qualitative methods, generalisability remains insufficiently sensitised in qualitative research.

Likewise, this research also faces the issue of generalisability given its qualitative nature of approach. Although generalising findings to the population is not the primary goal of the study, the researcher is confident that the study provides an insight into how sampled hospitality general managers of leading hospitality organisations learn based on in-depth study of information-rich cases, hence, findings can be generalised to some extent.

Dependability is parallel to the reliability criterion in a conventional paradigm, defined as a systematic process systematically followed (Patton 2002b). It can be established by using a dependability audit, which is a technique for documenting the logic of process and method decisions. Yin (2003) suggested that in case study, using case study protocol and developing case study database are tactics to establish reliability. Following Yin's suggestion, the researcher has developed a procedure for approaching sampled organisations as outlined above. A database was developed by using the NVivo software programme to ensure the dependability of the study, as well as to facilitate data analysis.

Confirmability is concerned with assuring that findings are rooted in the data themselves, e.g. constructions, assertions and facts can be tracked to their sources. The logic used to develop the interpretations needs to be evident in the narrative of a case study (Guba et al. 1989). The confirmability audit is the usual technique for confirming data and interpretations. It shows the connections between data and the researcher's interpretations (Gray 2004b). As mentioned above, the research employed the framework analysis approach to analyse data. Analytical actions were recorded in NVivo meaning that any changes to codes, coding and memos in relation to data could be tracked.
7.9 Limitations

In addition to the limitation of purposive sampling as stated above, the research has limitations concerned with data. It studies learning experiences which are not directly available to public view; therefore data gathered need to consist of self-reports of participants' own experience as evidence. Individuals are rarely able to give full explanation of their actions but accounts about what they did and why (Denzin & Lincoln 1998). As such, the limitation of self-reported data is that the data depends on the participants' ability to reflectively understand aspects of their own experience and to communicate what they discern effectively (Polkinghome 2005).

7.10 Summary

Essentially, a researcher's ontological stance influences his/her epistemological position which in turn determines his/her methodological approach. As demonstrated in this chapter, the researcher holds the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the research paradigm of constructivism and employs a qualitative approach. The nature of a research approach is informed by the combination of three elements of inquiry namely alternative knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry and methods (Creswell 2003). It can be quantitative, qualitative or a mix of both. Creswell (2003) pointed out that a quantitative research aims to develop knowledge by identifying variables, testing hypothesis and theories, which reflects the stances of positivism and post-positivism. By contrast, knowledge claims in a qualitative inquiry are made based primarily on constructivist, participatory perspectives or both.

Taking a qualitative approach, the inquiry aims to describe and explain how hospitality managers learn and explore the role of technologies in their learning as it is understood in their lives. Purposive and iterative strategies are employed to select information-rich cases for in-depth study. Qualitative data are gathered in the form of spoken and written language rather than in the form of numbers via interviews, observations and documentations. The research objective 1 was partially achieved through observing the work of seven participants. All the data are transformed into written text for analytic use. The next chapter will explain the steps undertook to make sense of the data.
Chapter 8
Analytical Process

8.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the process of how data were handled and analysed using the framework analysis method. It is part of the research design. Indeed, Coffey and Atkinson (1996, pp6) commented that "The process of analysis should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather, it is a reflexive activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection and so forth" and that it needed to be methodical, scholarly and intellectually rigorous. The process of analysis is broken down differently by various authors. For instance, Huberman and Miles (1994) defined data analysis as consisting of three linked sub-processes: 1) data reduction, 2) data display and 3) drawing conclusion and verification. Likewise, Dey (1993) stated the analytical steps of describing, classifying and connecting. To Wolcott (1994), data analysis involved description, analysis and interpretation.

Essentially, the process of analysis has two perspectives which are data handling and imaginative reconstruction of meaning from the data. Hence, an effort is made in this chapter to report how data were managed and how data were interrogated, using the framework analysis method, to derive meanings to meet set research objectives. Within the context of the hospitality industry, the research objectives were set as below:

- Objective 1: To understand the participants' perception of learning about managing the business;
- Objective 2: To explore the nature and dynamics of managerial learning;
- Objective 3: To compare and contrast managerial learning across cases;
- Objective 4: To find patterns between managerial learning, knowledge and the use of technology;
- Objective 5: To explore perceived effectiveness of technology in their learning;
- Objective 6: To develop explanations of how hospitality managers learn to manage the business.
The chapter will first describe how various forms of data collected were organised and transformed, prior to applying the framework analysis method. It will then report how data were investigated at each stage of the framework and explain why and how various tactics were employed to make sense of the data.

8.2 Preparing Data for Analysis

Data collected from the field study consisted of four job descriptions for General Manager, seven field observation notes, twenty-five interview audio recordings, twenty-one Curriculum Vitae (CV) of interviewed General Managers and five drawings of learning experience. The audio recordings included twenty-one interviews with General Managers and four interviews with Human Resource Directors. In order to analyse the data by using the framework analysis method, non-textual data needed to be transformed to text. Hence, the interview recordings were transcribed by using a voice recognition software programme. Drawings were summarised in words, which were supplemented by the participants' explanations recorded in the audio files.

All data were then imported to NVivo version seven, a qualitative analysis software programme, and managed within it. Twenty-five cases were created and linked to relevant documents in NVivo. That is, each GM case was linked to the corresponding interview transcript, the job description for his/her position, his/her CV, the field note if it was collected and the drawing summary if the participant had produced a drawing. For each case of HR Director, there was only one interview transcript. The attribute function in NVivo was used to record factual information about the individual GMs, including age range, gender, the highest educational attainment, position, business unit, organisation and the type of business. The data were extracted from their CVs. Having transformed data to text, imported all materials to NVivo and linked relevant documents together, data could then be analysed by using the framework analysis approach.
8.3 The Framework Analysis Approach

The framework analysis technique has been widely used in qualitative research (Llewellyn et al 2005; Ritchie et al 1994; Ritchie, Spencer, & O'Connor 2003). It involves a number of distinct but highly interconnected stages namely familiarization, identifying a thematic framework, indexing, charting, mapping and interpretation (Ritchie et al 2003). The following section describes the process of developing a conceptual structure, or a thematic framework, within which material can be filtered and sorted. How the researcher explored, examined and interpreted data are also reported.

8.3.1 Familiarisation

Familiarisation is a crucial activity at the start of analysis as this process is akin to building the foundation of a conceptual structure. As Ritchie et al (2003) noted it was not necessary to include the entire data set in the familiarisation process. Eight interview transcripts (two cases from each sampled organisation) were selected for this first step of analysis. It was believed that this selection of cases would bring up the commonality as well as diversity of managerial learning across the hotel and contract catering sectors. The transcripts were analysed at a paragraph level by considering "what is the main theme in this passage?"

8.3.2 Identifying a Thematic Framework

A thematic framework was identified based on a combination of a priori issues, emergent themes and recurring experiences. As can be seen in Table 8.1, it had a hierarchical structure of main themes, first-level sub-themes such as “1.6 Social Context Awareness” and second-level sub-themes such as “2.2.5 Managing Service Quality”. Data needs to be categorised in order to give meaning (Dey 1993). These themes were identified through interacting with data in a number of ways, including:

- taking both inductive and deductive approaches,
- emerging similar analytical categories and grouping connected ones and
- creating vivo codes.

The framework was transformed from its initial form (see Annex E) which had been developed during the process of familiarising the selected transcripts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Learner (Rogers 2002, Goldstain 1993)</td>
<td>1.1 Educational Background 1.5 Preferred Way of Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Managerial Responsibilities (the interview guide) 1.6 Social Context Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Motivation to Learn 1.7 Working Background (the interview guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Perception of Learning (the interview guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Learning Content (Boud 2001)</td>
<td>2.1 Predominantly Predictable-Perpetual-Programmable (the conceptual framework of managerial work in Chapter 3) 2.25 Managing Service Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.1 Company Policies and Procedures 2.26 Maximising Revenues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.2 Dealing with Events 2.27 Product and Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.3 Financial Planning and Control 2.28 Sales and Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.4 Property Management System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.1.5 Regulations and Legislations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 Predominantly Variable-Volatile-Variety (the conceptual framework of managerial work in Chapter 3) 2.3 Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.1 Business Environment 2.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.2 Dealing with Stakeholders 2.3.2 Foreign Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.3 Local Unit Knowledge 2.3.3 Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2.4 Managing Facilities 2.3.4 Micro-management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.5 Time Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2 Formalised &amp; Less Contextualised (Marsick et al 1990, Mumford 1997 &amp; Rogers 2002) 3.5 Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.3 Incidental (Marsick et al 1990, Mumford 1997 &amp; Rogers 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Learning Process (various authors, see the cell on the right)</td>
<td>4.1 Constructivist (Kelly 1955, Rahman 1993) 4.4 Social and Situated (Vygotsky 1978, Lave &amp; Wenger 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2 Experiential (Freire 1972, Kolb 1984 &amp; Schön 1983) 4.5 Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 Humanist (Rogers 2002, Megginson &amp; Whitaker 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Technology (the interview guide)</td>
<td>5.1 Perceived Future of Technology (the interview guide) 5.3 Technology Application Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.2 Technological Perceptions (the interview guide) 5.4 The Use of Technology (the interview guide)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.3.2.1 Inductive and Deductive Approaches

Referring back to the interview guide (Table 7.6) an intention was made to find out issues around five aspects as underlined below:

1. Information about the participant / learner;
2. His/her learning experience including what was learned (learning content), where it was learned (learning context) and how it was learned (learning process);
3. The role of technology in learning.

Not surprisingly, when examining the selected transcripts at the paragraph level, themes that were identified very much reflected these a priori issues. Therefore, 5 analytical categories were created as main themes in NVivo. As illustrated in Table 8.1, they were “1 Learner”, “2 Learning Content”, “3 Learning Context”, “4 Learning Process” and “5 Technology”. Paragraphs were then labelled with these categories accordingly in the NVivo software programme.

Having created the main themes deductively and linked them with corresponding paragraphs within NVivo, the selected transcripts were further examined to identify sub-themes. Because they were managed using the computer software programme, it was very easy to retrieve all passages across all the transcripts that had been linked to, for example “1 Learner”. These targeted paragraphs were studied by considering “what are the key things that this paragraph is telling me?” and “what is being said repeatedly across these cases?”. Subsequently, over 40 sub-themes were created inductively, some of which appeared in only 1 or 2 transcripts. This made conceptualising ideas a challenge. Hence, it was felt that there was a need to bring in more general, conceptually specified concepts to organise these fragmented sub-categories.

One of the advantages of framework analysis is that it allows researchers to take both top-down and bottom-up approaches to make sense of qualitative data (Ritchie et al 2003). Huberman and Miles (1994) also stated that taking both inductive and deductive methods to create analytical categories was valid and potentially useful. Indeed, using the two approaches simultaneously has proved to be very helpful. For example, there initially were 18 inductively created sub-themes under “2 Learning Content”. They appeared to be mutually exclusive, which raised a question of “So what?”. However, when the theoretical concepts of manager’s job (e.g. predictability-perpetuity-programmability and variability-
volatility-variety) were included as first-level sub-themes, a new way of thinking was encouraged: What is beneath, for example, “2.2.6 Maximising Revenues”? What common or different characteristics does it have compared to other items? Therefore, those that were considered as being mainly foreseeable and procedural in nature were put under the first-level of sub-theme “2.1 Predominantly Predictable-Perpetual-Programmable”, such as “2.1.1 Company Policies and Procedures” and “2.1.3 Financial Planning and Control”. Those that were thought to be dynamic in nature were grouped under “2.2. Predominantly Variable-Volatile-Variety”, for instance “2.2.2 Dealing with Stakeholders”.

The advantage of using both inductive and deductive approaches was also seen in other aspects. Initially, “4 Learning Process” held all passages indicating the process of learning, which were often large chunks of text. After including the concepts of various forms of learning e.g. “4.1 Constructivist”, “4.2 Experiential”, “4.3 Humanist” and “4.4 Social and Situated”, it was made possible to break down a large amount of passages according to the main characteristics of the process. It was the same to the “3 Learning Context” category. It was believed that breaking down large chunks of text in a more meaningful way would facilitate more confined interrogation of data later on. It was felt that these conceptually specified sub-categories have indeed assisted the conceptualisation of data because they were more general and consequently could be applied in almost all selected cases in a more consistent manner.

8.3.2.2 Emerging and Grouping

Similar categories were merged and/or grouped. This was already elaborated above with sub-themes of “2 Learning Content”. Further examples of merging and grouping were with the sub-themes of “2.3.2 Foreign Languages”, “5.1 Technological Perception” and “2.2.2 Dealing with Stakeholders”. As can be seen in Annex E, there had been a second-level sub-category of “2.3.2 French Language” and one of “2.3.3 Spanish Language”. They were merged and named “2.3.2 Foreign Languages”.

In the initial framework (see Annex E), there were a sub-theme named “1.2 Emotion-Technology” and one named “5.1 Perceived Future of Technology”. The former had been set up to capture the GMs’ emotional views on information and communication technology application whereas the latter was to catch their outlook of the future role of technology. Both categories could be indeed seen as part of their perception of technology. Hence, they
were merged and grouped under the theme of "5.1 Technological Perception" as outlined in Table 8.1.

Similarly, there had been sub-themes of "2.2.2 Dealing with Suppliers", "2.2.3 Dealing with Customers", "2.2.4 Dealing with the Head Office" and "2.2.5 Dealing with Staff" (see Annex E). They all had one thing in common which was the GM interacting with people around him/her. Thus, they were grouped together and named "2.2.2 Dealing with Stakeholders".

8.3.2.3 Creating Vivo Codes

Analytical thinking could be extracted and ceased to be grounded in the data if concepts from existing literature or broader social theories were imposed at the early stage of analysis (Ritchie et al. 2003). Therefore, some sub-themes were labelled by using participants' own words e.g. vivo codes (Strauss & Corbin 1998b) to stay close to the data. Some examples of vivo code were "2.1.2 Dealing with Events", "2.3.3 Loyalty", "2.3.4 Micro-management" and "2.3.5 Time Management".

8.3.3 Indexing

Indexing is a process whereby the thematic framework is systematically applied to the entire textual data set. It is different from coding which is a process of capturing dimensions and properties of categories (Strauss et al. 1998a; Strauss et al. 1998b). Indexing shows which theme or concept is repeatedly mentioned in the data (Ritchie et al. 2003), which was carried out with the selected 8 transcripts during the construction of the framework.

Prior to assigning the created analytical categories to the entire data set in NVivo, the work of indexing with the selected 8 transcripts was reviewed by an experienced researcher external to this project. The purpose of this exercise was to seek professional comments on the appropriateness of use of the themes on data (see Annex H). The themes and structure of the framework were not reviewed in this process because it was considered not appropriate. As explained above, the main themes and many sub-themes were arrived at based on a range of a priori issues. Some first-level sub-themes were theoretical concepts emerged from literature. Given that the external researcher who reviewed the work had not read through the literature, it would be impossible for her to make judgement on the
framework structure and those conceptually specified concepts. The following documents were provided for the review:

- The Thematic Framework as outlined in Table 8.1;
- The definitions of all themes (see Annex F);
- Indexing Reports (an example is provided in Annex G);
- The selected interview transcripts.

### 8.3.4 Charting

Charting involves creation of thematic charts and summarising and synthesising the original data in the charts (Ritchie et al 1994). A thematic chart provides a visual form of displaying reduced and summarised data about one participant by themes and categories. Hence, twenty-five charts were created. These charts were then gathered together to build an accumulative thematic chart, in which the main themes and their associated sub-themes were displayed in separate rows, each participant was allocated a column and each piece of tagged data was included in the chart by its category and the participant. The thematic chart provided a ground from which data would be understood and interpreted. Indeed, as Huberman and Miles (1994, pp429) cited data display was an “organized, compressed assembly of information and that it should be performed in a way that permitted conclusion drawing and / or action taking”. Due to the space limitation here, only an extract from the accumulative thematic chart is presented here to exemplify how data was displayed (see Table 8.2).

Charting is also a process of summarising the key points of data (see Table 8.2). Reducing data was carried out systematically by examining all the content that had been labelled with a specific theme. That is, reading the chart horizontally and investigating one theme at a time across all the cases. In doing so, commonality became evident, but so did disagreement. This has certainly facilitated the process of meeting one of the research objectives, which was Objective 3: To compare and contrast managerial learning across cases.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Manager D</th>
<th>Manager H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Educational Background</td>
<td>The majority of the GMs started their working life straightaway after school. Some GMs hold a degree or a postgraduate qualification in hospitality management.</td>
<td>transcript: I left school with A level. That was years ago. field notes &amp; CV He comes from cheffing. As said in his CV, he was in a position as the Executive Chef for five years. He has been in the Deputy GM position for six years at a contract catering unit that serves up to three thousand covers with a turnover of £5m per year as stated in his CV.</td>
<td>transcript: I was in a Management School in France for four years, doing a Master of management in hotel business. That is where I started. And then working for many restaurants and hotels for many years before I knew what facility was. I didn't have a clue what world hospitality was. My background is hotels and restaurants management. field notes and CV He gained his qualification of hotel and restaurant management in Lyon, France. At the interview, he told me that he spent 4 years to doing Master of management in hotel business, although in his CV it was only 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Managerial Responsibilities</td>
<td>GMs have many managerial responsibilities, but the core is to meet financial targets through delivering operations, in which managing people is key.</td>
<td>field notes: He stays close very much to the operation. He explained to me that he would go around and check everything is functioning properly before events, from the back-of-house to the front-of-house.</td>
<td>transcript: The day-to-day responsibility of bringing in business. I am in charge of the account. I am in charge of all the financial side of the business. I am in charge of 11 people. job description S Manage and control the catering services for the client to the agreed specification and to the agreed performance, qualitative and financial targets.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8.2 Extract from the Accumulative Thematic Chart (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Manager D</th>
<th>Manager H</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Learner</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Motivation</td>
<td>Often GMs realise there is a need to learn in order to do their jobs.</td>
<td>transcript: So I had to</td>
<td>transcript: I had one week to change everything. If &quot;no&quot;, I would lose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometime, they are put in a learning situation by their organisations.</td>
<td>pick up the things I didn't</td>
<td>my contract. There was a lot of pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>know very quickly so to</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>be able to then assist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>them. Unless it is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>something really</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>important, I wouldn't be</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>bothered with it because</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>it is not relevant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Perception of Learning</td>
<td>Learning is about learning something. It can take many forms. People</td>
<td>transcript: Learning is</td>
<td>transcript: You learn to use things every day. There is a challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>learn every day. Learning about managing hospitality business is mainly</td>
<td>about getting as much as</td>
<td>that you need to solve. Those challenges make you to learn something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a product of experiencing work over time.</td>
<td>information about</td>
<td>You know, With experience you find out you have got less and less...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>everything, so it can be</td>
<td>because you know what you are dealing with and more quickly and more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>big.</td>
<td>efficiently. So you are in a better position than before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Preferred Way of</td>
<td>GMs prefer learning through acting and experiencing. When reading, they</td>
<td>transcript: Probably when</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>prefer to have material printed out on paper.</td>
<td>I do learning [sic], I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>prefer to use hard copy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Social Context</td>
<td>Being a GM does not mean that learning stops. They have to keep</td>
<td>transcript: To be honest</td>
<td>transcript: I like changes but some do not. You have to push yourself,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness</td>
<td>learning to improve themselves.</td>
<td>to you, I do prefer... I</td>
<td>you need to say: whatever I am doing, I will do it to the end. Never give</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>am a bit old-fashioned.</td>
<td>it up before you have tried.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ritchie et al (1994, pp231) claimed that "The key question in charting is 'how do I summarise the content to best retain the context and essence of the point and without losing the language or voice of the respondent?' " The richness of data may be lost in over-condensed summary whereas including too much data may indicate being bogged down in the raw data, thus slowing down analytical thinking. To keep the appropriate balance between summarising and transcribing pieces of data, the following criteria were set:

- To retain key terms and expressions as much as possible from the own language of participants;
- To keep interpretation to a minimum at this stage;
- Not to dismiss material that seems to be irrelevant as it may be clues later on in the interpretive stage of data analysis.

8.3.5 Mapping and Interpretation

During the mapping and interpretation process, meanings were drawn and explanations were sought. Wolcott (1994, pp36) claimed that interpretation was the threshold in thinking and writing and was the stage "at which the researcher transcends factual data and cautious analysis and begins to probe into what is to be made of them.” The imaginative work of interpretation can be carried out by employing a variety of different tactics, such as looking for comparative and contrasting cases and exploring themes, patterns and regularities (Huberman & Miles 1994; Ryan & Bernard 2000). Ritchie et al (1994) talked about creating explanatory concepts, using theoretical frameworks, using common sense and inferring an underlying logic to develop explanations.

In the process of mapping and interpretation, a descriptive analysis was performed followed by an associative analysis. The main purpose of the descriptive analysis was to identify the properties of each theme so that data could be displayed in a way that was conceptually pure. The descriptive analysis involved 3 steps: identifying dimensions, refining categories and classifying data as suggested by Ritchie et al (2003). Table 8.3 showed the descriptive analysis on “4 Learning Process”. First of all, charted data that were labelled with the themes were interrogated across all cases e.g. examining the accumulative thematic chart horizontally row by row, throughout all the columns.
Data were then abstracted from the substantive content. They were the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data, known as the unit of coding (Boyatzis 1998). They were maintained close to the original form, as exemplified in the second column in Table 8.3. This was because, as Ritchie et al (2003, pp238) expressed, "it will not necessarily be clear at this stage how the more abstract classification will be constructed and it is important that the initial elements can be seen". The theme, in this case "4 Learning Process", was refined as a result of defining its elements. In the third step, more distinctive, summative and theoretical categories were created and abstracted data were assigned to them accordingly in NVivo. As shown in Table 8.3, some of the classes were information searching, testing and information transformation. The categories were then assigned to the data that have moved beyond the original transcripts. So data were interpreted in a more conceptual way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Charted in Row</th>
<th>Elements / Dimensions Identified</th>
<th>Categories / Classes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 Learning Process</td>
<td>The key thing you look at [is] what your competitors are doing. (4.4 Social and Situated)</td>
<td>Information searching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can tell whether they are busy, what rate they are selling at. (4.1 Constructivist)</td>
<td>Information transformation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You know the history. We’ve got four or five years of history for that exact day. (4.2 Experiential)</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Is this third Wednesday in July any different to those last five years? Is there a different event in the town? (4.2 Experiential)</td>
<td>Reflective thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If we’ve always been full [over the] last five years and it is the same this year, we are going to be full. (4.2 Experiential)</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We also monitor our pick up constantly and look, okay we’ve got 50 rooms to sell, however it is picked up very slowly. Our competitors are still selling. They’ve got lots of rooms to sell because we can tell by their pricing. (4.1 Constructivist, 4.2 Experiential &amp; 4.4 Social and Situated)</td>
<td>Testing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* case number-paragraph number in the transcript

Table 8.3 Extract of Descriptive Analysis
Following the process described above, each row was interrogated until there was nothing of any central part left to describe or classify. Developed categories included recurrent descriptors and/or those mentioned only once but still contributed to the full set of the elements of the category. This is because in descriptive mapping, it is the itemised content that matters although the frequency of an item's occurrence has relevance in conveying the content of the data (Ritchie et al 2003). For instance, one of the classes of “1.5 Perception of Learning” was “knowing the purpose of mechanism use”, which was only mentioned by Manager F. By carrying out the descriptive analysis, research objective 2 was addressed, which was to explore the nature and dynamics of managerial learning.

"Associative analysis is a lucrative form of qualitative data investigation as it almost invariable brings a deeper understanding of the subject under review” (Ritchie et al 2003, pp48). It involves detecting patterns of association and developing explanation. To meet research objectives 2 and 4, the following approaches were taken to search for associations:

- Examining the accumulative thematic chart vertically;
- Using the query function within NVivo (A screen shot of running a query is provided in Annex I);
- Using the attributes function in NVivo;
- Developing models (A screen shot of an associate model is provided in Annex I).

By examining the chart vertically, associations were detected at the individual case level. Similar and different linkages between categories were identified by reading down charted data for each individual case. For example, it was detected that in 4 cases, participants mentioned about the contribution of “learning activities” in relation to “learning outcome”. This association was noted 6 times across the whole data set, which indicated a level of reoccurrence. The detected association would contribute to a better understanding of the meaning of managerial learning.

Research objective 4 was set to find relationships between managerial learning, knowledge and the use of technology. It would be very challenging to do this by just reading through the thematic chart due to its size and the amount of charted data. The alternative was to examining the whole data set in NVivo by using its query function. Coding queries were used to find data that had been coded at for instance “blogs” within passages coded at “learning process”. The query results were then examined to identify relationships.
The attributes function in NVivo was used in order to construct a central chart, which "displays a mixture of demographic data and classifications developed during the descriptive stage of analysis" (Pitchie et al 2003, pp250). They maintained that such a central chart was extremely helpful for detecting patterns of association and for generating a higher level of typology. A range of attributes were set up and assigned to individual cases, such as age range and gender. Since each case was linked to themes, categories and relationships which were managed as nodes in NVivo, it was not difficult to create the central chart.

A model is a set of abstract constructs and the relationships among them (Bulmer 1979). It is a visual display which is an important part of qualitative analysis (Ryan et al 2000). Themes, sub-themes, categories and relationships were created and managed within NVivo. This enabled the creation of various models to capture and present the complex and dynamic nature of the subject under study, which again would be presented and discussed in the following chapters.

8.4 Summary

This chapter has described how data were handled, managed and analysed. Non-textual materials were converted to text, including interview audio recordings and participants' drawings of their learning experiences. All textual data were imported to NVivo and managed within the programme. Data were analysed by following the procedure of framework analysis (Ritchie et al 1994; Ritchie et al 2003). The chapter has provided an account on how data were interrogated manually and by using NVivo to address set research objectives. In the descriptive analysis, data charted in the thematic chart were examined horizontally e.g. by each individual theme across all cases. In the associative analysis, data were investigated vertically e.g. case by case to identify relationships between concepts within each case. The query function of NVivo was employed to identify associations between concepts that are scattered in the chart.

By undergoing the steps of framework analysis as suggest by Ritchie et al (1994; 2003), it was felt that these steps are interconnected in particular the construction of the thematic framework and indexing. The framework that was created when examining the selection of eight transcripts was constantly reviewed and transformed when applying it to the whole
data set. Changes of the framework even took place when the descriptive analysis was performed because the understanding of the data was improved and new ideas emerged. Hence, the entire process is very much iterative and each step informs another. The best advantage of the framework analysis method is that it allows both the inductive and deductive approaches, which has given the researcher a great flexibility to sort data and to make sense of data. NVivo is found to be very useful during this process. Categories can be re-named and re-structured within the programme without worrying about losing the tags to the data. The programme also permits easy and fast retrieving of data. It indeed facilitates data management and data display. However, it is still down to the researcher to actually understand and interpret what is being displayed in the charts. The following chapter will report the research findings.
Chapter 9

Findings

9.1 Introduction

The research endeavours to identify how hospitality managers' professional development can be facilitated by information and communication technologies. Two of the research questions were:

1. How do hospitality managers learn about managing the business?
2. What is the role of ICTs in their learning?

To be able to answer the first question, four research objectives were set:

- Research objective 1: To understand the participants' perception of learning about managing the business;
- Research objective 2: To explore the nature and dynamics of managerial learning;
- Research objective 3: To compare and contrast managerial learning across cases;
- Research objective 6: To develop explanations of how hospitality managers learn to manage the business.

To be able to answer the second question, two objectives were set:

- Research objective 4: To identify relationships between managerial learning, knowledge and the use of technology;
- Research objective 5: To explore perceived effectiveness of technology in their learning.

This chapter will report the research findings. The rest of the chapter consists of four main sections. In the first section, how management training is organised and delivered in the sampled organisations will be explained to provide a context in which the participants' learning take place. The second section will report the findings on the participants learning about managing the business. Research objectives 1, 2, and 3 will be addressed in section 9.3.1, 9.3.2, and 9.3.3 respectively. The discoveries of the role of ICTs in their learning will be reported in the third section. Research objective 5 will be attended to in section 9.4.2.
9.2 Management Training in Participating Organisations

Management development courses for General Managers mainly cover technical skills and soft skills. Technical training courses may be grouped into two: one is legislatative, such as Employment Law and Health and Food Safety; the other is concerned with skills in the use of computer software applications, such as courses on yield management system, finance management system and Microsoft office package. Soft skills training courses are mainly concerned with relationship building, such as Managing People and Strategic Client Management.

Training courses are delivered through either on-the-job training or formalised classroom-based sessions. HR Manager W indicates that the training on organisation values is provided on the job. "Most of the training that we give to our managers is on-the-job training", she maintains, "So they are delivered by their line managers. So most of it is on the job. It's not formalised training" (23-15). A new way of developing the managers are emerging in company A. It is "a more coaching culture", says HR Manager V, "So the managers' manager coach them through a particular project or a particular situation and make sure that they are trying to learn from that situation" (22-11). He comments that this is about developing the managers through experience and believes that learning by doing is "a lot better" than more traditional courses.

Company H has been using a learning management system to deliver their training courses while company A and S are recently adopting such a system. The General Managers of company H can access all courses provided in the system. The course offerings for the GMs are comprehensive. In contrast, courses available electronically in company A and S are mainly for operational staff and supervisors. For both contract catering organisations C and S, the challenge is to make their training courses accessible online to their employees. "We have quiet a challenge. In the 7.5 thousand bits of business we have, not all of our managers are linked to technology" (23-19), HR Manager W says. Likewise, interviewee X states: "We are a technology limited business. In fact we've got 4000 PCs out there and
that isn't likely to change," ... "so how do we get to our people?" (24-57). Both HR
managers W and X express that limited access to technology is a barrier to promoting
learning through technology in contract catering business.

9.3 How Do the Participants Learn about Managing the
Business?

9.3.1 The GMs' Perceptions of Learning about Managing the Business

The research objective 1 was to understand the participants' perception of learning about
managing the business. The study found out that almost half of the participants make
explicit remarks around the bipolarity of form of learning: theoretical learning and practical
learning. Theoretical learning is referred to as learning in theory whereas the latter is
learning through experience e.g. through working in the industry. For instance, Manager A
says: "I'm learning things in practice every day and you are learning in theory every day.
You will be looking it from one way while I'll be looking at it from another" (1-4). He believes
that learning in practice is another way of viewing a situation at work. Manager N
distinguishes "a form of classroom style learning approach" from "experienced based
learning" which is very much "hands on" (14-15). Similarly, Manager F differentiates the
"on-the-job training aspect" from the "educational aspect" such as a university degree.

In essence, learning in theory is regarded as learning on various courses and programmes.
It covers not only learning on schools and universities courses but also pre-organised and
structured company training courses that are delivered in a formalised manner. "Life long
education is an ongoing process day after day. It doesn't stop whether it's attending
business courses, whether it's attending technical courses, whether it's attending skills
courses" (16-17), states Manager P. "Structured", "formal" (14-35) and "methodical" (21-
25) are the words that many participants attach to this type of learning. For example,
Manager E states, "that normal kind of training and development programmes, courses and
assessment centres and all that kind of stuff in an organisation" ... "are very much formal,
planned training in educational programmes" (5-21).
In contrast, practical learning is learning on the job. It is about "ground floor training" (6-128) and being "exposed to operations" (21-25). The participants view this form of learning as learning through practice and experience. Manager N regards practical learning embracing learning from people around him and learning by finding out himself. Manager B also points out the problem-solving nature of practical learning. He comments:

"You are put in a situation and you're not sure what to do in terms of what to rectify, to address it, so you find out. You do your research. You talk to the relevant people. You may call a colleague and say: "What do you do in this circumstance?" Through that you build up a catalogue of experiences that you are able to apply in any incidence, so going forward" (2-30).

Practical learning forms a big proportion of the GMs' learning. Participant G states, "Most of the learning is from dealing with day-to-day business and experience" (7-34). Manager E also comments that learning about managing the business is of studying and learning and the actual work experience in the industry itself. He maintains, "A lot of it is through experience" (5-29).

Though practical learning is a significant element of their learning, the majority of the participants still believe that it is important to have an understanding of principles through theoretical learning. Manager P comments that the provision of theoretical learning offers "the broad sound basis of understanding in going out into the business world" (16-21). However, this is not shared by contract catering Manager C who exclaims: "This is all lovely in theory. You are on the floor. There are millions [sic] things you need to think about. You don't learn at college because all come out of blackboard" (3-47). A similar view is expressed by hotel Manager A: "There are a lot of university courses, postgraduate courses in revenue management. They will teach you the theory. No one is going to teach you all the sudden we've got a terrible day what we are going to do about it" (1-32). However, he admits that a formal course would probably help him make decisions in a more structured manner. So, in essence he values the provision of theoretical learning though it may not meet all his learning needs.

The majority of the GMs believe that to fulfill the roles of General Manager they need to learn by going on "structured learning programmes" (21-25) as well as being exposed to operations. "It is important to supplement the experience-based learning with a form of classroom style learning approach" (14-15), says Manager N. He maintains that he could have benefitted from training courses offered by his company if those courses had been "a
Manager B also expresses that one needs to understand theoretically how an operation is performed and needs to know how to apply that within one's own environment. He highlights the relationship between theory and practice, suggesting that learning does not stop at knowing what it is; instead, it goes on to actually applying theories to practice and contextualising what is written in theory.

Education is considered central in the provision of theoretical learning. Manager U says: “In all walks of business, education is key in order to aspire to best performance. Gaining knowledge through education contributes to that success” (21-55). Having a good education background is believed important in the business world today. Some participants express that it used to be possible to become a hotel General Manager without an educational qualification. This, however, has changed. “Especially with the global companies like Continental, Hilton, or Marriott, with all those companies” ... “usually you need to have some educational qualifications on its own” (21-39), Manager U says. This is also mirrored in participant F’s account:

“I don’t think that you can come from a degree without having the ground floor training. And I don’t necessarily think you would be comfortable [sic] in the position [of General Manager] without an educational background” (6-128).

9.3.2 Managerial Learning

The research objective 2 was to explore the nature and dynamics of managerial learning. The study discovers:

1. The participants’ learning involves a process of “finding out”, in which four stages emerged from the data;
2. Reflective thinking is central in their learning.

How this finding is derived is described in Chapter 8.

9.3.2.1 The Process of “Finding Out”

The interviewed hospitality managers learn how to manage the business, predominantly, through experience. Based on their accounts, learning through experience is about “finding out”. Four closely linked stages were identified in that process, which are Being Challenged, Information Searching, Information Transformation and Testing (see Figure 9.1).
Figure 9.1 Finding out - Learning through Experience

- **Being Challenged** → Relating to relevant knowledge & experiences
- **Information Searching** → Understanding the information
- **Information Transformation** → Understanding the information and situation
- **Testing** → Understanding the information/feedback and situation

- Changes
- Routinisation

- **The Personal Library of Knowledge and Experiences**

Remembering the new perspective
Stage One: Being Challenged

The GMs’ learning often starts when they are put in a situation whereby they are motivated to learn by feeling they are being challenged. Manager H states: “There is a challenge that you need to solve. Those challenges make you to learn something” (8-106). One of the challenges that all the GMs recognise is to generate profits for their companies. Participant J says, “It [the challenge] is constantly trying to generate business” (10-3). Manager U has also expressed a similar view, stating that he had to drive in large volume business through his hotel when he first started his role of General Manager. “It was very challenging” (21-29), he comments.

Participant A is the General Manager of the most profitable hotel of Company A. “It [The hotel he is managing] has always done very well and we are just continuing to push that”, he says, “We really watch supply and demand a lot and make sure that we maximise the price as much as we can get all the time” (1-13). Every day he faces the challenge of maintaining the hotel’s performance and maximising the revenues in the competitive market that is volatile and full of uncertainty. Hence, the problem that he has to solve is to price hotel rooms to the demand every day.

Having identified a problem, the managers start to visualise the final outcome that they want to be and then consider how their vision can be achieved. They reflect on what they know from past experiences, looking for similar experiences and what actions were taken in responding to those situations. Manager B led a project to review the breakfast menu for hotel company A. He explains that in his previous experience he was involved in a similar project for a different hotel company in Australia, hence he knows how to develop a new menu for company A. “I was quite familiar as how to put together an offer for 50 hotels because I’ve done that before”, he says, “So I got some expertise within the company to help me do this” (2-60).

Often the GMs find that their current level of knowing can provide a solution that may partially solve the problem, but there is always something unknown or something that they do not fully understand because the situation has changed. For example, participant J expresses that he learned how to handle human resources issues from his previous working experience: “I probably, from my Rail Gourmet experiences, understand much more human resources function in terms of what you can and can’t do with staff” (10-29);
however he is “still not 100% [sure]” (10-29) because the situation is not the same. “You end up dealing with different situations”.

**Stage Two: Information Searching**

Consequently, they start to look for information that will enable them to find a solution to the problem. Information that they search for is essentially external socially constructed knowledge, which include personal knowledge of other people and knowledge in the public domains. The GMs use different channels to get relevant knowledge so that they can solve the problem that they are confronted. One of the channels is approaching people who are more experienced in dealing with the similar situations. Referring back to Manager J’s situation, he approached the Human Resources Department of his company to seek information and advice on dealing with staff issues. He says, “They [the human resources team] talk you through processes, so you then gain that understanding from them” (10-31).

Likewise, in responding to the client’s request of providing healthy food for their delegates, Participant D talked to his colleagues in the headquarter office to find out options of suppliers for organic food. “We then spoke to somebody from purchasing, to somebody from the supply chain”, states Manager D, “We looked at all products from our suppliers” (4-96). Some hotel managers express that they ask their revenue officers what they are doing when they start their role as General Manager of the hotel. “You have got to not be afraid of asking the people that are working for you: what they are looking at each day”, says Manager T, “it’s actually the more you learn as they’re explaining” (20-15).

Participant B asked a colleague who was a vegetarian what people like her were looking for and consulted a nutritionist to find out the requirements of healthy eating, so that he can then develop a menu which will meet different requirements of the guests. Therefore, by asking those people around them, the managers gain information about, in Manager J’s and D’s case, company policies and procedures which are knowledge that is socially constructed in the past. They also gain personal knowledge of these people, such as advice on handling staff issues, insights into purchasing issues and selling hotel rooms and personal stance on vegetarian dishes.

Approaching more experienced people for information involves not only asking them but also observing what they are doing. “When I came to London, I didn’t know the London
market, but my Rooms Division Manager and my Revenue Manager did, so I learned from what they were doing” (1-32), participant A says. Similarly, Managers D and Q express that they learned how to shorten the queuing time by observing what their head waiters were doing. Hence, the knowledge that they gained was effective front line practices that the head waiters had developed.

Moreover, the GMs search external knowledge from public domains. In his project to develop the company’s corporate social responsibility policy, Manager D gathered information from different media. “It is a very much reading the broadsheet on newspaper with all the retail sites, like what a supermarket is doing and where the food mile started to come in”, he says, “There are also government agencies for example the Carbon Trust, a government agency set up to help companies work out their carbon food print” (4-108). To develop the breakfast menu, Manager B read research reports that were available in the public domain to understand the current customer trends and eating habits. He paid visits to competitors’ sites, supermarkets and high street cafés to observe what they were selling. Therefore, at this stage of Information Searching, the managers gather relevant social knowledge and personal knowledge of other people by asking them questions, reading what has been written down and observing what other people or businesses do.

**Stage Three: Information Transformation**

This is a stage whereby external knowledge is internalised and becomes internal knowledge of the participants. When the GMs are exposed to the information that is new and relevant to them, they try to “understand it”, which is a complex, internal and psychological process. To understand a piece of new information, the GMs associate it with their past and present relevant experiences and try to explain it in a way that is familiar to them. Manager K attended a training course on coaching. From there he came across the concept of “negative coaching” that was new to him – managers spend time looking for what their staff are doing wrong, instead of spending time on what the staff are doing well. “I always think that finding a problem is a good way of how to approach your work”, he says. He believed that identifying a problem could improve work. “But it can also be seen as a negative way of coaching” (11-41), he states.

Trying to make sense of it, manager K reflected on how he managed his people at his hotel, considered what his employees would want to have and questioned his existing
management style – what is missing in the process of converting negativity to positivity. "Of course we need to identify them [problems], but rather than just to identify them on the spot like that", he comments, "It is to get the team themselves to say "Yes. I do that wrong. Yes, we can improve that"... "[to] get them involved into converting the negative into a positive" (11-45). Hence, he tries to understand the concept by associating it with his own environment, critically reflecting on his way of managing people and bridging what the concept promotes with what is missing in his approach.

A similar approach is also witnessed in Manager E’s learning about managing people. He gives an example of him reading a management book about how to create a positive environment in which everybody collaborates and learns from each other. To understand the concept, he puts it in an environment that he is familiar with so that he can explain it in a meaningful way, in that he turns the concept into his knowledge. "So it’s looking me [sic] how I manage my managers. Do I create a competitive environment within the unit? Do I have my managers compete against each other for favouritism?” says he, “And absolutely we are very competitive in a hotel but we are not competitive against each other. We are competitive against our competitors” (5-41). Like Manager K, participant E internalised the concept of “win-win environment” by linking it with the context that he is familiar with, reflecting upon his own practice and being critical about it.

Information Transformation can also occur during social interactions. Manager A tells how he learned about exercising dynamic pricing in the London market from his subordinates: “They told me a lot about how the marketplace works here. At the same time if I think they were doing something they weren’t quite right, I challenged them”. He suggests that learning from people is a two-way interaction involving observing, listening, asking, questioning, agreeing or disagree with each other. His words also imply that what was being exchanged between his managers and him was a consented negotiation between the new information or practice and his established bank of knowledge of how a hotel business needs to be managed.

An outcome of Information Transformation is the formulation of a strategy, solutions and new ideas. Participant E who has recently been promoted to General Manager tells the biggest challenge that she is facing:

"It is you are starting a new job in a new establishment with new people and your new owners. So your whole scope has changed. And it is learning the property and the politics behind the
Among many other new initiatives that she introduces to take the business forward is a policy of early departure fees. She explains that in the airline industry customers will be charged for late changes whereas in the hotel industry customers can leave a hotel earlier than their original plan without paying for the early departure. “The actuality of what you have done is you have lost the potential revenue for that room”, says participant E, “This is something that is backwards and forwards in various hotels for years” (6-273). Such a fee was introduced in the hotel that she used to work at, so she has witnessed and experienced what it can bring to the business. “We discussed it amongst our team”, states Manager E, “I told them how much money we made in the past in another hotel” (6-310). She decides to apply such a practice at her hotel. This decision is made based on her observation of what the airlines are doing and the debates around this issue within the hotel industry and her past relevant experience. Hence, the transformation of information to knowledge is shown through the introduction of the new policy in the business unit that she manages.

The transformation of information to knowledge can also be demonstrated in decision making. For example, before deciding how much he will sell his rooms at every day Manager A reads through information from the property management system, the forecast report, historical data about his hotel's performance over the last 5 years, the competitors' pricing and events calendar. “You've got to get all the information together and then you've got to digest it – what does it mean?” (1-26), maintains Manager A, “Based on that and based on history and based on what our competitors are doing we think this is the price that we should sell on this day” (1-28).

Similarly, it was observed that before making a decision Manager B looked through information on five different systems on his computer, asked his Reservation Officer what her recommendation was and questioned why there were no-shows on the same day last year. He referred to the events calendar and looked at what was the week date. He reflected on his memory as how his hotel performed over the same period in the last few years. “I didn’t go to my file and look at it [the historical information] but I know what was there because I was here last year” (2-40). By having been in London and working at this hotel, he took “an educated guess” and decided to go for a higher rate. He comments:
"I know through history of being in this hotel that I shouldn't spike one day in terms of available rooms. So I take an educated guess, knowing that, really at any one time I don't want to take any more than 25 rooms of a professional group in one day, unless it's more than 2 to 3-night stay. "... "We went with the higher rate. They would either take it or they wouldn't."... "I know through the fact to be able to get a space, to buy a room cheaper, they have to go to somewhere else. I know that through experience having been in the market."

(2-44)

Stage Four: Testing

Having formulated a strategy or solution to their problem, the GMs test their ideas by implementing their ideas in the real operations of their business unit, monitoring the progress, evaluating obtained feedback information and making adjustments to their initial solution accordingly if necessary. For example, when Manager B was the GM of a property near the Excel exhibition centre, he decided to introduce fair rates one year. "There is a wine fair at Excel every year", says he, "I decided to put fair rates in place based on what I believed to be the demand for that event. And it worked" (2-34). He makes a decision based on his understanding and awareness of how the market works and how to maximise yields which he has gained from his previous experiences and then put his decision in action to test whether it works or not. In his trial of new fair room rates, Manager B monitored how the hotel rooms were selling through examination of information on the yield management system. He compared that information with his expectations and historical financial data of the hotel to justify the viability of his idea.

In the same way, Manager A tests his decision on the room rates for the day by applying that pricing strategy and monitoring the progress. He states, "We also monitor our pick up constantly. If we've got 50 rooms to sell, however, it is picked up very slowly. Our competitors are still selling. They've got lots of rooms to sell because we can tell by their pricing. Therefore, we need to look at our pricing" (1-26). His words suggest continuous alterations to the initial pricing strategy through monitoring so that the equilibrium between what the market can take and the maximum financial yields of his business unit can be reached. Alterations to the initial strategy or idea suggest the element of learning from "trial-on-error" (1-32). For example, Manager A expresses that he has learned pricing to the demand by making mistakes. "You don't always get them right", He maintains, "You are buying and selling. It's trading. It's risk-taking" (2-34). Manager F implements her idea of
Early Departure Fees in her business unit. She is aware that the outcomes could be very unexpected, stating that the new policy “could blow up in my face, but you don’t know unless you try it” (6-269).

9.3.2.2 Reflective Thinking

It is emerged from the data that reflective thinking is central to the GMs’ learning. As already mentioned in some examples given above, the managers constantly interact with their known concepts, reflecting on their bank of knowledge and experiences, to understand what is happening around them. More evidence is provided here to further elaborate on the findings. Managers D and H experienced a similar situation whereby they needed to make a decision on the use of organic ingredients for their products. They both carried out research to identify ingredients, potential suppliers and pricing strategies, through which they understood what opportunities there were in the market in terms of ingredients supply and what they would need to do to ensure their profitability.

They then analysed the information that they had gathered through critical reflective thinking on costs and other related issues. “Organic food is two to three times higher than ordinary food”, says Manager H, “You will spend £4 or £5 a day, but you don’t want to spend £15 or £20 a day”. So he assesses the financial gain should they decide to offer organic food. For Manager D, it is a slightly different situation, in which he needs to assess the fitness of delivering organic food with the company purchasing policy.

As a result of the experiences, Participant H learned that, though his client requested organic food offerings, people who work in the premises are actually not willing to pay that amount of money for a lunch in their workplace. For Manager D, he gave more thoughts to what could be done to make it possible as a result of the experience. “Basically, it’s just about finding enough ingredients on your supply chain for certain supplier fitting into the 85-10-5 framework”, says he, “I knew I could do it but it would be going around to the other side but not quite within how you’re supposed to do it with preferred suppliers” (4-100). He understood more how to work with the company policy from that personal experience. Hence, through reflective thinking they both have learned something from those experiences. Those gained new perspectives expand their reservoir of knowledge and experiences which in turn influence their future learning.
Manager A tells that he dealt with a situation whereby a guest was abusive to his staff who became very offended as a result. "I haven't personally dealt with exactly that before but I've dealt with difficult guests", he maintains, "I've done similar things. So it's very straightforward: What you do is you support your staff and make sure that they know what's for them. You take [sic] it very pragmatic." (1-65) He did not search for new information per se to find a solution to solve the situation. Instead, he reflected upon his past experience, finding similarities and differences between prior learning and the action experience. As a result of that reflective thinking, he adopted the strategy that he had used before, recognising why he needed to do what he had done.

9.3.3 Individual Difference in Learning

The research objective 3 was to compare and contrast managerial learning across cases. In addition to the commonality of the participants’ learning as reported above, the study found out that seven managers show their awareness of their personal preference of learning, using the term of "learning style". These managers believe that they would benefit more if they choose the learning approach that they prefer. However, there is not enough evidence suggesting that hotel GMs learn differently compared with their contract catering counterparts.

Among the seven GMs, some prefer to learn by throwing themselves in action - learning through practice. Contract catering manager S says: "I think for me what works best is on the job, on the job things. I need to see, I need to do something to understand it" (19-123). His view is shared by hotel manager B, who states: "For me, I like to do. ... "I need to be involved in that process" and to "be shown a real-life demonstration as opposed to if you do this, this could happen" (2-128). Manager F also expresses a similar point of view, who says: "Sometimes me with learning, you go with the traditional methods of a professor in front of the class, we will be bored" (6-72). She seems to suggest that herself and her fellow hotel managers tend to be extroverts who favour learning through doing exercise together, because she maintains:

"If you are one of those people that maybe is an introvert, you may not...for that type of training. Because an introvert may prefer to sit, or give me an environment where I don't have to speak, because an introvert is somebody that doesn't talk too much or his communication skill is not as open so he may prefer to sit in the classroom and listen to the professor" (6-76).
The managers prefer to learn through social exchange of ideas and practices with other people. For instance, Manager C is in favour of asking and listening to people to get different perspectives of supply chain management. Manager E recognises his own personal learning style and acknowledges that he learns a lot from group discussions on concepts and techniques in management books. He remarks: “My own personal learning style is that I learn a lot from those discussions” (5-61). Manager O also expresses that “face-to-face is always easier and it’s always more meaningful” (15-29) and that he prefers speaking to an individual rather to a computer screen. He recognises the value of conversation with people and insists on the importance of bringing people together to “discuss objectives, to discuss best practices, to discuss targets or merely just to get to know one another” (15-29). Therefore, social interactions are important to the managers’ learning.

Some managers prefer to read hard copy of materials which can be a handbook, a report, a management book or a Financial Times article. It is interesting to witness that both contract catering Manager D and hotel Manager A use the term of “old-fashioned” to describe themselves because they prefer to have a hard copy in the hand so that they can refer back to it when they need to. Manager D explains: “I feel much happier reading the handbooks and chapters rather than anything on the Internet” (4-138). Manager B compares himself with other managers who access their diaries and reports on computer and calls himself “old-fashioned”. He also explains this: “I know quite easily. I’m a bit old-fashioned. I have all my reports here [pointing at the reports on his desk]” ... “if I can’t remember something I go back to my historical information and looking for trends and making decisions from there [pointing at his file cabinet]” (2-52). Manager E also favours to read paper-based materials. He states: “I prefer to have a book in my hands. I wouldn’t sit at work reading an e-book” (5-49). This is shared by Manager F who says: “I prefer to read pages in front of me versus reading at the computer screen” (6-153).

There appears to be a disagreement about reading between hotel managers E and F and contract catering manager C. Both hotel managers from company H highlight the depth and breadth of reading. This is exemplified in their accounts. Manager E says: “I like to experience new ideas and concepts” (5-67) whilst Manager F states: “you read on what’s going on beneath that situation” (6-43). In contrast, Manager C expresses that he has not read management books on, for instance, supply chain management, because he does not bother if someone can tell him what it is in five or ten minutes. He prefers to learn things quickly. This is reflected in his account:
"it would be pointless sending me on a five-day, 8 until 6, high intensive, lots of writing, lots of research training, because I will leave in half a day, because I can't do that sort of thing. It would just drive me mad. Well, if it was half a day and it was... I won't say it was hugely interactive but it was sort of squashed and the main relevant point brought out" (3-105)

9.4 The Role of Technology in the GMs’ Learning

Table 9.1 outlines main applications and devices that are used and where they are used in the process of “finding out”. The GMs use a range of media to gain external knowledge. Some hotel GMs collect information from their yield management systems and competitors’ websites so that they can monitor the progress of their experimentations. These findings are reported in detail in the following sections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applications &amp; Devices</th>
<th>Stage Two - Information Searching</th>
<th>Stage Four - Testing / Monitoring</th>
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<td>Telephone conferencing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CD-ROM &amp; DVD</td>
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<td>Learning management system</td>
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<td>Finance management systems</td>
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<td>Till systems</td>
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<td>Yield management system</td>
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9.4.1 Technology and Learning

As illustrated in Figure 9.2, some ICT applications are used in formalised learning interventions whereby the participants gain company bespoke knowledge about company
procedures, policies and using an information system. A much wider range of applications are used in their managerial activities to get diverse external knowledge.

Figure 9.2 Technology, Learning and Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical knowledge</th>
<th>Information systems</th>
<th>CD-ROMs &amp; DVDs</th>
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<td>Intranet</td>
<td>Information system simulations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Learning management system</td>
<td>Podcasting</td>
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<td>Interpenetration</td>
<td>Search engines</td>
<td>Virtual classrooms</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Websites of competitors, Exhibitions centres, Intermediates and others</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Community websites</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Telephone conferencing, web conferencing, telephone &amp; iPhone</td>
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<td>Personal knowledge</td>
<td>Within managerial activities</td>
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<td>Formalised learning programmes / courses</td>
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Learning Context

9.4.1.1 The Use of Technology in Company Training Provision

ICT applications that are used in company training intervention include CD-ROMs, DVDs, learning management system, simulations of information systems, virtual classrooms and podcasting. They play a role at the Information Searching stage in the process of "finding out". The context in which the ICT applications and devices outlined in the following subsection are used is formal. It is less contextualised than a learning event delivered outside company. Hence, it reflects a type of management development that encourages formalised, less contextualised learning (see Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5).

CD-ROMs and DVDs

CD-ROMs and DVDs are the channels that some participants get technical knowledge such as company policies, brand standards and training materials. Managers P and E explain that
they learn about company branding via CD-ROMs. Participant O indicates that he gains updates of the organisation using this medium.

**Simulations**

All GMs of hotel company H claim that they have accessed the learning materials that are available on their organisation’s learning management system. Within this Internet-based learning platform, computer simulations are employed to deliver information technology training. Participant E says, “Some of that IT learning that we did for our new property system is simulation” (5-61). Manager F has given a more specific description with regard to the new system training, who states: “I had to make a reservation, how to check somebody in, how to check somebody out, how to post a bill, how to book a room” (6-149). The knowledge that the managers gain is technical in nature.

**Learning Management System**

All GMs of hotel company H claim that they have accessed the learning materials that are available on their organisation’s learning management system. The span of learning subjects is comprehensive ranging from company brand standards to the introduction to appraisal skills. They refer it as the company “University”. Participant O regards this provision as “a library of knowledge” (15-29), from which the managers can choose a certain element if they want to “cherry pick” (5-41). For example, Manager E expresses that he has used the system to learn how to carry out an appraisal. He says, “[I] pulled out a PDR [personal development review] programme. I was just reading through that very quickly online just to get my head in gear before I would then go and do a PDR process” (5-41). He read about the procedures, a form of knowledge that is technical.

**Virtual Classrooms**

Again, on their company Internet-based learning platform, the majority of GMs in hotel H use virtual classrooms in company training sessions. They assert that they have used this technology in courses such as mentoring, business management skills, IT system and brand standards. Manager U describes his experience: “One was for mentoring. Another one was for market strategy where we had an outside company. They took us through some training on the system through virtual classroom [sic]. It obviously had headphones
and a screen through my laptop, dial in and just listen to and participate in the event" (21-17). When they have a question, they can raise it in the virtual classroom environment and discuss it among them. Hence, the knowledge that they gain is a mix of technical social knowledge and personal knowledge.

**Podcasting**

Some managers download podcasts of seminars facilitated by experts in universities and watch podcasts about what is happening within their organisations. Manager E explains: “If our CEO wants to communicate with us in the States, we all dial in on a PC at 2 o’clock in the morning, join podcasts or observe podcasts” (5-57). Hotel GMs T and U express that they have participated in web conferences to get updates on what is happening within their organisation. In Manager U’s words:

“Our Chief Executive every now again wants to update the general management population throughout the world. We sat at a web conference”... “there was an opportunity for” [his organisation] “to speak to the large range of people – the management population – in one go to set out what the future of the company and how things were going to be done” (21-35)

9.4.1.2 The Use of Technology in Managerial Activities

This sub-section reports the ICT applications and devises that are used by the participants in their learning that is embedded in work. The context in which they are utilised is informal and integrated within work activities. It reflects a type of management development that encourages integrated learning (see Figure 5.1 in Chapter 5).

**Information Systems**

Information systems are referred to yield management systems, finance management systems and till systems here. The hotel GMs use their yield management systems to get information for decision making on room rates and then to obtain feedback information so that they can monitor the progress of room selling against their competitors. The information that they access here is considered as technical knowledge.

Similarly, some contract catering managers use their finance management systems and till systems to get such knowledge. Participants Q explain: “We’ve got a system called e-Profit
which drags all the information off the tills” (17-71). Manager I who is from a different contract catering company also states that their tills are all EPOS linked, meaning that they can retrieve a bank of information about sales of a particular product. She says, “We can pull out the top £20 from a similar event”... “So when another event comes, we can make sure that those thoughts are applied to that type of events as well” (9-55). Therefore, the information that the managers obtain from their information systems reflects business operations. It is technical and specific to the business.

**The Intranet**

Some GMs use their company intranets to access technical-driven and company-specific information. For example, Manager D says: “I found out through the intranet in terms of the policies and procedures that xx [company C] have. There is Health and Safety. There is a standard statement” (4-56). Another manager states that he accesses the company brand standards manual and indicates that much of course of action will be based on what he will have found out on the company intranet. He comments:

“In pricing of other companies, there’s some very specific information such as our brand standards manual would be posted on it. So there’s resources, quite a lot of the work that I would be doing on it would be based on accessing resources that are located there” (14-143).

Two contract catering GMs express that they access information about their suppliers’ products on their company intranet. Manager G has given an example on this: “The supplier section, yes. We are certainly up on it [the intranet] this morning to look for kitchen equipment that I could possibly recommend for us to bring to the next building” (7-75). Manager Q also indicates that he uses the company intranet as one of the main sources to search for information about their suppliers’ products and prices.

**Search Engines**

The GMs indicate that they use search engines such as Google and Yahoo to seek all different specific information, including:

- Competitors’ product offerings and pricing;
- Food and beverage products, such as coffee, wine and cheese;
- Furniture for hotel lobby, guest rooms, restaurants and cafes;
- Images of flowers, hotel lobbies, guest rooms, restaurants and cafes;
• Equipments for kitchen and bathrooms in guest rooms;
• Research reports, articles, news, books and recipes;
• Events in the local area;
• Legislations;
• Executive training courses provided by external training consultancy;
• Stationary for the client;
• Location of an establishment.

The managers also use search engines to find recipes and marketing ideas. Participant N enters “cheese” on a search engine to find what a good cheese platter should include while participant D keys in “Tagine” to search for the recipe for his client’s Moroccan event. Manager B keyed in “breakfast” on Google to find research reports about the breakfast market, customers’ eating habits and other relevant information to develop a new breakfast menu for the company. “It is unbelievable how much information is there”, he says, “There is no way that you could get that amount of information” (2-72). It is not just the breadth but also the specificity of information that he was able to gather, such as statistics on the number of people who do not eat breakfast on the day. He learned from an online research report about the reasons that why some people do not eat their breakfast. He then applied the same approach to survey the guests. “So there were some trends that mirrored all the way through”, he says, “Some of them confirmed what we had found out from the Internet” (2-74). His research conducted on the Internet contributed to his efforts to find valid information about their guests’ eating habits which consequently enables him to construct effective strategies.

The research also discovers that search engines are used by some hotel GMs to improve the virtual environment in which their hotels market their products and services. They type in certain key words on search engines to find out how easy and quick their hotels show in the search results. Manager F describes this: “If I am at New York, I am thinking of coming to London. And I want a hotel near Westminster, but I don’t know anything about London,” she states, “I will go to Google and I will type “hotels in London next to Westminster” or “next to Big Ben” (6-197). She writes down a list of all possible combinations of words that people may put in to find a hotel in the area and enters each of them in different main search engines such as Google and Yahoo to see whether her hotel will come up in the search results.
Her way of using search engines is also shared by some other hotel managers. For example, participant K says, "I just go in and type “Euston” [in a search engine] and see what other hotels come first, or type “St Pancras”” (11-103). He maintains that if his hotel does not come first, he will look into words and phrase that people would enter in a search engine to find a hotel. He comments:

"There are words that people will naturally type [in a search engine]. It can be “accommodation”, “hotels in Euston”. It could be “rooming [sic] in Euston”... “So it is finding these combinations” (11-103)

Therefore, the managers use search engines to help them identify a comprehensive range of words to match their hotels and link them with their websites. In doing so, they shape the virtual environment so that it is more likely and quicker for customers to find the hotel websites and thus to increase the possibility of revenue generation from online bookings. He comments: “You look at how quick you can book a room because everybody is working hard on those things” (11-103).

Websites

Some GMs claim that they visit their competitors’ websites to learn about them and to identify opportunities to generate business. Contract catering manager Q expresses that he visits their competitors’ websites to find out what they are doing. He states: "I’ll see what competitors are doing, see what products they’re promoting. You’ve got to know what’s out there as well and you’ve got to know what your competitors are and what products are being sold” (17-123). His approach is shared by Manager I from company C, who states: "I tend to go on to the O2 site to see what they are up to, what events they’ve got coming out" (9-67).

Hotel manager A informs that when he looks for specialised topics, he will browse their competitors’ websites to find new ideas for his hotel: “I’ll steal food and beverage marketing ideas. It’s probably one that I steal a lot” (1-81). In addition to information about products and services that their competitors offer, the participants also search pricing information. Hotel manager K remarks: “I go to my competitors’ websites”... “trying to look at their rooms and see what prices they are selling at” (11-103). Likewise, contract catering Manager C says: “you look into your competitors, what is happening in the marketplace and you will consider the cost and what selling price is going to be” (3-39). Hotel manager B and
E also talk about visiting exhibition centre's websites, such as Excel, O2 and the Dome, to find out what event will be held so that they can formulate their pricing strategy accordingly.

The majority of the hotel managers state that they visit websites such as Trip Advisor and Expedia to view the comments about their hotels and where they are positioned against their competitors. For instance, Manager T states:

"I look at it [Trip Advisor website] really to look at the guest feedback on that and where you sit. So it's more from guest feedback point of view that I look at that website than for anything else. Other websites I'm looking at are Expedia, Hotel.com, Travelocity, Price Line and then the Lastminute. These are the ones that I look at more for how we're positioned compared to our competitors, how is the hotel looked on that" (20-21)

The reason for viewing the comments is to identify potential problems as well as the strengths of their hotels. Manager N explains that he uses Trip Advisor as a secondary source of guest feedback and that he will identify the common theme that people complain as well as compliment. He maintains: "it is a compliment I guess that we need to make sure that we continue doing; if it's a complaint about ... we need to try to eliminate" (14-67).

**Communication Applications and Devices**

The participants gain information through conversations and communications with both internal and external customers that are facilitated by ICT applications. Information that the GMs obtain from email communication is diverse, ranging from service booking requirements to training information. For instance, Managers D and G claim that email is their main link with the clients from where they get to know what the clients are asking for. Managers J, N and Q indicate that they receive information about courses via emails. Participant Q states: "I get the training calendar come through. I always look at it" (10-87).

Three hotel managers claim that they have signed up for news alerts with websites such as hotels.com, e-Hotelier and Travel Mall, so that they receive email messages when there is news that they are interested in. For example, Manager E tells that he has set up an account using the Financial Times so he receives emails whenever there is any breaking financial news. Manager K explains how this may be set up and how this kind of alerts work: "You go to Google alerts and then you put the words that you want. Every time that word comes up, Google will send you the alerts" (11-79). In doing so, they drive the information that they want to read about to them as opposed to receiving junk emails.
The GMs use telephones to get information. It is observed that Manager B made a call to a fellow GM to find out whether the manager could participate in a coffee trial for a company project that he leads. Hotel Manager F had telephone conversations with her company lawyer and a customer to find information so that she can decide how to deal with the legal dispute. It is also observed that contract catering Manager M and hotel Manager B use their telephones to participate in conference calls whereby they found out price issues with their suppliers. Manager M indicates that within his brand company all business unit managers and the Operations Manager have a call conference every Monday morning to review the business performance of their own units in the previous week and to exchange information.

Telephones are also used to search information about competitors. Contract catering Manager C remarks that the telephone is used to call their competitors to find out the prices that they charge customers. This practice is shared by his colleague Manager J, who says:

“We share information. And as far as our tariffing[sic] is concerned we tend to benchmark on a regular basis as well. So, we will ring up a lot of venues and other venues ring us. It’s just benchmark, you know, how much you are charging for your top 10 items to see if it’s comparable what, you know, they are charging.” (9-73)

However, in hotel Manager A’s account, it seems that such an exercise used to be carried out in hotels, but it is no long employed, thanks to the Internet. He states:

Instead of me quickly looking on here [pointing at Internet Explore screen on his computer monitor] and seeing what my competitors are selling at, I have to have someone… and not long ago this happened. Someone was ringing around every day “Hi! This is so-and-so from ABC company. Have you got a room for tonight? How much is that?” We used to have that all the time.” (1-48)

Contract catering Manager H describes how web conferencing is used in meetings with his line manager, fellow managers and suppliers. He says: “Normally, it is not with the client, it is with our suppliers” … “my boss will call me and say, for example, this fruit supplier is going to call us and we are going to do a conferencing on Skype, or iChat” … “At 10 o’clock you will need to log to the Chat and you will talk to your supplier” (8-147). Only hotel GM uses a similar programme that allows web conferencing with his family members.

Moreover, Two contract catering managers who have iPhones use their devices to send and receive emails. For example, Manager H states: “If I received a last minute requirement, I can get it from my pocket straight away” (8-191). Also, Manager I says: “When I’m not at
my desk, I receive emails via Blackberry” (9-59). These communication applications and devices facilitate information exchange, e.g. exchange of personal knowledge, through social interactions.

9.4.1.3 A Comparison of Technology Usage

As can be seen in Table 9.2 the range of technology applications that are used by hotel GMs is relatively larger that of applications used by contract catering managers. Noticeably, a small group of 6-7 hotel GMs use podcast, virtual classroom and yield management systems. In contrast, technology applications that are used by contract catering GMs include only the intranet, Telephone conferencing, finance management systems and till system. In addition to this, two contract catering GMs use iPhones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel GMs * (no. of managers)</th>
<th>Both Groups</th>
<th>Contract Catering GMs *** (no. of managers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Podcast (7)</td>
<td>Email (11v10) **</td>
<td>Intranet (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual classroom (6)</td>
<td>Search engines (10v10)</td>
<td>Telephone conferencing (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yield management systems (6)</td>
<td>Telephone / mobile phone (11v10)</td>
<td>Finance management system (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company learning management system (4)</td>
<td>Community websites (8v1)</td>
<td>Till system (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation (4)</td>
<td>Web conferencing (1v1)</td>
<td>iPhone (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News alerts (3)</td>
<td>CD-ROMs &amp; DVDs (7v3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition centres' websites (2)</td>
<td>Competitor websites (5v4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiki websites (2)</td>
<td>Instant messaging (1v1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iPod (2)</td>
<td>Blog (1v1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booking engine (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online language learning tools (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediaries' websites (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extranet (1)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9.2 “I use”

* 11 hotel GMs in total
** (the number of hotel managers versus the number of contract catering managers)
*** 10 contract catering GMs in total

Those shared by both hotel GMs and contract catering GMs include email, search engines, community websites, competitor websites, CD-ROMs, DVDs, web conferencings, instant messaging, blogs, telephones and mobile phones. All GMs use email, telephones and mobile phones. They all, except one, use search engines. Yahoo and Google are frequently referred search engines by the GMs. A small group of GMs use web conference applications,
CD-ROM and DVD-based media and browse community websites and competitors’ website. A few participants say that they use instant messaging and blogs.

When comparing the figures across the business sectors, it appears that more hotel GMs use CD-ROM and DVD-based media than their counterparts. Among ten managers who use CD-ROMs and DVDs seven are hotel GMs. It also appears that more hotel GMs visit community websites than their counterparts. Eight hotel GMs follow community websites, such as Trip Advisor, whereas there is only one contract catering Manager D who expresses that he uses this type of websites in his personal life to find out “bad reputation it [a company] might have” (4-138). Hence, it may be said that community websites play a fairly important role in hotel GMs’ work. However, competitor websites may be equally important to contract catering GMs and hotel managers. Five out of eleven hotel GMs browse their competitors’ websites. Four contract catering GMs share such an exercise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotol GMs * (no. of managers)</th>
<th>Both Groups</th>
<th>Contract Catering GMs * (no. of managers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Search engines (1)</td>
<td>Blogs (8v7) **</td>
<td>CD-ROMs &amp; DVDs (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eBooks (2)</td>
<td>Simulation (3v6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web conferencing (4v5)</td>
<td>Instant messaging (4v5)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podcast (2v8)</td>
<td>Wiki websites (3v4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community websites (1v1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 11 hotel GMs in total
** (the number of hotel managers versus the number of contract catering managers)
*** 10 contract catering GMs in total

As shown in Table 9.3, one hotel manager says that he does not use search engines. There seems to be some confusion between search engine and booking engine. Two hotel GMs express that they do not use the eBook resource on their company learning management system while four contract catering GMs indicate explicitly that they do not use CD-ROM and DVD-based media at work. It appears that a relatively larger proportion of contract catering GMs have not been exposed to computer-based simulations and podcasting, compared with their counterparts. Other applications that some participants do not use include blogs, web conferencing, instant messaging, wiki websites and community websites.
9.4.1.4 Reasons for Using, or Not Using, Technology

There are a range of factors contributing to the adoption of technology and to the rejection of adoption, as illustrated in Figure 9.3. However, "time" is a shared influential factor to the behaviours of whether using a piece of technology or not. Hotel managers E and N explain that they do not read eBooks that are available on their company learning management system is because they do not have time. In contrast, participant K claims that the reason that he subscribes to news alert service with some websites is because he does not want to waste time on junk emails. In his words: "The reason why I actually ask for the information to come to me it's because I want to save time" (11-99). Hence, it may be said that time constraints can be a barrier to adoption, but can also be a driving force. The watershed between technology adoption and rejection may be partially affected by one's ability to use a negative factor to his/her benefit so that it leads to a positive outcome.

He has also given another occasion when he used a search engine to look for information about cheese. He explains that it was because he had limited knowledge on such an area and wanted to learn more so that he would be able to make recommendation to his chef on the cheese platter that they offered. He says: "Because my background isn't necessarily in this area, so I wanted to improve my skills" (14-107). Hence, there is motivation to learn, e.g. wanting to know different kinds of cheese. It may also be argued that he is involved in the details and that his management practice is influenced by the size of the hotels that he manages. This is because when he describes his involvement in managing revenues for the two hotels that he manages, he says:

"I do use it [the company revenue management system] which is probably different to what most of the General Managers would do because they [the hotels] are relatively small and as a General Manager I probably get a little more involved into the details than perhaps a general Manager of a very large property" (14-39)

In the case of GM A, one driving factor of using podcasts is his bad experience of using Skype in his personal life. He knows, from his past experience, that an unstable connection will affect the quality of communication. It is partially out of curiosity, he downloaded a podcast in which he was giving a speech to experience what it looks like. He explains: "I was on Skype this morning to my mum in New Zealand, video Skype. Some days it's fantastic you get great signal and another times it's just terrible signal that frustrated you more than anything" (1-83).
In addition to time constraints, limited accessibility, self-efficacy, personal preference of learning, perceived disadvantages of using the technology and company IT policy explain why some GMs do not use certain technology application. Two participants highlight the factor of accessibility. For instance, Manager A says: "I don't use blogs per se mainly because I can't get them on here [pointing at his desk top]" (1-81). The reason that he cannot use blogs on his computer is probably due to his company's IT policy that restricts or forbids activities such as posting a blog entry. This is mirrored in the account of Manager K who works in the same hotel company. He says: "No, we don't use blogs for the hotel. We're limited particularly to do it, to be honest. We've got IT restrictions to ensure our network is safe, because blogs can get you into anything" (11-67).

Figure 9.3 "I use it / don't use it because"
Other reasons that manager K does not use this application are concerns over complexity of incorporating it into business process, confidentiality and possibility of damaging the hotel's image. He states: “Because of the complexity and also the confidentiality that we have we don't want to have image lost that would lead to other issues that may be big” (11-67). His words convey a level of uncertainty about future outcomes that blogs may result in if it were to be employed in their business. The solution to this uncertainty is to not use it. Manager P shares this view, who says: “Sounds to me it [web conferencing] is not that secure. That's why we don't use it” (16-161). Therefore, disadvantages of using blogs and web conferencing are perceived by these participants include the complexity of incorporating a new piece of technology application into operations, potential problems in relation to confidentiality, possibility of jeopardising company image and the insecurity of online communication.

For Manager N, he does not use the eBook facility provided on his company's learning management system because he perceived himself unfamiliar with the eBook application. In his words: “I've heard there's [there're] eBooks but I'm not familiar with it and I haven't been enticed into it” (14-123). His colleague, participant E, who reads management books regularly, does not use this application either because he prefers to have a book in the hand. Both managers D and F have also made a similar claim. They express that they like to read pages in front of them as opposed to reading online. Participant D says: “I don't mind reading it, but I would like to print it out like a hard copy and then read through” (4-226).

9.4.2 Perceived Effectiveness of Technology in Learning

The research objective 5 was to explore perceived effectiveness of technology in the GMs' learning. The study discovers that, overall, technologies are considered good as backup and a support. They shorten the process of finding information thus assist decision making. All the participants express that technologies in general have made their work easier and more efficient. They recognise that it is very important to process information in order to provide what they offer to their customers, clients and other stakeholders and that technologies have enabled them to handle large amount of information. “Technology speeds up what we have done”, says hotel Manager A, “We wouldn't know the demand so well without it. There will be a lot of guesswork” (1-48). Similarly, contract catering Manager R comments:
"We need to look at information day and night for the kind of job that we do. That means we need to manage the information and finalise it"... "Our job will be very hard without help of technology" (18-61)

The majority of the participants have made comments on the advantages and disadvantages of ICT in communication. Manager L says that email is “the best channel” (12-116) to communicate with his staff and other people of his organisation. Participant O believes that ICT applications that enable online conversations provide “an easy way and a cost effective way of getting people together” (15-19). To Manager U, such applications are “a very useful way to contact a wide variety of people throughout the globe” (21-35).

The major concern about using technology to communicate is around the necessity of “human touch”. “There are actual people there at the end of that keyboard”, says Manager L, “Sometimes we tend to forget that” (12-124). Participant T asserts that communication through technology “is not a substitute for face-to-face contact” (20-23). Some participants have explained why. For example, Manager G expresses that speaking to people personally is necessary because the hospitality industry is “a people industry” and the business that they are in is “a people business” (7-105). Managers M and O also explain why technology cannot be a substitute for face-to-face contact. They both believe that communication through technology is not the same as communication in person. In the latter, “you get more out of people” (13-71), says Manager M. Participant O also comments:

“Face-to-face contact is always better than non-face-to-face contact. Yes, discussion [in an online environment] is possible but it’s possibly not as free and easy as if you can get six people altogether in one room, face-to-face” (15-19)

There is a mixed view on whether technology can play a role in learning. Manager N also states: “I think technology-based learning is actually a still small role for me” (14-135). However, the majority of the participants believe that technology can help them to learn. The benefit of flexibility that ICTs bring in to learning is widely recognised by the GMs. “Technology frees you to learn more” (6-339), states Manager D. Participant T also says: “It depends on what you feel like doing on that day. You can go in to any bit and you can access it at work or access it at home” (20-15).

Technology is regarded as a tool that makes a large amount of knowledge accessible. Participant O says: “What I do have is a huge amount of knowledge or available library that
I have never had nor would I never be able to have beforehand and technologies actually facilitate that" (15-29). In addition to opening up the gate of knowledge, technology is thought to help them learn more quickly and more targeted. "It speeds up what information you want to find and learn about. You can also refine it right down so it is not too generic" (1-94), says Manager A.

A number of GMs believe that technology is a useful tool to learn technical skills such as how to use a property management system, or a finance management system. "I think probably technology is very good to learn hard skills" (20-27), comments Manager T. Contract catering GM I does not think that technology will help her to learn personal skills. Likewise, participant states: "You can learn from technology, but on the soft services side, it's been a minimum what you can learn" (18-59). However, Managers E and T do not agree with this. They believe that technology can be used to help them to learn soft skills such as mentoring and managing people. "I think there're lots of ways that you can use technology that I think it'd be really good" (20-15), comments Manager T.

Four GMs express their concerns about learning through technology. "I sometimes question the complete understanding because I get a bit concerned that you can't ask a question" (6-181), says Manager F. Although ICT applications such as virtual classrooms make live conversations possible, they offer limited interactions between people. Manager T states: "virtual classrooms are great if your training is for an hour", however "what you may miss out is always that human interaction side, that networking: what you learned from someone over a coffee in a casual conversation" (20-23). Moreover, some GMs question Participant O also states: "The difficulty sometimes is just validating if people really do know and understand" (15-29). Manager E believes that technology-based learning often just encourages remembering of what is being read on the screen "rather than understanding it" (5-41). Therefore, some GMs believe that technology-based learning needs a follower to ensure that learning has occurred and conveyed messages have been understood.

The majority of the participants think that technology will continue to play an important role in business and its role in learning will increase in the future. "You can't get away from technology", says participant P. "The role of technology in learning is going to increase. In what particular way, I don't know. But yes, it is going to increase if nothing else because costs and necessities" (15-29), comments participant O. However, this view is not fully shared by participants C and D. "I don't think there is going to be a big future", says
contract catering Managers C of organisation C, “Look at the core nature of the business, why do we need a podcast or web conferencing?” (3-85). However, Manager Q of contract catering company S also says:

“If there was a bit more thought, especially in this business, towards what information that needs to be passed and what learning needs to be done, then “yes”. Technology will be a useful tool. It just doesn’t seem to be utilised enough at moment” (17-145).

Interestingly, some GMs indicate that, in the future, they would use the ICT applications that they are not currently using if these applications could offer what they need. For instance, Manager Q comments: “If there was information there that I wanted to get I would use them” (17-153).

9.5 Summary

The chapter has reported what the participants perceive learning about managing the business, how the participants learn, the role of technology in their learning and what is their view of technology in their professional development. Research objectives 1-5 were addressed. The key findings were:

- The participants perceive learning about managing the business is a mix of theoretical learning and practical learning.
- The GMs learn, mainly, through experience, which is a process of “finding out”.
- The process of “finding out” consists of four closely linked stages, namely Being Challenged, Information Searching, Information Transformation and Testing.
- Reflective thinking is central to the GMs’ learning.
- The central role of technology in the GMs’ learning lies on Stage Two – Information Searching and Stage Four – Testing.
- A group of ICT applications are used in company training intervention for learning about mainly technical knowledge and company specific information, including CD-ROMs, DVDs, learning management system, computer simulations, podcasting and virtual classrooms.
- A wider range of ICT applications and devices are used in participants’ learning that takes place within their managerial activities.
- The GMs perceive that technologies have shortened the process of information searching thus assist them to make decisions more promptly.
• The majority of the participants think that technology will continue to play an important role in business and its role in learning will increase in the future.

The findings of how participants learn to manage the business will be explained (e.g. research objective 6) in the following chapter. How technologies facilitate their learning will be also further explored in the next chapter.
Chapter 10

Discussion

10.1 Introduction

This chapter further investigates the key findings of the research and compares them to the previous research in this area. The consistency, as well as conflicts, of the findings with theoretical claims will be identified and examined. Discussions are presented in the following two main sections: 1 – How hospitality managers learn is explored; 2 – The interplay of technology, management learning, knowledge and managerial work is reviewed.

10.2 Explanations of GMs’ Learning through Experience

Research objective 6 was to develop explanations of how hospitality managers learn to manage the business. To address this objective, this section reflects on relevant learning theories and the findings on how the participants learn in order to explore the reasons for the way they learn. As reported in the previous chapter, the participants learn about managing the business predominantly through experience which is a process of “finding out” consisting of four stages. They are Being Challenged, Information Searching, Information Transformation and Testing. This finding is considered surprising because the research has taken a holistic approach to the learning concept and thus embraces different school of thoughts; however, the four stages very much mirror notions of experiential learning theory (Dewey 1933; Jarvis 1987; Jarvis 1992; Kolb 1984b; Lewin 1951; Piaget 1973) and demonstrate an orientation to problem-solving learning (Boud & Feletti 1998; Gagné, Briggs, & Wager 1992; Jarvis 2004; Savin-Baden 2003).

Stage One: Being Challenged

As reported in the previous chapter, the participants’ learning often starts when they are put in a situation whereby they are motivated to learn by feeling they are being challenged. In
order to understand this finding, it is important to establish the relationship between “situation” and “experience”. According to experiential learning theory (Kolb 1984), “experience” can be understood in two ways: one is subjective and personal e.g. one’s internal state and the other is objective and environmental such as work experience. Kolb introduced ideas of the objectivity and subjectivity of an experience. He used “concrete experience” to describe an immediate, “here-and-now” and subjective live experience. Jarvis (1992) regarded such a first-hand experience as a primary experience – the actual experience that one has in a given situation, that moulds a “self-identity to a great extent” (pp180). He highlighted the importance of the actor being involved in the situation and implied that each primary experience has some kind of self-shaped entity that can be recognised, or identified, as an experience. In this study, the managers speak of situations that have direct effects on their work and the business. These identified situations occur during their management practice. They are initially objective representations of what is happening in their workplace, but are then interpreted by the managers. There is a transition here from objectivity to subjectivity. It is the actor who makes this transition possible. Hence, it may be said that a primary experience involves the actor, the objective representation of a given situation and the subjective interpretation of the situation. These three elements act together to create a self-identity of the experience.

The situations which the managers identified did not just inform their first-hand experience of professional practice, but were also perceived as problematic. They are problem-situations as Dewey (1916, referenced in Margetson 1997) would classify them. They are considered by the managers as potentially causing negative effects on the business. Jarvis (2004, pp126) used the expression of “experience regarded as a problem”. This causes confusion. As discussed above, “experience” has dual meanings. The way that Jarvis used the term is probably related to the objective meaning of the concept. A problem is derived from a problem-situation and is related to the contextual conditions (Margetson 1997), but more importantly, it is a representation of what is perceived by the individual who is involved in the situation. It describes what is problematic about the situation, not experience as Jarvis (2004) put it. A problem that is perceived by a manager is embodied in the work situation. It is different from “problem” formulated in professional educational programmes (Boud et al 1998; Margetson 1997; Woods 1985). The problem that arises out of the real work situation is highly contextualised and directly influences the manager’s work activities. In contrast, a problem in an educational programme is de-contextualised. It is presented to the students to practise problem-solving skills.
In this study, identified problem-situations tend to have ultimately negative financial implications on the business. Participants B, I and U from different companies all work, or used to work, in business units in the Arena area in Wembley. They all face the challenge of seasonality. When there are not many events held in the Arena, their revenues decrease. The issue is then what they can do to address the situation, e.g. how to minimise negative impacts and/or maximise positive impacts. It becomes a problem if they do not know how to deal with the issue, or they do know the approach that they are going to take but not sure about its outcomes due to other changing factors. Indeed, as Schön (1983) has pointed out, managers often find themselves in a situation of uncertainty and ambiguity. The unknown, uncertainty and ambiguity result in feeling of being challenged in the managers.

The feeling of being challenged mirrors the concept of “disjuncture”. Jarvis stated that “Disjuncture occurs whenever there is lack of accord between the external world experienced by human beings and their internal biographical interests or knowledge” (1992, pp83). He maintained that society is undergoing changes all the time hence the occurrence of disjuncture is inevitable. Indeed, it is witnessed that the managers in this study recognise that the world is constantly changing and that they do not always know the answer to a problem-situation. It is also found that disjuncture can occur when the managers are promoted or given more demanding projects to undertake, because they cannot act unthinkingly any longer based on their current level of knowing. For instance, when contract catering manager D and hotel manager F were promoted to their current roles, they found the situation that they were in challenging because they recognised that they did not have adequate knowledge to perform the activities required for their current positions. Participant D realised that he did not know enough about front-of-house operations to assist his staff while participant F admitted her limited knowledge about the hotel property.

Mezirow (1991) regarded this gap between biography e.g. what one knows and experience e.g. the new experience that requires more knowing to be understood as the heart of learning. Argyris (1992) pointed out that disjuncture makes learning possible, but it is also possible that learning may not occur if people choose not to take the learning opportunity. However, the present study discovers that when the managers are aware of the existence of the gap between their biography and the experience, they often have to take actions to bridge the gap because of their responsibilities for the accounts of the business. They have obligations to deliver profits to the company and the shareholders through a balanced...
approach to revenue, people and quality. They keep learning what is happening around them, what is happening in the market and what is happening in the industry and other industries. Hence, when a problem-situation occurs they have to find a solution to address it to ensure smooth operations and the profitability of the business.

**Stage Two: Information Searching**

Because of their managerial responsibilities, the participants keep their minds open to the surroundings, looking for information, in order to find a solution to their problem. The stage of Information Searching mirrors Boyd and Fales’ (1983) stage of “openness to new information”. It is about the managers acquiring a broad perspective and gathering more information. They search different kinds of information and allocate those relevant to the problem-situations that they have identified. This stage involves two separate, but inter-related, aspects. One is “what” – the content of information that they search for. The other is “how” – the methods / activities that the managers use or perform to search for information.

To understand the “what” aspect of Information Searching, the meaning of “information” needs to be clarified. Information is knowledge that is independent to the managers. According to a number of authors, knowledge has broadly two forms which are social knowledge and personal knowledge. In Chapter 3, I reviewed different taxonomies of knowledge. It is important to clarify discrepancies and similarities between the typologies and their relationship with social knowledge and personal knowledge here, in order to further explain the “what” aspect of Information Searching.

Experiential learning theorists such as Kolb (1984) and Kayes (2002) regarded social knowledge as “the independent, socially and culturally transmitted network of words, symbols and images that is based solely on comprehension” (Kolb 1984, pp105). They seem to accept it as objective representations of past experiences of human civilisation. On this point, they follow Dewey’s (1933) idea: social knowledge is the civilized objective accumulation of previous human cultural experience. However, social knowledge has subjectivity in itself. Heritage (1974, referenced in Ziman 1978) pointed out that social knowledge comes from objective observations and humanistic intersubjectivity of motive, emotion, reflection and intention. It depends on the consensibility of the observations made by scientists and the ultimate agreement achieved by the exchange of messages describing
these observations (Ziman 1978). Therefore, social knowledge is not subjective-free; instead, it has both the elements of objectivity and subjectivity. It is codified, generally accepted as valid and publicly available.

In contrast to social knowledge, personal knowledge is regarded as the accumulation of one’s subjective life experiences which is the combination of one’s direct apprehensions of experience and the socially obtained comprehension that one uses to explain this experience and guide one’s actions (Kayes 2002; Kolb 1984b; Matthews & Candy 1999). Direct apprehension of an experience involves capturing the face-value of the experience whereas comprehension involves a dynamic thinking process that examines different aspects of the experience to understand it. Personal knowledge is an individual selection of knowledge from a much larger public knowledge base. It is influenced by knowledge encountered during education, by personal experiences and by social interactions with other people. It informs working professionals’ judgement or “becomes embedded in their performance” (Eraut 1994, pp17).

There are different forms of personal knowledge. Eraut (1994) suggested that personal knowledge contains propositional knowledge and personal interpretations of public theories and principles, as well as process knowledge including knowing how to access the body of propositional knowledge about processes and making use of propositional knowledge. Ryle (1949) spoke of “knowing-how” while Oakeshott (1962) suggested “practical knowledge”. Both authors emphasise knowledge involved in performing a task. Oakeshott (1962) pointed out that not all practical knowledge can be codified and publicly available, in particular non-verbal knowledge which is expressed only in practice and cannot be codified in principle. Indeed, Polanyi (1967) emphasised “tacit knowing” – a kind of knowledge that people know but cannot tell explicitly. Some authors, such as Raelin (2007), Kayes (2002) and Stephenson (2001), apply the terminology of “tacit knowledge” to include personal and subjective knowing that one has through performing work activities, only some of which can be expressed.

Therefore, “social knowledge” can be seen as an umbrella categorising knowledge that is generally considered as being scientifically established, valid knowing of natural and social phenomena. It includes propositional knowledge and part of process knowledge that is concerned with what needs to be done and the steps of doing them. The former can be further grouped into: category 1 – discipline-based theories and concepts, category 2 –
generalisations and practical principles in the applied field of professional action and category 3 – specific propositions about particular cases, decisions and actions (Eraut 1994). Examples of process knowledge in the social knowledge base include managerial processes of planning, organising and team building and decision-making process, which are largely taught in management books. “Personal knowledge” includes propositional knowledge and process knowledge collected from the social knowledge base, personal interpretation of that knowledge, practical knowledge of actually implementing codified process knowledge, notes and memories of cases and problems that have been encountered, reflected on and theorised for current practice. Some personal knowledge can be expressed explicitly but some is intuitive knowing e.g. tacit knowledge, following Polanyi’s (1967) notion.

The research reveals that the hospitality managers search different kinds of knowledge from the social knowledge base. Hotel managers, in particular, are engaged with discipline-based theories and concepts. For example, Manager E reads about concepts of people management, such as creating a “win-win” environment and motivating staff. Manager B comments on SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats), which is a technique widely taught in business studies. Participants F, K, T and U talk about learning principles of coaching and mentoring on training courses. The managers see this kind of knowledge as principles in theory of management, echoing Gibbons’ et al (1994) notion of “disciplinary knowledge”, which is often codified and represented in publications and professional education and sometimes training courses. Eraut (1994) argued that propositional knowledge acquired by the professional worker from the social knowledge base underpins and enables professional actions. Indeed, the managers in this study note that those theoretical principles direct their practice at work. For example, Manager F comments, “it is looking at me how I manage my managers. Do I create a competitive environment within the unit? Do I have my managers compete against each other for favouritism[?]” (5-41). He reflected upon the concept of creating competitive environment and questioned whether he had created a positive environment for his staff. The theoretical concept gives him a direction to which he should manage his team.

It appears that hotel GMs tend to engage with theoretical, propositional management knowledge whereas contract catering GMs are more interested in certain marketing ideas. Both groups of managers recognise that they are in a very operational business. However, the hotel managers tend to seek theoretical principles as guidance to their actions and decisions. This is maybe because they are more exposed to education programmes and
training courses. The data suggest that overall the hotel GMs have a higher level of educational attainments than the contract catering GMs. Six out of eleven hotel managers have a degree whereas only one out of ten contract catering manager has the same educational attainment. Moreover, it is also evident that the majority of the interviewed hotel GMs have completed some form of company management training programme for graduates; whereas participants from contract catering organisations did not benefit from such a provision.

Both hotel managers and contract catering managers access information about their company's policies and regulations such as health and safety legislation. This kind of knowledge provides organisational and/or legal guidelines that the managers have to follow. Thus, it enables their professional actions. It is not discipline-based theories and concepts, but general rules and practical principles in the applied field of business. Hence, company policies and relevant authority legislations fall in nicely in the second category of Eraut's “propositional knowledge”.

The participants access other forms of knowledge from both the social knowledge base and the body of personal knowledge of other people. One form is process knowledge. All the participants access company procedures, such as how to conduct an appraisal and how to make an order and procedural information about how to use a computer system. Company procedures describe what actions need to be taken and the sequence of performing them and guide the managers’ professional practice. Instructions about how to use a piece of technology application is process knowledge that the managers follow to achieve a specified outcome. Several contract catering GMs search specific recipes for themed events for their chefs. All these kinds of knowledge give step-by-step instructions.

The other form is specific propositional knowledge about particular cases. Manager D reads an internal document about how a real business acted upon accreditation procedures required by a professional organisation and why it failed in that process. Manager Q engages with information about the launch of a retail unit in Euston Station and why that effort did not turn out a success. Participants E, F and K access knowledge about marketing practice in airlines and other organisations and why they have been successful. This kind of knowledge represents specific propositions about individual cases and actions; therefore it comes closest to the third category of Eraut’s “propositional knowledge”.

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Some authors would argue that managers do not always learn from their experience (Ellis, Mendel, & Nir 2006; McCall 2004). There is a tendency that managers learn from failures instead of success (Zakay 1984; Zakay, Ellis, & Shevalsky 2004). In the present study, it was found that the participants learn from both successful and failure experiences of their own, of other people and of other organisations. They engage with this kind of knowledge in order to identify what they can do and what they should avoid to move their business forward. Such experiential reflection gives rise to anticipatory reflection (Van Manen 1991), in which for example how a new marketing idea can be employed to enhance future business. It also gives permission to reflection-on-action (Schön 1991) e.g. finding solutions through trialling.

With regard to the “how” aspect of Information Searching, the GMs search and allocate relevant knowledge through different activities. The managers read about theoretical principles and managerial procedures from books and training materials and discuss their interpretation of the knowledge with other people. They read newspapers and other information sources about general developments in the market. They are open to new ideas in the business world and use a range of technology applications and devices to reach external social knowledge and personal knowledge of other people, which will be discussed in detail in the next section.

It is found that observation is one of the methods that the managers use to gather knowledge. The GMs observe what their competitors are doing and from there they take in some of the ideas and customise it for their unit. For instance, Manager K states: “I look for things. If I like something, I say: Okay! How would that fit in my place?” (11-105). This mirror Bandura’s notion of learning through observing and modelling. According to Bandura, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: “from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed and so later occasions this coded information services as a guide for action” (1977a, pp22). He emphasised the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes and reactions of others in learning. Bandura probably came from a perspective of people. However, as witnessed in this study, behaviours of organisations also form a source of knowledge, which are demonstrated through marketing initiatives, innovative product offerings and managerial techniques. As said previously, the managers in the study do keep their eyes open to new initiatives in the market and other organisations. They reproduce successful ideas in a
slightly different way and at the same time stay away from less successful approaches that other companies have taken.

Certainly, “observing” remains one of the important methods for gathering process knowledge that other people have. Other methods include asking questions, listening and discussing ideas. As seen in the study, the managers observe people who are more experienced, or have an expertise, in a particular area how to perform. For instance, Manager D states that he has learned how to deal with profit and loss accounts from the Accountant by asking him questions. All interviewed hotel GMs express that part of their learning of managing hotel revenues is actually from observing what their revenue people and predecessors do, asking them questions and challenging some of the practice that they do not necessarily agree with. Learning from more experienced others echoes Vygotsky’s (1962a) theory of the zone of proximal development, which advocates that people learn more through a collaborative dialogue with a more learned other. Indeed, participant T indicates that she asks her Revenue Manager how he conducts his work and that the more he explains the more she learns.

**Stage Three: Information Transformation**

At the same time as looking for new information, the GMs try to understand what they are exposed to and what they are experiencing. Problem-situations and external knowledge are “understood”, in the participants’ own words, which probably mirror a more technical expression from the literature - “internalisation of knowledge”. This stage is called Information Transformation in this research. Internalising what is perceived in the outside world involves complex, psychological processes, which have been researched for decades by numerous scientists and scholars. In Chapter 4, an overview of different learning theories was provided. Some of the notions advocated in those theories are found to be useful to explain the participants’ internal learning process that are displayed externally through their use of language, the behaviours that they describe and those observed by the researcher.

The study witnesses that when the managers are confronted with a problem-situation, they make sense of it through reflective thinking. They reflect on what they already know and what they are exposed to. Eraut’s (1994) comment that reflective thinking is a prerequisite of knowledge internalisation. But, what is “reflective thinking”? A reflective thought is defined as an “active persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of
knowledge in the light of the ground that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends” by Dewey (1933, pp9, referenced in Mezirow 1991). A number of scholars expanded that definition and suggested that reflective thinking involves purposive thinking that is cognitive, as well as emotional (Boud et al 1985; Steinaker & Bell 1979; Usher 1985). They argue that emotional influences can facilitate, block, or steer the process of reflection. However, this is not very apparent to the participants. It is probably because the interviews and observations were conducted in a working environment and the participants were conscious that they were playing the role of manager in that social interaction with the researcher; consequently personal emotions were greatly concealed.

Gadamer (1976) suggested that reflection can be simply standing back from the situation, examining it and making decisions, without being critical. In other words, reflection does not have to be critical and leads to revolutionary outcomes. The present study reveals that the hospitality managers do step back from situations and review their business regularly. In that process, reflecting on what the business has done over the last three or four months, identifying what has been done well, what has not been achieved and why. Unlike Gadamer’s (1976) hermeneutical reflection, the managers question business practices and business performance. They have to be critical about how to manage the business effectively because they have a real business to manage.

Nonetheless, to understand a confronted problem-situation or a piece of new knowledge, the participants reflect on their library of knowledge and experience. In this process of reflection, they search for comparable experiences and known concepts, find similarities and differences between prior learning and the action and evaluate how what they know can be applied to the problem posed by the situation or how what they know can be related to the piece of new knowledge. This, to a large extent, echoes Boud’s et al (1985) idea of four elements of reflection in learning through experience, which are association, integration, validation and appropriation. According to Boud et al, “association” is relating new data to what is already known; “integration” is seeking relationships among the data; “validation” involves determining the authenticity of ideas and feelings that have resulted; and “appropriation” is internalising knowledge, making it one’s own. The reflective thinking process of the participants can also be linked to Kolb’s (1984) “knowing through apprehension”. Recollecting the review of the learning processes of apprehension and comprehension in Chapter 4, knowing through apprehension is a registrative process.
transformed by appreciation. It is basically taking the face value of what is being experienced. However, how the face value is taken is not clearly stated in his work.

As a senior General Manager, participant I often finds herself on a mission to assist junior GMs in other business units. Each time, when she pays a visit to the site she observes how operations are conducted, inspects how the back-of-house is managed and studies contract conditions of the business unit and the demographics of the area. She gathers all the information and compares it with what she already knows from her experience of managing her own business unit and experiences of business review on other units, which reflects Boud's et al (1985) element of association. She questions why certain things are done differently in this particular unit and links the uniqueness of the unit to the contract agreement, demographic characteristics of the area and local legal legislations. This echoes the element of integration. In the reflective thinking process, she also evaluates whether any practice that she knows would be suitable to this particular unit based on her analysis of the information that she gathered and gives reasons for why this practice would work in this situation but not others. This comes closest to the element of validation.

Association, integration and validation are also witnessed in other managers in this study. For example, the hotel managers, who started their role in the new hotel, observed what their experienced revenue officers were doing and how they responded to the changing market. They registered that information in their mind and then started to question why their officers had responded to the situation in that particular way, why it was different to the approach that they would have taken based on what they knew from their past experience. In that process, they associated the new practice to what they knew about revenue management (association), questioned why the differences existed by identifying relationships between various factors (integration) and reasoned why a particular approach was more appropriate (validation). In doing so, they interpreted what they were experiencing into a form that they understood. This naturally mirrors Kolb’s (1984) idea of “knowing by comprehension”, which is regarded as an interpretive process transformed by criticism.

According to Kolb (1984), in the process of knowing through comprehension, knowledge gained through apprehension is refined, elaborated and re-arranged through analysing, criticising and synthesising. The participants in this study associate their perception of what they are exposed to with what they know and analyse that perception of what is happening
by identifying similarities, differences and relationships between components of a defined problem-situation or a piece of new knowledge. Such association and integration enable them to capture the face value of the situation or knowledge. This is probably what Kolb's (1984) meant by "knowing by apprehension". Nonetheless, having taken the face value of what they are confronted with, they start to raise questions and be critical about the situation or knowledge. This is what Kolb would call "knowing by comprehension", in which process the managers in the study draw on different kinds of knowledge that they know to make sense of what is presented to them.

The managers' reflective thinking processes can also be explained by using Piaget's concepts of assimilation and accommodation (Ginsburg et al 1969), which is reviewed in Chapter 4. Piaget suggested that knowledge internalisation is achieved through the complementary processes of assimilation and accommodation. The process of assimilation involves integrating what is perceived in the outside world based on the person's existing cognitive structure. As already discussed above, the managers in the study learn about what they are exposed to by relating it with their existing known concepts e.g. association; they learn by relating perceived relationships between factors of a given situation or a piece of external knowledge with their existing internal structures if these factors e.g. integration and evaluate the extent of harmonisation between external knowledge or action experience and their existing schema e.g. validation. So, they find consistencies with what is already known. In doing so, what is perceived in the outside world is validated while what is interpreted internally is also confirmed.

When the perceived external knowing does not perfectly match with the internal knowing, the participating managers change their existing categories and/or re-arrange them and the relationships involved to create capacity for the new information. This is what Piaget termed "the process of accommodation", which is witnessed in all participants' learning. For instance, Manager B was leading a project to develop the company's breakfast menu. What fell in his initial category of "competitors" included all local high street food retails, cafés, supermarkets and other hotels; therefore, he and his team visited some of these businesses. However, when he read a market research on the Internet, he read about the contract catering businesses offering breakfast to employees in big corporations at a much lower rate, meaning they are competitors in the breakfast market. However, this piece of knowledge did not exist in his initial theme of "competitors". So, he expanded his initial category to include "contract catering providers" in order to accommodate the new information. In other
words, new knowledge is internalised, which reminds Boud’s et al (1985) notion of appropriation.

Changing internal categories to accommodate what is perceived in the outside world is also demonstrated in examples whereby the managers construct new ideas for their business. Hotel GM B introduces Fair Rate while contract catering Manager H pioneers Celebrity Dish Day. In her new role of GM, Manager F brings in a number of ideas, such as Early Departure Fees, responding to guests’ comments on Trip Advisor website and a menu that will increase alcohol sale. To elaborate on this, Manager F’s example of Early Departure Fees is examined in more detail here. Her initial understanding of the problem-situation is that hotel’s profitability is jeopardised because hotel guests can depart early without paying for the early termination of the sales agreement. She understands that airlines implement policies that will make customers pay for a last-minute change of the ticket booking. However, such an exercise does not exist in her initial category of “practices in hotels”. Hence, she expands that category to include it and introduces the Early Departure Fees policy in her hotel, which demonstrates the appropriation of the business practice of the airlines. Like other participants, she is more concerned with building what works for her hotel than discovering the truth of knowledge. This echoes Handy’s (1985) and Ball’s (1991) argument that management learning in organisation is not about finding out what other people already know, but constructing new ideas to solve problems.

If accepting that knowledge internalisation is achieved through complementary, dialectical processes of assimilation and accommodation which involves association, integration and validation, a question may be asked: how are reflective thoughts organised in the processes? Manager D and H experienced a similar situation whereby they needed to make decision on the use of organic ingredients for their products. They analysed the information that they had gathered to identify suitable ingredients and potential suppliers. They formulated pricing strategies that would deliver profits. Their critical reflective thoughts cover what is required should they decide to do so. What is reflected on here is propositional knowledge. Such reflection is what Mezirow (1991) called “content reflection”, which involves reflecting upon the content of an action or effort. For Manager D, it is a slightly different situation, in which he assessed the procedures that it may involve. This is probably what Mezirow (1991) termed “process reflection”, which is concerned with the method or procedure of the effort. What is reflected upon here is effectively process knowledge (Eraut 1994).
In addition to content reflection and process reflection, Manager D also reflected on the fitness of delivering organic food with the company purchasing policy. In other words, he examined the feasibility of the idea in his business environment. Mezirow (1991) distinguished content reflection and process reflection, but not reflection on context. In fact, all other participants consider whether their ideas would work in their given context at some point in their reflective thinking process. For instance, Manager K witnessed how a waiter in a restaurant was up-selling drink. In that situation, the waiter bought a glass of double Gin Tonic without actually asking the customer to clarify whether he wanted a single or a double beforehand. At the end, the customer had to pay the price for the double Gin Tonic. For Manager K, it is a very clever way of selling a drink. He then questioned whether the same technique would work in his hotel. So he reflected on the context in which “the content” may be applied. Recollecting the example of Manager I above, in her inspection of other business units, she always examines the operational background of the business, such as the contract conditions, the circumstances when the contract was signed, legal restrictions and characteristics of the local area. Such context reflection can be critical to the success of the course of action that they may decide to take. It not only enables integration in which relationships are identified, but also facilitates validation because it permits evaluation of feasibility of the content and / or process of the effort that is reflected on.

**Stage Four: Testing**

Reflective thinking often, but not always, leads to actions through which solutions are tested. For example, based on his past experience and knowledge about his hotel, Manager B believed that the business could yield more during the wine fair held in the Excel exhibition centre every year. He then introduced fair rates, which were £20 - £30 higher than the normal rack rates, in his property one year. During the trial, he monitored how the rooms were selling based on information from the yield management system. He compared that data with the hotel’s historical financial parameters and his own expectations and concluded that his idea worked. Since then, the hotel applies the fair rates every year during the wine exhibition. Finding the problem resolution through testing in management practice is also reported in other studies such as Handy (1985) and Ball (1991). Argyris (1974) pointed out that testing in professional practice is more challenging than experimenting in a laboratory environment because there are other hidden variables, unexpected results and influences of subjective assumptions of people. At this stage, the participants engage their conceptual knowledge in such a way that it becomes contextualised.
Testing in itself involves here-and-now concrete experience to validate new ideas. Immediate personal experience gives life, texture and subjective personal meaning to concepts that are abstract (Lewin 1951). The GMs may not personally implement their ideas as it is normally carried out by their team, but their personal involvements in the trial are exhibited through the exercise of monitoring and evaluation. The present study learns that the participants often gain quantitative and technical-driven information from information systems including yield management systems, finance management systems and till systems. At the same time, they monitor the changing market, of which process is greatly facilitated by World Wide Web applications. At the stage of Testing, technology plays a significant role to generate just-in-time valid information, which makes assessment of deviations from desired goals possible.

While monitoring the progress, feedback information is understood through analytical and reflective thinking. This reflection-on-action (Schön 1991) enables them to develop different insights into the situation as what works and what does not. Appropriate alternations to the initial solution can then be derived, in which further new information may be sought for decision making. As a result, the initial solution is refined and re-constructed until it becomes part of business routine. Importantly, the efforts that they have made generate meaningful experiences, because they know that is something that they will avoid in the future. Such reflective practice is regarded as a more sophisticated approach to learn a practical subject (Jarvis 1992).

"Testing" is believed to be critical to the concept of learning through experience. Trial of the idea provides a "publicly shared reference point for testing the implications and validity of ideas created during the learning process" (Kolb 1984b, pp21). Only when putting a working solution in the real action of business will the managers know what has worked, what has not, why and how to make it work through reflective thinking. Such reflective learning makes it possible to know why a particular situation should be dealt with in a specific way (Jarvis 1987), bringing the inherent tacit knowing of experience to the surface. Personal knowledge is enhanced through reinforcing the tacit knowledge acquired in experimentation (Raelin 1997). The new perspectives contribute and expand the reservoir of their knowledge and experience which becomes an exceedingly abundant resource in learning.
Towards an Epistemology of Participants’ Managerial Learning at Work

Reflecting upon the finding of the process of “finding out”, an epistemology of management learning at work is emerging. The process denotes a problem-solving orientation of managerial learning that involves critical reflective thinking. Yeo (2008) argued that problem-solving learning activities enhance the capacity to acquire new knowledge. Problem-solving and action in a working environment often leads to learning that is centred around reflection (Raelin 2000). It is seen that the participants deal with problem-situations, in which process they learn through questioning and reflecting on own experience and those of other people or company. They bridge internal and external knowing through reflective thinking that permits dialogues of assimilation and accommodation.

From a more philosophical point of view, the process of “finding out” actually mirrors the adaptive process of human learning (Dewey 1933; Kelly 1955; Kolb 1984b; Lewin 1951; Mezirow 1991; Piaget 1973; Vygotsky 1978). In that process, humans create their personal concepts and ideas and then manipulate them to solve their problems so that meaning can be derived from what they are experiencing. As a result, people become more adaptable to the external world. Hence, learning “is the major process of human adaptation” (Kolb 1984, pp32). However, management learning in the workplace has a distinctive characteristic compared with learning in a school or in other contexts. It is because the participants in the study find problem resolutions that can bring benefits to the company. This echoes Gray’s (2004a) argument that workplace learning is “a process of reasoned learning” (pp5, original emphasis), through which individuals move towards desirable and sustainable outcomes for the benefits of the organisation. Therefore, it may be said that individual managerial learning at work may reflect the adaptive process of human learning, but it is inevitably driven by business needs and other organisational factors, such as business objectives and business environment.

The process of “finding out” also suggests the blurred boundaries between learning and work in management practice. Driving to different goals, work is about generating products and services that the organisation offers either now or in the future (Boud et al 2001) whereas learning is directed towards the acquisition of knowledge or capacity (Stephenson 2001). In their daily practice, the hospitality managers are confronted with various problems that they need to solve. During the problem-solving process, they learn what is new or what is different, reason what these mean to their problems and find problem resolutions through
trailing in the professional environment. Much of reflective thinking occurs in the course of action. This echoes Schön’s concept of “reflection-in-action”. Schön suggested that a manager’s reflection-in-action is essentially similar to reflection-in-action in other professional fields, consisting of “on-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, restructuring and testing of intuitive understandings of experienced phenomena” (1983, pp241). Indeed, when the participants are dealing with issues in particular in the front line of operations, such as solving a confrontation between a guest and staff at the hotel lobby or solving slow service at the restaurant, they have to think on their feet and respond to the situation on the spot.

Hence, learning occurs simultaneously with work. It is embedded in work activities and integrated with what they do. Because of such integration, learning is not always explicit to the hospitality managers. They can speak of what they did to solve a problem, but they are often unable to step back to reflect on that process and recognize how learning has occurred. They all recognize the importance of technology in helping them to solve work problems, but they tend to overlook the role that technology plays in that learning process. Barnett’s (1999) argument is espoused here: There is a persistent impetus to learn built into work in the age of globalisation thus learning has to become work and work has to become learning. Research has shown that such informal and integrated learning actually represents a significant proportion of management learning in the workplace (Marsick et al 1990; Mumford 1991) and that the level of a manager’s personal knowledge is positively associated with matching work activities to managerial functions (Armstrong & Anis 2008).

The process of “finding out” and the four stages discussed above suggest that management learning through experience is not only acquiring new knowledge and reviewing experiences, but also constructing and testing new ideas. This is consistent with research on experiential learning in various contexts (Argyris et al 1974; Boud et al 1985; Kolb 1984b; Schön 1991). Argyris (1974) examined learning of a mixed group of professionals in business management, organisational development and professionals in the humanities and arts. Kolb (1984) investigated how professionals such as managers and technical managers learn. Schön (1991) studied learning in professions of business management, engineering, medicine and education. Their works highlight that professionals learn through solving problems and learn through reflective thinking, which is also reflected in the present research. Hence, it may be said that the hospitality managers who participated in this study do not learn differently compared with other professionals; however what they learned is influenced by the context in which they are allocated which will be discussed later.
Reflecting upon the nature of manager's work discussed in Chapter 3, Mintzberg (1973) identified ten inseparable roles of managers which are further classified into three groups, namely interpersonal roles, informational roles and decisional roles. If his notion is applicable to the hospitality managers, then a claim may be made that hotel GMs and contract catering GMs play an extra role of active researcher, as well as Mintzberg's ten roles, in their practice. Other authors have recognised that managers are increasingly undertaking action research projects in their own organisations (Coghlan 2001; Skinner, Tagg, & Holloway 2000). Handy (1985) talked about a manager as a person who has to take local responsibility for finding problem resolutions through research. These authors' claims are indeed witnessed in hospitality managers in this study who gather information, understand it, formulate working solutions and find out whether they would work by testing them in the real business environment. "You don't always know the answer but you'll find out" ... "You do your research" (2-30), says Manager B. If a hospitality manager's work is about fulfilling managerial functions (Gulick et al 1937) by performing a variety of tasks, dealing with a wide range of people and large volume of information (Kotter 1982; Luthans et al 1988; Mintzberg 1975), then part of it, if not all, requires the manager to have the ability to carry out research in course of his/her normal work.

The aim of the present research is to identify how management learning can be facilitated through the use of ICTs. To pursue the aim, one research question was to understand how managers learn in the context of hospitality. As discussed above, the participating hospitality managers' learning involves a process of "finding out" which consists of four inter-related stages: 1) Being Challenged, 2) Information Searching, 3) Information Transformation and 4) Testing. This process provides a foundation for further investigation on the role of technology in the managers' learning.

10.3 Technology, Management Learning, Knowledge and Managerial Work

Research objective 4 was to find relationships between managerial learning, knowledge and the use of technology. The objective is addressed in this section. As discussed above, the learning process of the participating managers involves four stages: 1) Being Challenged, 2)
Information Searching, 3) Information Transformation and 4) Testing. Stage one is essentially a feeling of being challenged, which arises out of recognition of a gap between their internal knowledge and the external world experienced. It denotes a psychological status. Technology has a limited role to play at this stage; however, the personal knowledge gap can be related to technology. For instance, Manager F expressed that she learned how to use a new reservation system, which was delivered through a 36-hour information system simulation programme, because she did not like knowing any less about the system than her staff. In this case, disjuncture is associated with process knowledge about using the new reservation system. However, it is mainly governed by her personality of being competitive at work, because as the General Manager of the hotel, she does not have to use the system to make a reservation. Stage three is a process that is also internal and psychological. It concerns with internalising what is exposed to and what is experienced. There is no evidence suggesting that technology has a role to play at this stage in the present study.

However, the empirical data show that some ICT applications and devices play a significant role at stage two and stage three in the participants' learning. Some of them are used by the participants in their daily practice to allocate and retrieve different types of information whether it is historical, or up-dated, at the stage of Information Searching while some can be powerful tools enabling speedy feedback on multiple dimensions to the manager who then readjusts approaches at the stage of Testing. They facilitate the learning process of the managers. This facilitation can be explained in connection to three inter-related dimensions, which are the formality of managerial work, the formality of management development and knowledge interpenetration. The present study has identified the interplays of use of some ICT applications and devices with these three dimensions. Figure 10.1 illustrates the usage patterns of various ICT applications and devices in searching and allocating different kinds of knowledge in different contexts of MD. Some confirm, or partially confirm the propositions suggested in Chapter 6 while others are new and not covered in that chapter. The following section discusses the interplays and makes comparison against the propositions where applicable.

Referring to Figure 6.3 in Chapter 6, Figure 10.1 shares the same horizontal dimension which is the continuum of formality of MD discussed in Chapter 5 and the vertical dimension symbolised the continuum of formality of managerial work developed in Chapter 3. It also includes an extra dimension that is labelled "knowledge interpenetration". As discussed in
the previous section, knowledge can be broadly distinguished into two forms: social knowledge that is socially consented knowing and personal knowledge that is individual subjective knowing. When the participants solve problems, they often search for new information which is essentially external knowledge that consists of social knowledge and personal knowledge. What are required to solve a problem in this context of management learning reflect a level of formality of managerial function. New knowledge that a manager needs to acquire to solve a problem that involves performing a high degree of formality of managerial function is predominantly social knowledge. As the formality of involved managerial function decreases, new knowledge to acquire is a more blended mix of social knowledge and personal knowledge.

![Figure 10.1 Technology, Learning, Knowledge and Work](image)

**Learning Management System**

All the General Managers of hotel company H have used their company's learning management system to access learning materials when they are enrolled for courses. The
contents of learning published on the system covered technical knowledge such as how to carry out a procedure and principles and techniques about how to develop good interpersonal skills. They are a component of social knowledge that underpins and enables professional managers' actions. Hence, it is associated with the formal aspect of managerial work.

These managers value the breadth of contents provided in the system and appreciate that the learning management system allows them to access the knowledge anytime, anywhere. They can log into the system to read about a particular subject or materials around a specific task just before they carry it out anytime at work. Whether or not they have undertaken the course before, or they just want to refresh what was taught on the course. Therefore, it may be said that learning management system can be an effective tool to provide managers with social knowledge that underpins the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of formalised less contextualised learning and integrated learning. This partially confirms Proposition 1, which was learning management system may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning and that of formalised de-contextualised learning. It is because 1) none of the participants engaged with an educational programme that was delivered via a learning management system and 2) some managers consulted specific learning contents on the system within their managerial activities.

**Information System Simulations**

The majority of the participants have used simulations that are designed for acquisition of process knowledge, such as how to check in a guest or how to process a purchase order in the computer system on company training course. Some participants associate the content of learning with being technical. Indeed, the taught knowledge in such a simulation is codified and pre-programmed instructions that the managers have to follow to complete a process, which signals a high degree of formality of managerial function.

The managers express that it is very useful to experience different processes in the system before they actually complete a procedure in the real environment. However, some of them also believe that such training intervention needs to be supplemented with on-the-job, face-to-face personal coaching initiatives. They explain that they tend to just memorise the instructions rather than understand the reason behind it and that such an understanding is
better achieved when actually carrying out the process in the real situation with a more experienced colleague in presence to explain to them.

Therefore, it can be said that an information system simulation is a user-friendly solution to learning about technical and procedural knowledge required in performing a high degree of formality of managerial work, because it allows the managers to practise in an imitation of the real situation without worrying about consequences that a wrong action may cause to the business. It is an effective tool for professionals to explore and get more familiar with the system, though learning needs to be further enforced and enhanced through other means in the real managerial practice. Hence, Proposition 2 is confirmed: Information system simulations are effective in facilitating learning of highly predictable and repetitive element of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that can be codified, pre-programmed and made explicit in the context of formalised less contextualised learning.

**Business Simulations**

None of the participants have used a business simulation. This is maybe because their companies have not provided any in company training provision, or there is not a need for managers to use a business simulation to learn about how to deal with a problem-situation as they actually deal with all different situations in the real organisational context. There is not any evidence suggesting business simulations are effective tools in management learning in this study. Hence, Proposition 3 cannot be proved.

**Podcasting**

Some hotel GMs have used podcasting to acquire information about recent developments in their organisation. Only two of them have downloaded podcasts of learning events such as MBA seminars. A true podcast involves some form of “push” technology such as RSS feed to deliver live sessions to large audience (Altree 2006). That is, when a new live session starts, it is spontaneously delivered to the received through RSS feed, so that the person can watch the live event. These managers have not yet taken advantage of such podcasting, but they have attended live podcasts in which their Chef Executive or other senior manager from the headquarter office gives a talk about what is happening in the organisation and where the company is heading. Such a podcast delivers company-specific propositional knowledge while a podcast of an MBA seminar would be expected to contain
more components of theoretical propositional knowledge of management. However, both forms of knowledge sit in the domain of social knowledge as they are not driven by subjective knowing based on personal live experience.

The social knowledge carried by the podcasts that the participants have watched underpins and directs their work. As already mentioned before, theoretical principles of management are dominant contents of learning in a management education programme or training course. They are often concerned with processes of, such as planning and decision-making (Eraut 1994). Hence, the podcasts of learning events equip the participants with knowledge required in the formal element of their work. The podcasts from the headquarter office update the managers with developments in the organisation and give directions where the organisation is heading to. This also guides the participants’ work. Manager E expresses that having watched the podcast from the Chef Executive he identifies the area that he needs to focus in his work so that his hotel develops towards the organisation's vision.

A podcast is regarded as a good communication channel to get updates in a large international organisation by the managers. It, however, does not permit interactive two-way communication. It serves its purpose as broadcasting an event to a large audience. For the managers who have watched downloadable podcasts of learning sessions, podcasting is considered an effective tool to access learning contents without having to travel to the venue. This saves time and costs on travelling. More importantly, podcasting has potential in facilitating learning and development in hospitality organisations because it can be used to deliver learning sessions facilitated by experts. “A podcast is a unique different way of training” Manager F comments, “It’s like having that professor in front of you teaching you” (6-209). Therefore, podcasting is an effective tool to facilitate learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of formalised less contextualised learning and formalised de-contextualised learning. This partially confirms Proposition 4 because podcasting was not used by the participants to learn within their managerial activities.

**Virtual Classrooms**

The majority of the participants in hotel company H have used virtual classrooms in their management training. They join the live sessions that are facilitated by professional trainers at their desk. They can raise questions during the sessions. A virtual classroom is used to deliver courses such as mentoring, business management skills, IT system, marketing
strategy and brand standard. It enables the delivery of propositional and process social knowledge as well as permits exchange of personal knowledge. Hence, in terms of knowledge that is delivered, virtual classrooms allow transmission of both social and personal knowledge, which shows the commonality with search engines and email. This also means that the knowledge guide professional activities that represent an intensively mixed zone of the formal and informal nature of managerial work.

In general, these managers consider virtual classroom as a good tool to help them learn. It has the advantage of allowing two-way interactions, compared with podcasting. It allows them to attend a training session in their office. Hence, the data suggests that virtual classrooms are effective in facilitating learning of formal and informal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning. This partially confirms Proposition 5. It is maybe because the participating managers have not been involved in a virtual classroom used in an educational programme. However, the virtual classroom is considered as having “a potential in the future” and “an excellent way” (6-225) to gain access to university management programmes.

**Search Engines**

The managers in the study use search engines to access different kinds of information, such as of competitors, food, drink, beverage, furniture and equipments. Reflecting on research on modern technologies in learning, little is know about what information professionals use search engines to retrieve. Sigala and Christou (2002) reported that hospitality and tourism students search for industrial data and articles on the Internet, but research on this has been indeed insufficient. Thus, it is not a surprise to see a call for investigation on the use of ICT applications such as search engines in informal learning in organisations from the Charted Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD 2007).

Nonetheless, information that the participants access through search engines is diverse, including both objective social knowledge and subjective personal knowledge. Some of it is relatively more technical such as legislations and nutrition requirements. Some is more general and less technical, such as news and personal opinions. Hence, the Web really brings rich and diverse knowledge to the managers. This broadens the way in which they approach their work, though some of what they will be doing are still underpinned by the propositional knowledge and process knowledge that they have retrieved, as shall be seen
below. This is probably the zone in which the formal and informal aspects of managerial functions are highly integrated, though the degree of formality of one function can be different to another.

Search engines make it possible for the participants to retrieve specific information from diverse sources on the Internet; thus they are exposed to more options and ideas to take their business forward than otherwise. Some managers often search photos of hotel lobby and restaurants, pictures of flowers, furniture and other decoration items to get new ideas to improve the presentation of their business unit. They also look at how their competitors are presenting their product offerings and make sure that theirs are better and stronger to attract customers. However, whatever they do to change the image of their business unit, they have to meet the branding standards. Hence, there is an element of informal managerial function, which is constrained by formality of organisational rules.

Some participants search information about a dish, beverage, or coffee, or to introduce a new product in their business unit. One may not expect a hotel GM would go down to this level of operations; however, a number of participating hotel GMs have sought for information about cheese, wine and coffee beans. They are not just involved in the design of front-line presentation, but also the development of food and beverage offerings. Contract catering GMs are all very interested in information of dishes. They search for recipes of other countries for themed-events and cultural information, such as customs and traditional clothes worn by people in those countries. Some of them type in a celebrity chef’s name in a search engine to find his/her recipe or new offerings on the website of the celebrity chef’s restaurants.

All this information provides the managers with different options that they can choose to use or to customise to suit their business. Hence, they are given more flexibility to develop business solutions that have relatively long-term effectiveness to inspire best performance. The managers remark that search engines and the Web have enabled them to do this very effectively and efficiently. Hence, search engines are an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal and informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning. This confirms, part of Proposition 6, which stated that search engines may be effective in facilitating learning of formal and informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that can be codified, pre-programmed and made explicit in the context of integrated learning and that of incidental learning. What is not confirmed is the effectiveness
of search engines in incidental learning. This is probably because the participants were not aware of learning that had occurred incidentally.

**Blogs and Web Conferencing**

The majority of the participants do not use blogs and web conferencing. Some of them have not heard of “blogs” while others confuse it with “online forum”. This suggests that blogs are still a relatively new application to the managers. With regard to web conferencing, only one contract catering manager has used Skype for meetings with his colleagues and the line manager. He is the only person who has a webcam in the group. Thus, web conferencing has not yet been widely adopted by the hospitality managers in this study. Consequently, Propositions 7 and 9 cannot be proved in this study.

**Online Communities**

The majority of the hotel managers visit community website, such as the Trip Advisor site, other websites that have a dedicated virtual community area for members to post messages, such as Expedia.com and Lastminute.com. These managers view the personal accounts of individual customers about their hotel and where the hotel is ranked against their competitors in the virtual communities. The way that the participants utilise “online communities” for their work is different from that that Proposition 8 is derived from. As said in Chapter 6, other studies have suggested that community website permits individual contributions to the construction and maintenance of a knowledge base (Jonassen et al 1995; Jonassen & Rohrer-Murphy 1999; Naidu et al 2000) and that it encourages reflective learning from experience at both the individual and group levels (Moyle 2006; Paulsen 2001). Birchall and Giambona (2007) also investigated how to improve the engagement of managers with each other in a virtual learning community to share experiences. The managers in the present study do not engage with their peers to exchange opinions, practices and experiences in a virtual community as such, but they engage with what has been said about their hotel and their competitors in online communities of customers.

They use the online communities as a supplementary source to get guest feedback. The feedback information is considered extra supportive information by the managers. When they analyse guest feedback on their product and services, they use the data from the company’s own survey as the main benchmarking indicators because they regard that
measurement as a well-established official mechanism. Some participants question the whole validity of comments put in the online communities whereas others recognise that some of the comments may not truly reflect the facts. Hence, only a few managers take the comments into account in their management of service quality. This reflects the variability of approaches that the managers are free to choose. When they use the comments, they use them with caution. Both manager B and N suggest that one way to identify whether that comment is a real reflection of that person’s experience in the hotel is to look into the operations of that day, such as whether the Housekeeping Department was under staffed, to make the judgement. This also mirrors the changing and unstable contexts of operations that they have to manage. Hence, information in virtual communities that reflects personal knowing of community members informs the informal aspect of some participating managers’ work.

The question left is: Are online community websites effective in helping the hospitality managers to learn what is required to do the job? The answer is not crystal clear to the managers at the time of this research. Internet-based technology offers a rich repertoire of referential anchors and points of shared reference (Hemetsberger & Reinhardt 2006), consequently, any informal transfer of guest feedback can lead to a great impact on hotel profitability. Hence, the hotels are increasingly taking guest comments on community websites seriously. They expressed their growing concerns over what customers write about their business on the Internet. One of the hotels in the study has recently introduced initiatives to respond to the comments on the Trip Advisor website. We may soon see more hotels taking this approach. The current trend implies the effectiveness of community websites in facilitating learning of personal accounts on the quality of hospitality products and services that the customers received through integrated learning. Thus, this partially confirms Proposition 8 as there is not any evidence suggesting the effective role of community websites in incidental learning.

**Email**

Similar to search engines, email brings a vast range of different information to the managers. They receive information about changes in the company, memos, meeting minutes, information about training courses and so on. Some hotel GMs have signed up for news alerts with some websites and receive updates of changes in the industry, the trends of market development and breaking financial news about banks and their key corporate
clients. Some GMs use email as a coaching tool, forwarding complementary messages to staff to inspire best performance. Contract catering managers handle service bookings via email. Hence, email is a communication channel that brings not only personal knowing but also social knowledge, which help the managers to deal with a variety of different issues, queries and situations.

Manager A comments that emails are the daily business function and are used “day in and day out for everything” (1-83). This denotes email helps these managers to respond to various tasks, issues and situations through exchange of information. In the literature on management, it is widely accepted that managers are involved in a variety of different tasks dealing with large volume of information (Hales 1999; Kotter 1982; Mintzberg 1973; Stewart 1967). The present study affirms this notion. This, however, does not mean that email only facilitates the informal aspect of the managers’ work.

Some managerial functions have a high degree of formality. For instance, the contract catering managers treat their email communications with the client and end customers as official and formal records of sales negotiations. The final confirmation of a booking is usually exchanged through an email. Hotel GMs do not deal with service bookings via email; however when a new procedure is sent to their inbox, they have to act accordingly. Hence, email finds its place in the converging area of informal and formal aspects of managerial work, sharing the same feature with search engines in this connection.

This partially confirms Proposition 10, which states: Email may be effective in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the contexts of integrated learning and incidental learning. The empirical data of the study suggests that email facilitates accessing not only external personal knowledge but also social knowledge. It facilitates learning of not only informal element of managerial work but also the formal aspect. Learning facilitated by email occurs within the managers’ work activities. There is not any evidence suggesting that email plays a role in incidental learning, which is probably because the participants are not aware of such unconscious learning when it occurs.

In summary, in Chapter 6, the following propositions were put forward:
• Proposition 1: Learning management system may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning and that of formalised de-contextualised learning;

• Proposition 2: Information system simulations may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning;

• Proposition 3: Business simulations may be effective in facilitating learning of the informal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised de-contextualised learning;

• Proposition 4: Podcasting may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of integrated learning, formalised de-contextualised learning and formalised less contextualised learning;

• Proposition 5: Virtual classrooms may be effective in facilitating learning of formal and informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that can be codified and pre-programmed and personal understanding of a subject, an issue or an experience in the context of formalised de-contextualised learning and that of formalised less contextualised learning;

• Proposition 6: Search engines may be effective in facilitating learning of the formal and informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that can be codified, pre-programmed and made explicit in the context of integrated learning and that of incidental learning;

• Proposition 7: Blogs may be effective in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the context of integrated learning;

• Proposition 8: Community websites may be effective in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the contexts of integrated learning and incidental learning;

• Proposition 9: Web conferencing may be effective in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the context of integrated learning;

• Proposition 10: Email may be effective in facilitating learning of the informal elements of managerial work that involves use of knowledge that represents a personal
understanding and interpretation of a subject, or an issue, in the contexts of integrated learning and incidental learning.

Empirical data of this research confirm Proposition 2, but do not provide evidence to prove or disprove propositions 3, 7 and 9. Based on the data, propositions 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10 are partially confirmed; therefore the revised propositions are as below:

- Proposition 1: Learning management system is an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of formalised less contextualised learning and integrated learning;
- Proposition 4: Podcasting is an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of formalised de-contextualised learning and formalised less contextualised learning;
- Proposition 5: Virtual classrooms are an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal and informal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning;
- Proposition 6: Search engines are an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal and informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Proposition 8: Community websites are an effective tool in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Proposition 10: Email is an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning.

In addition to this, new relationships of some other ICT applications and devices with knowledge, the formality of managerial work and the formality of management development are identified, which are discussed in the following sections.

**CD-ROMs and DVDs**

Some participants access CD- and DVD-based company-specific, technical knowledge including company policies, brand standards, organisational procedures, workplace legislations and product offerings of their designated suppliers. This type of knowledge, again, forms organisational frameworks which the managers’ actions need to comply with. Often the managers are given a CD-ROM or DVD which contains training materials about, such as marketing, or as a supplementary form of a manual. The contents of learning are structured and pre-programmed by the HR professionals. The managers are actually expected to read about them in their own time whenever it is convenient to them. The
participants regard CD-ROMs and DVDs as providing an effective way of communicating key messages from their headquarter office, although this way of using these media are gradually replaced by the intranet. Thus, it can be suggested that CD-ROMs and DVDs are effective tools in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning (Proposition 11).

The Intranets

When some participants want to find a specific company policy, they visit the intranet straightaway instead of finding the CD or DVD and loading it in the computer, because it is quicker and the policy on the intranet is more updated. However, the perceived effectiveness of the intranet is not clearly cut. Some managers indicate that it is very easy and convenient to download all different forms that they need for a task from the intranet; hence, it is effective to assist the managers with supportive functions.

However, other participants indicate that it is not straightforward to find information that they want on the intranet because the contents have not been well organised. It is also pointed out that they can find out more information about their designated suppliers on the Internet than from their company intranet. Despite reported frustration, the managers rely on this application to allocate and retrieve information which later on informs their work activities. The intranet is important for the managers to access company-specific propositional and process knowledge that enables them to perform the formal aspect of the job at work. Thus, it is proposed that the intranets play an effective role in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning (Proposition 12). Its effectiveness in the current stage of application in the industry requires further improvement through better organisation and inclusion of an embedded search engine.

Information Systems

The participants use in-house information systems to access business statistics and other business parameters. As reported in Chapter 9, the hotel GMs rely on their yield management systems to get statistics, such as the room occupancy rate, room rates, the number of no-shows and information of the guests. Some contract catering managers retrieve sales information from their till systems and finance management systems. All this
factual information forms part of their knowledge base, from which the managers develop an understanding of what is happening and how their business is performing. These systems are critical tools that the participants use to identify the weak areas of business performance, potential problems and opportunities to address them so that financial gains can be maximised.

As General Managers, the participants are responsible for their business unit's daily operations, but most importantly and ultimately for its profitability. Generating profits is regarded as one of the core responsibilities by all the participants. This is their obligation to the company. This is a managerial function that they all have to perform well. Thus, it represents a high degree of formality of managerial work. These information systems have made it much easier and more effective to carry out the function, which is agreed by all participating managers. Therefore, yield management systems and financial management systems including till systems are effective tools for hotel GMs and contract catering GMs, respectively, to learn about the formal aspect of managerial work in the context of integrated learning (Proposition 13).

**Telephone and Telephone Conferencing**

The participating managers use telephones frequently at work to find information, give instructions and exchange information and ideas with peers, subordinates, suppliers and other stakeholders. This reminds us the comment that Mintzberg (1975) has made that a manager's work is featured by verbal communication and that verbal communication enables the manager to find solutions to the problem quickly. Indeed, the participants often need a short answer to a situation or an issue. They usually use telephone or mobile phone to reach the person who can give them an instant answer. A quick telephone call to find an answer probably reflects an informal and less structured approach to work.

Some managers use the telephone for long distance group meetings. For example, in his conference calls with the supplier, participant B and his fellow managers of other business units discussed issues about increased food costs. Through that social interaction, he learned why food prices had increased and what the alternatives are from the supplier. He also learned what other managers were doing to address the same problem. Moreover, he and his colleagues exchange their personal understanding of the situation, ideas and solutions. They learn from each other's strength as well as approaches that they should
avoid. What is exchanged is personal understanding and interpretations of business problems, some of which is about practices (propositional knowledge) while some is about procedures (process knowledge).

Foster and Lin (2003) argued that ICT application such as conferencing call enables a process of synchronous negotiation in which there is multilateral participation in and active responsibility for meaning-making. Indeed, the managers regard conferencing call as a very good way to bring people together to discuss issues and problems. It provides greater potential for group learning. It enables simultaneous interaction and mutual support among the networked group members (Yapp 2005). Through such a group meeting, the managers are able to find solutions to the problems and changing situations that they are confronted. In other words, conferencing call helps them to deal with the volatile, unexpected situations. Therefore, it is proposed that telephone and telephone conferencing are effective tools in facilitating learning of the informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning (Proposition 14).

To summarise, the following new propositions are put forward based on the data of the present study:

- Proposition 11: CD-ROMs and DVDs are effective tools in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning;
- Proposition 12: The intranets are an effective role in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Proposition 13: Yield management systems and financial management systems including till systems are effective tools for hotel GMs and contract catering GMs, respectively, to learn about the formal aspect of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Proposition 14: Telephone and telephone conferencing are effective tools in facilitating learning of the informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning.

Having discussed the interplays of the individual ICT applications and devices with knowledge, the formality of managerial work and the formality of management development it is worth reviewing the role of technology in management learning from a more general point of view. These interplays suggest a theory of formality of technology in
management learning. Prescribed management functions, which are codified knowledge about what a manager should do at work, can be acquired more effectively through pre-planned and structured learning activities, which can facilitated effectively through use of some technologies. By contrast, the informal aspect of their work can be learned more effectively through learning activities that are embedded in their work activities. These learning activities are facilitated effectively through use of some other technologies. The new theory suggests foresaid Proposition 2, revised Propositions 1, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 10, and Propositions 11-14 identified in the data.

Technology provides them with access to a large amount of different information quickly so that they can make decisions to deliver desirable and sustainable outcomes effectively and efficiently. Often they have to make a decision promptly due to the fast changing market. Sometimes, they have to respond to issues straightaway while they are needed on the operation floor. Information and communication technology makes instantaneous flows of information and decision-making possible (Barnett 1999). At the same time it results in increased options coupled with inconsistent and ambiguous information and thus makes decision-making more complex. In information-driven economies (Quinn 1992), knowledge is the most important source of competitive advantage (Grant 1996; Spender 1996). The only way to sustain competitiveness is to promote faster learning (Child & McGrath 2001). Internet-base technology applications are the tools that managers can use to accelerate information searching so as to learn just-in-time knowledge more quickly.

As can be seen in Figure 10.1, a variety of ICT applications and devices are used by the managers in their integrated learning of managing the business. Mumford (1997) argued that integrated management development encourages effective learning because learning is self-directed and self-managed and that what is learned is highly contextualised and relevant to the learner. Hence, the contents of learning is better understood in such a context than in a de-contextualised environment (Mintzberg 2004). There is also a variety of ICT applications and devices falling in the arena of company training provision e.g. formalised less contextualised learning. In the recent survey report (CIPD 2009), it is stated that eLearning has been accepted by organisations as one standard mode of training delivery along with other means. In the present study, we see that the hospitality organisations are moving closer and closer to this trend, comparing with our previous understanding of eLearning practice in training (Li et al 2007). They put resources to develop eLearning provision so that their employees and managers can benefit from it.
However, there is not enough attention on encouraging and supporting informal integrated learning.

The significance of informal learning in the workplace has been widely recognised (Cheetham et al 2001; Enos, Kehrhahn, & Bell 2003; Harrison 2006; Marsick et al 1990; Mocker et al 1982; Watkins et al 1992b). Scholars argue, continuously, that informal integrated learning enhances the effectiveness of learning (Boud & Garrick 1999; Mintzberg 2004; Mumford 1994; Raelin 1997). This study has revealed some ICT applications and devices provide effective means to facilitate informal and integrated learning. However, this is just touching the surface. Hence, the author supports the call for more in-depth investigation on enhancing informal learning through modern ICT applications in organisations.

Often, the hospitality managers find themselves in a situation whereby they need to have all different information to make a decision, in particular when it is concerned with pricing strategies and marketing strategies. To gain technical information such as historical or current business performance parameters of their own business unit, hotel managers use yield management systems while contract catering General Managers use finance management systems and till systems. To gain just-in-time information of their competitors, clients and the market trends, the General Managers use World Wide Web applications such as individual competitor’s website or other Internet-based applications such as online new alerts. Such technical knowledge helps the managers assess how they perform against their competitors, what the demand would be and formulate strategies accordingly to respond to the changing market. “You cannot price dynamically unless you have the information. And all these technologies help you to get the information” (1-42) says Manager A.

The participating managers rely on technology in their process of problem solving because they need information to decide how to address the problem. Technology has a significant role in management learning; however, the managers are not always aware of how their learning is shaped by technology and thus fail to recognise its importance in their learning. Suutari and Vitala (2008) reported that Internet-based learning was evaluated as the least efficient development method, compared with other management development interventions such as formal training courses and coaching, by senior managers who participated in their research. However, some comparative studies highlight the positive impacts of technology on knowledge acquisition. Changchit (2003) reported that learners
who used an Internet-based intelligent system learned more compared to those who did not. In their comparative study, McCall, Arnold and Sutton (2008) conducted experiments to identify the impacts of knowledge management systems on problem-solving and knowledge acquisition of decision markers. They revealed that users of knowledge management systems outperform users of manuals and text books in problem-solving and that the former group of users tend to acquire interpretative problem-solving skills which are key to the formulation of tacit knowledge whereas the latter group of users tend to simply memorise codified rules and procedures. Indeed, the present research discovers the significant role of technology in facilitating learning of different forms of knowledge that feed into the hospitality managers’ work in different learning contexts. This facilitation occurs at the stage of Information Searching and/or that of Testing.
Chapter 11

Conclusion

Management is regarded as an essential resource in unlocking the potential of an organisation (Armstrong 2006; Storey 1989; Storey 1990); however abundant studies have pointed out that there are many problems in developing managers. During the past years, information and communication technology has been continuously reported in research as a tool to facilitate learning in education (Pollard et al 2001; Ravenscroft 2001; Sigala & Christou 2003); however little is know about its role in management development in the workplace (Li 2005; Li et al 2007; Li, Buhalis, Lockwood, & Gray 2006; Stacey et al 2004). Hence, the present research aimed to identify how management learning might be facilitated through the use of ICT. The UK hospitality industry was chosen as the context of the research. To pursue the aim, three research questions were to be answered, which were:

1. What do hospitality managers need to learn?
2. How have they learned them?
3. What is the role of technology in their learning?

The first research question was addressed through a review of characteristics of hospitality industry that pose challenges to managerial practice and a review of management literature. It is learned that a manager's job involves performing a variety of tasks that link to the responsibilities that s/he holds for the company, which displays as managerial functions. In order words, an individual managerial function is to reach an objective that the manager is responsible for through performing various tasks. In the process of achieving the objective, some tasks are repetitive procedures that must be followed perpetually. These predictable tasks can be programmed as contents of learning for future managers. These features of predictability, perpetuity and programmability symbolise the formal aspect of managerial work.

Other tasks are variable. Managers are free, to some extent, to choose which task to perform and how to carry it out given various cultural, social and organisational factors and personal preferences. Moreover, managerial work is constantly interrupted by unexpected situations e.g. volatility thus it is characterised by variety and brevity. The service nature of
hospitality industry put more pressure on the managers to react to the unexpected promptly. These features of variety, variability and volatility symbolise the informal element of managerial work. Both elements constitute what future hospitality managers need to master in order to do the job. Furthermore, the present study reveals that much of the participating managers’ work involves activities of “finding out”, which is overlooked in the management literature. Mintzberg (1973) introduced ten roles of a manager. It is argued that this needs to be expanded to acknowledge the new role of research in practice.

To address the second research question, the study embraced notions advocated in different schools of thought in learning and reviewed methods of management development. The field study was conducted to examine how hospitality managers learn to manage the business. It was found that the participants learn to manage the business through solving problems grounded in their managerial activities and through reflective thinking. The participating managers refer to this process as learning through “finding out” in their work experience. The process involves four stages which are “Being Challenged”, “Information Searching”, “Information Transformation” and “Testing”. This process of “finding out” and its four stages strongly reflect notions of experiential learning theory and the problem-solving cycle.

It is believed that experience is a base of learning. When the gap between personal knowing developed from previous experience and the action experience that manager is involved is recognised, disjuncture occurs, which encourages learning to take place. Disjuncture highlights the psychological nature of learning. The process of learning is indeed complex. Any form of learning stages is an oversimplification of human learning, though it makes analysing the phenomenon possible. All schools of thought in learning contribute to our understanding of how people learn. As witnessed in this study, at the stage of Information Searching, the managers use different means to acquire external knowledge, such as reading a book or an article on the Internet, attending a lecture or a learning session delivered via virtual classroom, or learning from other people through observation and social interactions. Hence, learning is also about interacting with the environment which contains people, events and other social and cultural factors. This very social nature of learning is emphasised in social learning and situated learning theories.

The core of learning may lie on “knowing”, which involves internal and mental processes. In this study, reflective thinking is found acting as a mechanism for sense-making. We see
changes in the managers as a result of learning through their use of language and behaviours. This is where we find cognitive learning theories and constructive learning theories central to understand how internalisation of information takes place in the mind of the managers.

To address the third research question, the study reviewed research on the applications of different technologies in learning and explored how the participants use technology in their learning. It is revealed that technology plays an important role in their process of problem-solving because it facilitates speedy search of abundant and targeted information and contributes to the development of personal knowledge of managers. Consequently, the managers can make prompt decisions on courses of action that are likely to generate relatively long-term effectiveness for their organisation. The research identified the interplays of some ICT applications and devices with knowledge, the formality of managerial work and the formality of management development. Some of the interplays confirm, or partially confirm, propositions derived from literature review. New exploratory propositions have also emerged from the research. These propositions may suggest a theory of formality of technology in management learning.

The aim of the study was not to generalise findings to the arena of management. However, reflecting upon what have been found out from this research, it may be possible to distinguish some management practices that are specific to the hospitality context and some that are in line with management in general. It is believed that the practices that differentiate themselves from management practice in general include:

- Managing the unexpected with immediate response, which is often seen in the delivery of service;
- Managing the volatile demand with a well-balanced knowledge about yield management, the local market and the business unit, which is often witnessed in maximising revenues in both hotel and contract catering businesses;
- Managing expectations of clients to secure and improve the work relation, which is especially important to contract catering businesses.

Managerial practices that share the commonalities of management in general are:

- Managing customers e.g. meeting their needs and requirements to build and maintain good customer relations, which is commonly practised in the service sector;
Managing business operations, in particular in the area of production and product
development, which is a common managerial practice in the service sector and, to
some extent, in the manufacture sector as well;

• Managing people and their development through training, mentoring and other
methods.

With regard to managerial learning, hospitality managers develop themselves by engaging
with a variety of learning and development activities within and outside their organisations.
This reflects the common theme identified in celebrated research on management
development in other industries. However, operational training appears to play a significant
role in the participating GMs, which mirrors finding reported in other studies (Ladkin 2000b;
Ladkin et al 2000). This kind of training often takes place on the job. The learning process
that is found in this research affirms notions of learning theories and research on how
professionals learn. This was discussed in the previous chapter.

A number of lessons are learned. Firstly, the process of “finding out” emerged from the data
mirrors the adaptive process of human learning. Problem-based, reflective experiential
learning is also reported in research into learning of professional practitioners (Argyris et al
1974; Kolb 1984b; Kolb 1976; Schön 1991). Based on the data of the present research, no
evidence suggests that the participants learn differently compared with other professionals.
However, this does not imply a disagreement to the notion that people learn differently as
advocated in adult learning literature (Honey & Mumford 1992b; Rogers 2002; Rogers
2003). The present research indeed witnesses different personal preferences of learning
within the learning processes. Thus, it may be said that at a macro level there is a process of
problem-based, reflective and experiential learning and that at a micro level there are
personal differences in learning.

Secondly, in information- and knowledge-driven societies, there is a continuous force to
learn that is embedded in work. In the workplace, learning activities are part of work
activities whilst work activities involve learning. Making a distinction between “learning” and
“work” in the context of workplace learning does not help the understanding of
management learning at work. A new epistemology that permits the converging nature of
learning and work should be encouraged.
Thirdly, the previous point inevitably leads to discussions around informal, un-planned, embedded learning in the workplace. Many authors (Cheetham et al 2001; Marsick 2003; Marsick et al 1990; Watkins et al 1992b) have identified that managers cannot benefit from informal learning initiatives because this provision is not well supported despite it represents a significant proportion of workplace learning. This is however still witnessed in the present study. Organisations still fail to incorporate research and take actions to facilitate effective informal learning for their advantage.

The study has two unique theoretical contributions to the body of knowledge. Firstly, based on the literature review, it was identified that there is little known about how hospitality managers learn (Ladkin 1999). This study reveals that the way in which participating hospitality managers learn to manage the business is problem-solving, experiential and reflective in nature. As mentioned previously, the study identified that the process of learning involves four stages and that reflective thinking is central to sense-making. These findings support and affirm a range of theoretical ideas advocated in learning theories. They also provide empirical evidence of how hospitality managers learn.

Secondly, knowledge on the role of technology in management learning in the workplace is limited. The present study identifies that a range of ICT applications and devices facilitate managerial learning effectively at the stage of Information Searching and that of Testing. Such facilitation is achieved through technological interplays with knowledge interpenetration, the formality of managerial work and the formality of management development. The research identifies that some technology applications are effective tools in helping the hospitality managers learn the formal elements of managerial work while other applications are effective in facilitating learning of the informal elements. Searching engines, email and virtual classrooms are effective tools for learning of both the formal and informal aspects of manager's job. The effectiveness of the use of technology applications is also associated with the type of management development. These identified relationships suggest a theory of formality of technology in management learning. This theory provides a conceptual framework for the study of the role of technology in managerial learning. It incorporates theoretical principles in management, management development and learning. It is believed that it permits a new approach which will encourage more fruitful and meaningful practical ideas on developing managers more effectively in education and training.
The study has some methodological contributions. It employed observation and interview to collect data on learning experience. Observation is a very good method to gather behavioural data about learning activities such as reading, questioning and so on. It is less desirable to collect unobservable data. However, observation led to an unexpected outcome. It is found an excellent method to establish a personal connection with the participant. The managers who had been observed tended to search inside them and told the researcher how they felt about a learning experience during the interview. They were more willing to open their world than other managers who were only interviewed. Based on such experience, there is a need to further encourage other researchers to think about using techniques or methods, such as observation, to build rapport in their research in organisations so that rich data can be collected.

The study has implications for management education. It discovers that research activities are a significant part of managerial work. Professional managers are constantly engaged with such activities to find problem resolution. Management education programmes often focus on functions such as planning, controlling and relationship building. Students are given opportunities to develop problem-solving skills (Porter & Makibbon 1988); however, they are not informed that actually, in management practice, a good proportion of work involves problem-finding and problem-solving through activities of “finding out”. When they take the role of manager in business, they could find management practice alien.

Such experience was already told by some managers in this study. They questioned the practicality of what they had been taught in business education programmes. This is because they are always in a mood of finding problem resolution which involves researching and understanding a large volume of different information that can be inconsistent or even conflicting. Academies in management education need to recognise this and provide opportunities for the students to practise the managerial function of “finding out”. Work-based learning may provide a solution to bring in some level of organisational context in which they can develop their skills to find and solve a problem that has a real business meaning.

What have been learned from this research sheds light on human resources practice. It was evident that, based on the interviews with the HR managers, the core interest of HR professionals is to make all learning opportunities available to the managers. However, the focus tends to be put on hands-on technical on-the-job training and formalised training
courses which can be classroom-based, or through a learning management system, or the combination of both. What has been overlooked is that actually managers often learn how to do their job through finding out. In their research, they search for information through all different channels using different ICT applications and devices in order to make appropriate decisions that will take the business forward.

Taking the intranet as an example, it is a main medium through which interviewed GMs find company policies and procedures. However, some managers comment that their company intranets do not work well because the contents on there are not well organised whilst others report that they have to use a different work station to access the company intranet instead of the computer on their desk. Community websites such as Trip Advisor and intermediaries' websites such as Expedia are increasingly influencing the hotel GMs' decision on service quality control and even actions to improve customer relationships. Therefore, hospitality organisations and their HR professionals should be more aware that their GMs develop through conducting research in course of their normal practice. Efforts should be made to develop resources that can facilitate their research.

What is also being overlooked is establishing an environment that enables personal knowledge of management practice to flourish among the management population. Taylor and Burgess (1998) argued that it is important to take a balanced approach to personal, propositional and process knowledge in developing professionals. Innovation is being initiated to help managers develop, such as one reported in Brichill and Giambona's (2007) study. ICT applications such as online forums, web conferencing and blogs have great potentials in facilitating exchange of personal knowledge and building good practice in management; however, hospitality organisations are lagging behind in the adoption of such technology applications, thus are not able to take full advantages that they can provide.

The study has its limitations. As said previously, little is known about how managers in the hospitality industry learn and the role of technology in their learning. Hence, the research journey was embarked on to explore the issues by examining a small group of hospitality managers, which makes generalising findings challenging. However, the depth and richness of participants' personal accounts about their learning enable the inquirer to establish the process of their learning and to explore how they use ICT applications in that process. It is also recognised that learning is a complex phenomenon. What is found and discussed in this study is very small in the research field of learning. It only explores the very surface of
human learning. Moreover, the proposed theory of formality of technology in management learning is based on data of the study that is exploratory in nature. It puts forward the following propositions:

- Learning management system is an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of formalised less contextualised learning and integrated learning;
- Information system simulations are an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning;
- Podcasting is an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the contexts of formalised de-contextualised learning and formalised less contextualised learning;
- Virtual classrooms are an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal and informal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning;
- Search engines are an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal and informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Community websites are an effective tool in facilitating learning of informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Email is an effective tool in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- CD-ROMs and DVDs are effective tools in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of formalised less contextualised learning;
- The intranets are an effective role in facilitating learning of the formal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Yield management systems and financial management systems including till systems are effective tools for hotel GMs and contract catering GMs, respectively, to learn about the formal aspect of managerial work in the context of integrated learning;
- Telephone and telephone conferencing are effective tools in facilitating learning of the informal elements of managerial work in the context of integrated learning.

A confirmative research could be conducted to examine the propositions by incorporating quantitative techniques with a sufficient sample size in the future.
Annex A

Introduction Letter

(to regional Human Resources Directors)

(Date)

Dear

Re: Research on Hospitality Managers' Learning

My name is Li Li. I am a PhD student at the University of Surrey. I would like to invite you to participate in my research. My study aims to identify how an operational manager's professional development can be facilitated by information and communication technologies. An overview of the research is enclosed for your reference. The work in progress will help the industry to better develop managers.

With your permission and assistance, I would like to study the work activities and learning experience of five of your General Managers / General Catering Managers. These participating managers should be responsible for the daily operations of the business and responsible for 50-249 employees / more than 10 employees and work in London and the South East.

In order to gather data for my research, I would like to
- obtain the job descriptions for their positions,
- observe their work activities during a two day period that suits their schedule and (not applicable to Accor Hotels and Sodexo)
- interview them in person in their workplace.

Each interview will take no more than 45 minutes to complete. Some key interview questions are enclosed with this letter for your information. All data gathered will not identify the individuals interviewed and only be used for this research. The research findings will be available to you when the study is completed. They may assist you with your learning and development policies and procedures.

I should be most grateful if you could help me with the research. A response form is enclosed for you to complete. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely

Li Li
MPhil/PhD Researcher
University of Surrey
Faculty of Management and Law
School of Management Building
Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH UK

Enclosed with this letter:
Overview of the Research
A Sample of Interview Questions
Response Form
Overview of the Research

This research is about identifying in what ways hospitality managers' professional development can be facilitated by information and communication technologies. It is to fulfil the requirements for the award of the degree of doctor of philosophy by the University of Surrey. The research objectives are to understand how operational managers in the hospitality industry learn what is significant to their job and to explore the role of technologies in their learning. The PhD researcher has engaged, extensively, with literature on management in the hospitality industry, management development, learning theories and eLearning. Some of key readings include:

- Honey, P. 1993, "Learning from experience", Improve your people skills p. 103.
- Kolb, D. 1984, Experiential learning - experience as the source of learning and development London: Prentice Hall.

Two theoretical propositions have emerged for the literature, which are:

1. The formal aspect of managerial work represents explicit knowledge about management, which can be acquired effectively through formal learning;
2. The informal aspect of managerial work represents implicit management knowledge, which can be developed effectively through informal learning.

By studying what participating managers do and how they learn, the research is to test whether the propositions stand and to find out how technologies could influence learning.
A Sample of Interview Questions

1. What is your core responsibility as a manager?

2. If I followed you through a typical day, what would I see you doing?

3. What tasks are significant to your responsibility?

4. How have you learned about performing the tasks?

5. Considering your own experience of learning with technologies, how do you see the role of technologies in your learning?

6. How do you feel about the effectiveness of the technology in your learning?

7. How do you see the role that technologies could play to facilitate hospitality managers’ professional development in the future?
Please fill in the response form and return it to:

Li Li
MPhil/PhD Researcher
University of Surrey
Faculty of Management and Law
School of Management Building
Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH UK
Email: li.li@surrey.ac.uk
Tel: 01483 689342
Fax: 01483 689516

Response Form

☐ Yes, we would like to participate in the research. Li Li can contact our managers listed below for her research.

☐ Yes, we would like to participate in the research. Job descriptions are provided with this form.

☐ No. We would like to decline the invitation.

Recommended business unit managers for Interviews:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Job Title</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
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Annex B

Participant Consent Form - Interview

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be audio taped during the interview and that I reserve the right to terminate the recording at any point of time during the interview.
- I understand that data will be held confidentially, in a secure place and in a password-protected computer at the School of Management, University of Surrey in the form of hard and electronic copies of transcripts and audiotapes. This data will be accessible to the researcher only.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher if I require further information about the research and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Management, University of Surrey, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed .................................................................(Research participant)

Print name ...............................................................Date .......................................

Contact details:

   Researcher: Ms Li Li, Li.Li@surrey.ac.uk

   Supervisors: Professor Andrew Lockwood, A.Lockwood@surrey.ac.uk
               Professor David Gray, D.E.Gray@surrey.ac.uk
               Reader Dimitrios Buhalis, D.Buhalis@surrey.ac.uk

   School of Management Research Ethics Coordinator: Dr. Anita Eves, A.Eves@surrey.ac.uk
Annex C

Participant Consent Form - Observation

- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be observed for two days and that I reserve the right to terminate the exercise at any point of time during the observation.
- I understand that data will be held confidentially, in a secure place and in a password-protected computer at the School of Management, University of Surrey in the form of hard and electronic copies of transcripts. This data will be accessible to the researcher only.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher if I require further information about the research and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Management, University of Surrey, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed ................................................................. (Research participant)

Print name ............................................................... Date .............................................

Contact details:

Researcher: Ms Li Li, Li.Li@surrey.ac.uk

Supervisors: Professor Andrew Lockwood, A.Lockwood@surrey.ac.uk
Professor David Gray, D.E.Gray@surrey.ac.uk
Reader Dimitrios Buhalis, D.Buhalis@surrey.ac.uk

School of Management Research Ethics Coordinator: Dr. Anita Eves, A.Eves@surrey.ac.uk
Annex D

Examples of eLearning Applications

Some examples of information and communication technology applications used in learning and teaching:

- **Blogs** - giving access to expert knowledge and updates of online interaction of people. They can be multimedia and also linked into other blogs and content.
- **Email** – used as a direct channel to learners, functioning as a tool for coaching, supporting learning and sharing just-in-time content.
- **Instant Messaging** – bringing people together to collaborate with voice and real time text chat.
- **Podcasts** – digital audio recordings of live conferences, workshops, seminars and lectures etc.
- **Search engine** – providing a direct link to public domain knowledge including research, books, articles, audio and video.
- **Simulation** – an imitation of, such as, a realistic decision-making context.
- **Virtual classrooms** – allowing two or more locations to interact via two-way video and audio transmissions and to share documents, computer-displayed information and whiteboards. Like classroom based learning, sessions are fixed to specific times.
- **Web conferencing** – can be used to conduct synchronous meetings or presentations via the Internet. Some features of a web conferencing include live video, real time audio communication, recording for future reference and text chat. MSN Messenger, Yahoo Messenger and Skype are some applications that enable such a web conferencing.
- **Wiki** – a community website which can be edited and added to by any member so that a knowledge base is constructed and maintained.
- Locating references in **bibliographic systems** and **electronic journals**.
- Reading online **CD-ROM** and **DVD-based learning materials**.
## Annex E

### The Initial Thematic Framework

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Main Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| 1 Learner (Rogers 2002, Goldstain 1993) | 1.1 Educational Background  
1.2 Emotion-Technology  
1.3 Managerial Responsibilities (the interview guide)  
1.4 Motivation  
1.5 Perception of Learning (the interview guide)  
1.6 Preferred Way of Learning  
1.7 Social Context Awareness  
1.8 Working Background (the interview guide) |
| 2 Learning Content (Boud 2001) | 2.1 Predominantly Predictable-Perpetual-Programmable (the conceptual framework of managerial work in Chapter 3)  
2.1.1 Company Policies and Procedures  
2.1.2 Event Administration  
2.1.3 Financial Planning and Control  
2.1.4 Property Management System  
2.1.5 Regulations and Legislations  
2.2 Predominantly Variable-Volatile-Variety (the conceptual framework of managerial work in Chapter 3)  
2.2.1 Business Environment  
2.2.2 Dealing with Suppliers  
2.2.3 Dealing with Customers  
2.2.4 Dealing with the Head Office  
2.2.5 Dealing with Staff  
2.2.6 Local Unit Knowledge  
2.2.7 Managing Facilities  
2.2.8 Managing Service Quality  
2.2.9 Maximising Revenues  
2.2.10 Product and Service Development  
2.2.11 Sales and Marketing  
2.3 Other  
2.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility  
2.3.2 French Language  
2.3.3 Spanish Languages  
2.3.4 Loyalty  
2.3.5 Micro-management  
2.3.6 Time Management |
3.2 Formalised & Less Contextualised (Marsick et al 1990, Mumford 1997 & Rogers 2002)  
3.3 Incidental (Marsick et al 1990, Mumford 1997 & Rogers 2002)  
3.5 Other |
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<tr>
<td>4 Learning Process</td>
<td>4.1 Constructivist (Kelly 1955, Rahman 1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(various authors, see the cell on the right)</td>
<td>4.2 Experiential (Freire 1972, Kolb 1984 &amp; Schön 1983)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 Humanist (Rogers 2002, Megginson &amp; Whitaker 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.4 Social and Situated (Vygotsky 1978, Lave &amp; Wenger 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.5 Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Technology (the interview guide)</td>
<td>5.1 Perceived Future of Technology (the interview guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.2 Technological Perceptions (the interview guide)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.3 Technology Application Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.4 The Use of Technology (the interview guide)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Annex F

### The Definitions of Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner</td>
<td>Attributes that the interviewed manager possesses, including his/her highest education attainment, working background, stances of learning and maybe other attributes to be revealed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Educational Background</td>
<td>The highest educational attainment and apprenticeship in management that the manager had.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Managerial Responsibilities</td>
<td>Description of a GM’s responsibilities for the company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Motivation to Learn</td>
<td>Factors that drive the manager's learning as well as those that don’t encourage learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Perception of Learning</td>
<td>What is one’s view on learning in general and/or in relation to a particular form of learning such as formal education, a training course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Preferred Way of Learning</td>
<td>The way which the manager likes to take in learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Social Context Awareness</td>
<td>The views that one has on the social context, himself/herself in this context, other people and how one should interact with other members of the context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Working Background</td>
<td>What the manager did in his/her previous jobs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Content</td>
<td>What is being learned. It can be a subject of learning, work activities, processes, procedures, policies of company. e.g. implicit and explicit management knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Predominantly Predictable-Perpetual-Programmable</td>
<td>Management knowledge that is predominantly driven by being foreseeable, continually recurring and being permanent in nature. Hence it can be formally codified in advance so that it can be disseminated to and learned by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Company Policies and Procedures</td>
<td>Instructions, processes of performing a task set up by the organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Dealing with Events</td>
<td>Administrative tasks prior to the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Financial Planning and Control</td>
<td>Part of financial management but the focus is on planning such as preparing budgets/forecast, maintaining account and controlling expenses and costs etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 Property Management System</td>
<td>Knowing how to use company property management system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5 Regulations and Legislations</td>
<td>National laws that a company must follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Predominantly Variable-Volatile-Variety</td>
<td>Management knowledge that is predominantly driven by being changeable, liable to change quickly and being different and diverse in nature. Hence it’s difficult to formally codified in advance so that it could then be disseminated to and learned by others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Business Environment</td>
<td>Knowledge about the business environment e.g. what is happening outside the company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 Dealing with Stakeholders</td>
<td>Managerial activities concerned with parent company, other units, clients, suppliers, employees, customers and other stakeholders, such as staffing, developing good relationship with clients and managing expectations of stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Local Unit</td>
<td>Knowledge about the business unit, its strengths and weakness, its...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Definitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>performance and capability etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 Managing Facilities</td>
<td>Building and equipments maintenance, such as refurbishment, repairing, replacing items etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5 Managing Service Quality</td>
<td>Service management, service quality control, its delivery etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.6 Maximising Revenues</td>
<td>Yield management, extend revenue streams, maximising profits etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.7 Product and Services</td>
<td>Initiatives to develop or improve company offerings, such as introducing new an idea or concept into what the business unit is doing both in terms of a new product or an existing product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.8 Sales and Marketing</td>
<td>Promoting products and services to the client and the public</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
<td>Social responsibilities that an organisation has</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2 Foreign Languages</td>
<td>Other languages such as Spanish and French.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.3 Loyalty</td>
<td>Being loyal to the company one works for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.4 Micro-management</td>
<td>&quot;more picky detailed things&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.5 Time Management</td>
<td>Managing time and prioritising work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Learning Context</td>
<td>The situation whereby the learning took place, the background information of a given learning experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Formalised &amp; De-contextualised</td>
<td>Learning occurs away from managerial activities; explicit intention is development; clear development objectives; structured by educators; planned beforehand or reviewed subsequently as learning experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Formalised &amp; Less Contextualised</td>
<td>Learning often occurs away from managerial activities; explicit intention is development; clear development objectives; structured by HR professionals or external consultants; planned beforehand or reviewed subsequently as learning experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Incidental</td>
<td>Learning often occur within managerial activities; explicit intention is task performance; no clear development objectives, unstructured in development terms; not planned in advance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Integrated</td>
<td>Learning occurs within managerial activities; explicit intention is task performance &amp; development; clear development objective; structured for development by boss/subordinate/the manager; planned beforehand / reviewed subsequently as learning experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Other</td>
<td>Other forms of learning context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Learning Process</td>
<td>The way in which learning took place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Cognitive</td>
<td>Knowledge is independent of people. Humans have the capability to learn e.g. intelligence. Intellectual development is only possible when intelligence is used and stimulated throughout life. Human beings have internal maps and use them to make sense of outside world. The engagement of the mind is active in processing data through a number of stages: sensory input, temporary storage and active processing, encoding and relatively longer/permanent storage and output. The outcome of cognitive learning is often demonstrated through, for example, a better understanding of a subject, the ability of solving problems or the use of language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Constructivist</td>
<td>Knowledge is not an objective reality to be discovered instead it is</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Themes Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>contingent</strong> and <strong>provisional</strong>. It cannot be transferred, but can be constructed. Humans create personal constructs from own feelings, ideas, memories, evaluations about events, place and other people and cultural background. People then <strong>manipulate</strong> these <strong>constructs</strong> in order to learn what is happening. Learning is not about discovering the truth. It is about the <strong>construction of new perceptions</strong>. [in management] learning is not finding out what other people already know but solving their own problems for their own purpose by questioning, thinking and testing until the solution is part of their life.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 4.3 Experiential | Experience forms the basis of learning. Learning from current experience creates the needs for learning. Learning is accomplished by **critically analysing experience** and **acting based on that analysis**. Learning proceeds in a **cycle** of concrete experience, critical reflection on experience, abstract conceptualisation and action which leads to further critical reflection. When critically reflecting upon experience the learner will **search for new knowledge and experience** and then **select appropriate ones to judge the present experience by**. This exercise is a powerful way to make sense of experience. Action is part of the learning process instead of the outcome. Learning is effective when the learner actively **engages with his/her context**. Hence, creating experience for learners will help them learn because it enables them to experience what they are learning about. |

| 4.4 Humanist | Learners are active, searching for meaning and the fulfilment of **goals that they set for themselves**. Motivation for learning comes from within and learners' urges drive towards more **autonomous** and **self-managed learning**. People learn by engaging with the world around them as well as with themselves, which mirror the notions of social learning theory. |

| 4.5 Social and Situated | People learn the language, attitudes, values and practices by **participating in activities** with others in the **community of practice**. Therefore, active engagement of learners with their environment, **imitation** and **internalisation of value systems** acquired from others are important. Much of learning is based on the **need to communicate** and **cooperate with others**. Social learning recognises the role of stimulus-response mechanism. Within the domain of social learning, situated learning is about learning occurs in legitimate peripheral participation situations, e.g. **on the edge of communities of practice**, such as work-based learning. Learning support is provided through the form of "scaffolding", e.g. **cooperation of more expert peers**. |

| 4.6 Other | Other forms of learning process |

| 5 Technology | Information communication technology (ICT) applications such as email, search engine etc. |

| 5.1 Perceived Future of Technology | How one thinks of the future of technology. |

<p>| 5.2 Technological Perceptions | How one thinks of the role of technology in work and learning such as &quot;technology speeds things up&quot;, or &quot;technology makes our lives easier&quot;, or &quot;emails are more of a communication tool rather than&quot; |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Technology Application Literacy</td>
<td>One's awareness of new ICT applications, degree of understanding of an ICT application and efficiency in using technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 The Use of Technology</td>
<td>Is technology used or not? How is it used? What is it used for?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Annex G**

**A Sample of Indexing Report**

**Name:** 2.1.2 Dealing with Events

1. Reference 1 – 1.33% Coverage

25: With the account management side it is very much just following the procedures, all way down the line from setting up the schedule to meeting the client, to doing the tasting, to doing the requirement, to doing the performance, to doing the terms and conditions, to following up the invoices a whole list of things you have to do. Fortunately we have to do Hospitality Assure through the HCIMA. And that is really useful for me because I could then put in procedures and pick up procedures that were already in place.

2. Reference 1 – 2.96% Coverage

38: I can call it operational, operational day-to-day business, how to organise, the example, a big dinner party. Let’s say somebody comes to me and says: I need catering function for 200 people. So what do I need to do? And you will be knowing which way along the line, you will make sure you have got all the equipments, you have got food sorted, you’ve got enough staff. All of these will be step by step.
Dear XXX,

Thank you for reviewing the coding for my PhD research which looks into how hospitality managers learn and the role of technology in their learning.

I have developed a number of themes and subthemes based on my analysis on 8 interview transcripts. I would be pleased if you could provide me with your comments on my coding: **To what extent the paragraph coded at the subtheme represents the code as defined?**

The following materials are provided for the review of coding:
- A Thematic Framework, which outlines the key themes and subthemes identified;
- The Definitions of Themes, which gives the definitions of all themes and subthemes;
- 36 Coding Reports, each of which shows all texts that have been coded at the subtheme;
- 8 full interview transcripts.

I appreciate that the result of the review will be available in the early October. Meanwhile, if you need more information, please feel free to contact me.

Best regards,

Li Li
MSc
PhD Researcher

University of Surrey
Faculty of Management and Law
School of Management Building
Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH UK

Tel: +44 (0)1483 689342
Fax: +44 (0)1483 690516
Mobile: +44 (0)7985 444659

email: li.li@surrey.ac.uk
www.surrey.ac.uk
Annex I

Screen Shots: Analysing Data in NVivo

Using the Query Function to Identify Relationships between Themes

Building a Model in NVivo
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