

Purpose:

To evaluate the career patterns and global mobility trajectories of hospitality and tourism graduates that are relevant for global knowledge and local talent management.

Design/approach:

This study maps and assesses the public profiles of over 2000 hospitality and tourism graduates from five institutions each from a different territory using a popular online professional network.

Findings:

The findings highlight a network of worldwide mobility from hospitality and tourism graduates of the five institutions. The findings also suggest five different types of mobility trajectories (i.e., stateside, intra-regional, continental, inter-regional, and global), and career patterns (i.e., rooted, prospector, seeker, two-homes, and wanderer).

Research limitations/implications:

Geographical mobility of graduates in tourism and hospitality is one of the less studied phenomena, however, it is important to understand due to growing concerns regarding globalization of the workplace and internationalization of education.

Practical implications:

This study provides insights into how knowledge transfer and talent management could be impacted by the global graduate movements.

Originality/value:

This is one of the first studies to-date to combine mobility trajectories with a classification of career patterns to provide implications relevant for global knowledge and local talent management.

KEYWORDS: career patterns; mobility; internationalization; knowledge transfer

1. Introduction

The long term success of hospitality and tourism depends on the recruitment and management of talented staff in a business environment defined by globalisation and mobility (Hsu, Xiao and Chen, 2017). Internationalisation of education and career is seen as having benefits for individuals in terms of their career and other aspects of life (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013; Henard, Diamond and Roseveare, 2012). Since mid-1990s there has been growth in interest in global education through mobility (i.e. domestic and international migration) of academic staff and students (Kehm and Teichler, 2007).

Mobilities is a social science paradigm that investigates movement of people, objects and information (Cresswell, 2011). Mobilities studies involve a large spectrum of types of movement of people at different scales, from a local commute to circumnavigating the globe (Urry, 2016). Methodologies of mobilities studies vary greatly as well. For example, studies published in Nature and Science journals on human mobility find the everyday mobility (i.e. patterns of recurrent physical movement of individuals) is rather predictable (Gonzalez, Hidalgo and Barabasi, 2008; Song, Koren, Wang and Barabasi, 2010). Long-term mobility, such as migration, appears to be generally related to the economic development and is less sensitive to distances than short-term travel, and yet can be predicted through modelling as well (Nie, Wu, Yan, Liu and Wang, 2018).

Career mobility is a concept related to human mobility. It refers to the movement of employees between positions within or between organisations, including complete changes of occupation and relocation (Sicherman and Galor, 1990). Career mobility is a prominent human resource management topic that reflects evolving workplace structures and diversification of career mobilities away from a linear career progression (Duncan, 2018; Florentine, 2016; Kaye, Williams and Cowart, 2017). Knowledge about the geographical and

career mobilities of hospitality and tourism workers is lacking and warrants further research (Baum *et al.*, 2016).

The connection between human mobility and career mobility raises the following questions: in an industry such as hospitality and tourism that is truly dependent on global movements, are employees generally open to mobility and career exploration? Are there differences in career patterns and mobility trajectories between employees from different geographical regions? What are the talent management implications of career mobility? In the context of this study, talent management is defined as strategic human resource practices that include retention, workforce planning, leadership/high potential development, and professional development (Christensen Hughes and Rog, 2008).

Considering these questions, the objective of the present study is to explore and evaluate the career patterns and global mobility trajectories of hospitality and tourism employees that are relevant for global knowledge and local talent management. While previous studies have provided information regarding which industries tourism and hospitality graduates may join (e.g. O’Leary and Deegan, 2005) or how graduate careers are likely to progress within hospitality (e.g. Smith, Clement and Pitts, 2018), very little is known regarding their geographical mobility. The present study maps and assesses the public profiles of over 2000 hospitality and tourism employees who graduated from five institutions each from a different country (i.e., Australia, Finland, United Kingdom, and the United States) or territory (i.e., Hong Kong) using a popular online professional network.

As a result, a map of hospitality and tourism employees according to different graduate backgrounds and mobility trajectories (i.e., stateside, intra-regional, continent, inter-regional, and global), as well as a categorization of career patterns (i.e., rooted, prospector, seeker, two-homes, and wanderer) are developed. The present study provides insights into how knowledge transfer (i.e. dissemination of knowledge within and across organizations)

and talent management could be impacted by the global employee movements. The present study also benefits hospitality and tourism companies in areas of recruitment and retention of staff.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Human Mobility

There are different models of human mobility. A radiation model of human mobility, proposed by Simini *et al.* (2012), suggests that distance, time and expense of travel determine the flow of people towards a certain area. For example, it can predict which shopping center customers are more likely to go to. The radiation model includes population density as a draw for human mobility. Simini *et al.* (2012) paper and radiation model are especially of interest for the present research, since their empirical study was based on analysis of job applications. Simini *et al.* (2012) analysed the patterns between Utah and Alabama, two states with the same population, however Utah has much lower density. As a result, job seekers in Utah have to travel further to find a suitable job, since a greater number of suitable vacancies is likely to be found in densely populated urban centers.

Recent research also suggests the existence of two distinct classes of people: returners and explorers (Pappalardo *et al.*, 2015). Returners tend to visit a small number of locations and they visit them repeatedly. In contrast, explorers travel to different locations and with the increase of radius of gyration the patterns of the two groups appear increasingly different. Pappalardo *et al.* (2015) conclude that not only geographical mobility but also social interaction patterns are different between these two groups.

Interestingly and somewhat counterintuitively, radiation model and all other models of human mobility presented in Nature and Science (e.g. Gonzalez *et al.*, 2008; Pappalardo, *et al.* 2015; Simini, *et al.*; 2012 Song *et al.* 2010) do not include nor discuss structural

barriers to mobility such as borders and visa regulations. Yet, these barriers, in addition to other aspects such as an individual's education, gender, and even stage in life, have been reported as relevant considerations for mobility in the hospitality and tourism literature (e.g. Hsu, Xiao and Chen, 2017).

2.2. Career Mobility

Career mobility is a term that describes movement of employees between positions within and between organisations as well as complete change of occupation (Sicherman and Galor, 1990). It does not preclude geographical relocation, however that is not a requirement. Therefore, there is an overlap between human mobility, i.e. geographical movement of individuals, and career mobility, i.e. career development and progression. A traditional view of career progression would be a progression of an individual from junior to senior positions within an organization or between organisations within the same specialization. Sicherman and Galor (1990) developed theory of career mobility largely from this perspective.

According to Sicherman and Galor (1990), employees would optimize the time required to be promoted and/or gain higher wages by either gaining internal promotion, switching firms, or through schooling. The career paths are however becoming less predictable as the workplace structures evolve and are more likely to be based around multi-functional teams working on problems that require a diverse skillset (Duncan, 2018; Florence, 2016). In such environment, employees seek not only vertical movement up the ranks within their specialization, but also acquiring a diversity of skills by trying different types of jobs, thus moving horizontally within their career. Such phenomenon has become known as a 'boundaryless career' (King, Burke and Pemberton, 2005; Smith *et al.* 2018).

From an organisation's point of view, provision of career mobility opportunities to employees could be a strategy for staff retention and their professional development. Both

these functions are seen as paramount for a success of an organization as they contribute to staff motivation and productivity. In a competitive environment a loss of a talented employee or loss of motivation among employees could pose serious risks to an organisation's success (Kaye *et al.*, 2017).

Relocation, accepting international assignments, expatriation and migration are career mobility strategies that could be initiated by both the employees and the organisations. Altman and Baruch (2012) suggest two distinct categories of motivation from expatriates: career build-up and personal development. Thorn (2012) argues that besides opportunities for career growth, cultural and travel opportunities are important motives for self-initiated mobility. The present study to a large extent focuses on the nexus between human mobility and career mobility. It takes a geographical approach in order to study mobilities of hospitality and tourism employees. The emerging patterns from this evaluation are partially informed by theories of career mobility.

2.3. Mobility in Hospitality and Tourism

Previous studies in hospitality and tourism have sought to explore mobility issues, although they typically contained sample only from one country or even one institution. Frändberg (2014) notes that Swedes who lived abroad temporarily during their early adulthood are more mobile later in life. Most respondents of that study travelled overseas for paid work while in their early twenties. One third of respondents retain regular physical contact with the place where they temporarily lived mostly due to friendships or family ties. O'Leary and Deegan (2005) study of tourism and hospitality students in Ireland indicates that 64% of respondents have not worked abroad. Considering that O'Leary and Deegan (2005) is one of the very few studies on mobility of tourism and hospitality students and employees,

such relatively low rate of international mobility raises questions regarding the mobility patterns of hospitality and tourism workers from different regions of the world.

From a broader perspective, it is largely unknown whether hospitality and tourism employees tend to stay in vicinity of the place where they graduated or move to other places to work. In general, European graduates may be more mobile than their counterparts from other parts of the world. This is due to little barriers for mobility within the European Union, and the achievements of Bologna Process which ensured compatibility of qualification and education standards (Hsu, Xiao and Chen, 2017). Interestingly, countries with a high proportion of international students are making it more attractive for graduates to stay and develop their careers in the country where they have graduated rather than returning to their home country. For example, international students may be granted either temporary or permanent visas after graduation, depending on the country's policy (Arthur and Nunes, 2014). Robinson, Ritchie, Kralj, Solnet, Baum and Ford (2014) suggest that one of the future human resource issues may be the lack of the qualified and skilled workers in the pleasure periphery in the Asia Pacific region due to ongoing urbanisation as a result of greater perceived opportunities for education and career in urban centres.

2.4. Talent Retention Issues in a Mobile and Competitive Environment

An increasingly competitive global environment has posed issues for talent retention in hospitality and tourism. Previous research has identified lack of positive perceptions towards hospitality and tourism career among the university students (Jiang and Tribe, 2009; Lo, Mak, and Chen, 2014; Richardson and Butler, 2012; Richardson, 2009).

One of the major reasons for lack of interest in hospitality and tourism is related to low rewards in the sector in comparison to other industries (Cairncross and Buultjens, 2010). O'Leary and Deegan (2005) report that difficult working conditions, lower rewards and a

negative image of the sector results in hospitality workers leaving the sector. Graduates who left hospitality industry indicated that it was important for them to have a career which contributes to society. Low wages and bad working conditions were major reasons for graduates in Switzerland to leave tourism (Heller, 2008). Perceived status of hospitality industries can also impact on the commitment of Macau graduates to enter the industry (Tung, Tang and King, 2018; Wan, Wong and Kong, 2014). Richardson (2009) suggests that students have unrealistic expectations about their career path. Schoffstall, Brown and Arendt (2017) find that students have much higher expectations regarding their career progression than alumni, who are more conservative in their career progression estimates.

Brown *et al.* (2014) found that irrespective of whether US hospitality graduates work in hospitality industry or not having a job that they enjoy was very important for them, however their experiences were below expectations. Further, graduates that stayed in hospitality industry indicated it was important for them to have a career in which they can utilise their degree and skills. Yet, there is a difference between the skills perceived as important by the graduates and the employers. Employers value practical experience, which reflects the common description of higher education graduates as overqualified and under experienced (Raybould and Wilkins, 2005).

To address these issues, it is necessary to prepare talents, regardless of gender, culture, and age, for global mobility so they can gain international experiences that develop their leadership practices, critical thinking skills, and emotional intelligence that are essential for successful career progressions (Whitelaw, 2010). Brown, Thomas and Bosselman (2015) conclude that Generation Y graduates are looking for exciting and challenging careers. Hsu, Xiao and Chen (2017) suggest the need for the internationalization of hospitality and tourism education. Kim *et al.* (2016) suggest that international work experience is important for students in Korea.

While little is known about how mobile male and female hospitality and tourism workers are, general literature on gender differences in career mobilities suggests that traditionally women had fewer international assignment opportunities in their careers (Altman and Shortland, 2008). This may be largely due to traditionally unfair practices in the workplace. However, female employees were not less likely to initiate self-expatriation than males and the likelihood of succeeding overseas was similar between two genders (Altman and Shortland, 2008; Tharenou, 2009).

Overall, research is still lacking in the international mobility of the hospitality and tourism workforce. Therefore, it is timely to assess the mobility of hospitality and tourism employees with focus not only on organisational mobility, but also on geographical mobility.

3. Methodology

Public profiles of hospitality and tourism graduates were extracted from an online professional network (OPN). An OPN is a social media network for personal brand and career development (Benson, Filippaios, and Morgan (2010). Examples of OPNs include LinkedIn and Research Gate. Smith *et al.* (2018) is one of the few studies of OPN in tourism and hospitality. In their analysis of LinkedIn profiles, Smith *et al.* (2018) identify different career paths among hospitality graduates from a US university. Aside from Smith *et al.* (2018), OPN is rarely used to address human resources issues in hospitality and tourism, despite the influence of social media on various aspects of human resources in the field (Baum, 2015).

Outside of hospitality and tourism, the use of OPNs have attracted the attention of researchers in human resources and talent management, thus demonstrating applicability of such data, as well as the diversity of topics that can be addressed through OPN research. Following are examples of OPN research. Basak and Calisir (2014) provide the following types of LinkedIn usage: self-promotion, group activities, job and job affairs, finding old and

new friends easily, follow up, profile viewer data, and professional networking. Chiang and Suen (2015) analysed the relationship between job seekers' self-representation and recruiters' recommendation to hire them. Steele and Cleland (2014) suggest that LinkedIn alumni group is a useful method of maintaining relationship with alumni. Hutchins (2016) discussed use of LinkedIn by marketing educators. Cooper and Naatus (2014) proposed LinkedIn exercises for business students. Guillory and Hancock (2012) assessed the deception used in LinkedIn profiles.

Other studies focused more on career patterns. Xu, Yu, Xiong, Guo and Zhu (2015) use data from LinkedIn and Foursquare to create data-rich profiles of individuals' professional and personal activities. The data from two databases allowed Xu *et al.* (2015) to develop an algorithm that can predict whether a job change will occur over certain period of time. Their study also suggests that consumption and mobility patterns change based on a job change. Similarly, Liu, Zhang, Nie, Yan and Rosenblum (2016) use data from three social networks (i.e. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) to predict career paths. The developed algorithm was more accurate with the inclusion of psychographic characteristics based on Facebook and Twitter activity. Case, Gardiner, Rutner and Dyer (2013) analyse careers of information systems alumni using LinkedIn data. Their analysis demonstrates that the graduates entered workforce at a variety of managerial and technical positions and most graduates transitioned into managerial positions later in their career. Li, Zheng, Peltsverger and Zhang (2016) use LinkedIn data to compare career paths of graduates from Bachelor of Science and Master of Science degrees and observe patterns similar to Case *et al.* (2013), although Master of Science graduates are more likely to move into managerial positions rather than engineer or technical positions than Bachelor of Science graduates.

In the present study, the graduates come from five institutions from different countries (i.e., Australia, Finland, United Kingdom, and United States) and territories (i.e., Hong

Kong). The institutions were selected as follows. The regions: Asia, Australasia, Europe and North America, represent the regions with high higher education mobility (UNESCO, 2019). Among these regions, the highest ranking universities with English language of instruction within Hospitality and Leisure Management subject area that has both hospitality and tourism degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate level according to QS World University Rankings were selected (QS Top Universities, 2018). This narrowed the selection of the institutions. Moreover, a preliminary search for graduate profiles has been undertaken through the OPN to assess the viability of data collection. While the selected universities in Australia, Hong Kong, United Kingdom and United States are all among the top-ranked according to QS Top Universities (2018), the university from Finland was deemed the most appropriate for continental Europe. An institution in continental Europe was selected to investigate whether the European Union regulations result in high mobility outside United Kingdom, which is one of the most popular education destinations internationally (UNESCO, 2019). In summary, these particular institutions were selected due to likelihood of having mobile students that are either international or local who are skilled and motivated to relocate and gain international experience. While there are some similarities between the selected schools, they represent different geography and history in hospitality and tourism education. All selected institutions have high number of graduates, which ensures enough data for mobility trajectories and career progression analysis.

Only publicly accessible information was gathered. Since Guillory and Hancock (2012) suggested that OPN profiles are less deceptive than the traditional resumes, therefore an OPN appears to be a reliable source of data required for career mobility research. It is important to acknowledge however, that social media analysis has been critiqued in the past as data may be biased since the sample is self-selected. For example, not all graduates may have a profile on the OPN, and more active and successful graduates may be more likely to

have one. Nevertheless, the sample is deemed large enough ($n = 2509$) to address the research questions of the present study and contribute to the mapping of mobility trajectories. The type of data that was gathered for the present study includes gender, education history (place, time, level of education), employment history (place, time, industry) and skills obtained.

A mix of data analyses approaches were employed. Microsoft Power BI was used to create a visualization of global mobility while statistical procedures such as analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent samples t-test were used to compare between group differences. Individual anonymized profiles were selected to represent diversity of mobility trajectories and career patterns found within the sample. The categorisation of mobility trajectories is undertaken based on the geographical scale most representative of graduates from each institution. Inductive approach was used for analysis of career patterns.

4. Results

Profiles of tourism and hospitality graduates ($n = 2509$) were collected from five different institutions (Table 1). The largest number of profiles came from Hong Kong (33.0%), followed by the UK (24.7%), and Finland (19.5%), and the number of females ($n = 1565$) outnumbered male profiles ($n = 932$). The majority of graduates hold a bachelor degree (72.0%), while slightly over a quarter of graduates reported postgraduate education (26.1%).

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There are significant differences among graduates from different education regions with regards to their recent work duration, $F(4, 2412) = 24.477$, $p < .001$ (see Figure 1). Graduates from the UK reported an average of over three years in their current position ($M =$

3.62), which is significantly longer than graduates from the US ($M = 2.53$), Finland ($M = 1.99$), Australia ($M = 2.61$), and Hong Kong ($M = 2.16$), $p < .001$.

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Individuals with a postgraduate degree, excluding doctorate education, reported an average of over three years in their current position ($M = 3.34$) while those with an undergraduate degree reported slightly over two years ($M = 2.25$), $t(2330) = -7.556$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2). The longer average work duration of postgraduates compared to undergraduates provides support to Brown *et al.*'s (2014) observation that it is important for individuals who stay in tourism and hospitality to utilize their degrees for career promotion opportunities.

Additionally, previous research suggests that there could be are gender differences with regards to turnover intention among hospitality employees (Bloom, van Rheede and Tromp, 2010). The current findings indicate insignificant differences in the average work duration of current employment between genders with undergraduate (mean males = 2.26; mean females = 2.25) and postgraduate education (mean males = 3.36; mean females = 3.35) across regions, $F(4, 2301) = 1.386$, $p = .236$.

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4.1. *Worldwide mobility*

The careers of tourism and hospitality graduates generally reflect a network of worldwide mobility (see Figure 2). Graduates are employed globally, with most working in Europe, North America, and Asia Pacific. However, there are noticeably fewer graduates

employed in Africa and South America, which is likely a function of the regions that the five institutions in this study are based.

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More interestingly, though, are the different patterns of global mobility among graduates of the five regions. Graduates of the US-based institution largely remained within the US, and more specifically, the east coast. This reflects the radiation model of human mobilities as more densely populated areas tend to attract migrants (Simini *et al.*, 2012). This pattern also maps relatively closely with graduates from Hong Kong, who tend to remain in the city, work in the neighbouring city of Shenzhen, or other first-tier cities in Mainland China, including Beijing and Shanghai. In contrast to graduates from Hong Kong, graduates from Australia are frequently represented in ASEAN countries (i.e., Association of Southeast Asian Nations), while graduates from Finland are frequently employed across European Union. Speculation as to the possible reasons for this pattern includes greater employment opportunities abroad in countries such as Thailand in ASEAN and Greece in the European Union that are rapidly developing tourism and hospitality, which potentially offers fast career growth and international experiences beyond the borders of Finland and Australia.

Graduates from the UK-based institution reflect the greatest extent of international mobility. There are graduates working across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia (i.e., Asia Pacific, Central, South, and Southeast Asia). There is also a sizeable number of graduates in China. The percentage of graduates from the UK with at least one international work experience (44.4%) is noticeably larger than the respective proportions from the other four regions, particularly Hong Kong (3.0%) and the US (2.3%) (see Figure 3). In many ways, this

could reflect the mobility of undergraduates venturing away from the home institution, as well as demand for postgraduate education from students already based internationally.

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4.2. Career Mobility of Anonymized Graduates

This section extracts mobility trajectories of five anonymized graduates with extensive careers, defined by ten or more reported experiences in their work history, across each of the five institutions. The five anonymized individuals each reflect a different type of trajectory (i.e., stateside, intra-regional, continental, inter-regional, and global), career pattern (i.e., rooted, prospector, seeker, two-homes, and wanderer), as well as distance traveled (see Table 3). Three of the five graduates are males in which two hold a postgraduate degree.

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4.2.1. Stateside

The career mobility of a ‘stateside’ trajectory is represented by extensive work experiences within a country within provincial or state boundaries, as characterized by this anonymized graduate from the US. The early part of this career trajectory revolves around work experiences near or within the state of the location of the home institution. A number of experiences from different organizations are typically accrued near the home. In this example, during the career that spans eighteen years, the graduate of a US institution has never worked outside of the state where the institution is located, with very limited distance traveled per work experience as shown in Figure 4.

In this ‘rooted’ career pattern, the graduate first spent two years within accommodation sector working in guest services. Consequently, the graduate switched to the

aviation sector and over a period of three years progressed to a management position within a major US airline. Afterwards, the graduate switched back to a major hotel and resort chain and is still currently with the same employer after thirteen years. This graduate demonstrates a great loyalty to the employer and stability in the career. The case is not exceptional, although another pattern for a stateside career would include the continuation of the early pattern of the graduate in focus: switching between jobs and even between industries while remaining within the same geographical area.

4.2.2. Intra-regional

The career mobility from the anonymized graduate of the Hong Kong-based institution reflects an intra-regional trajectory. In this career trajectory, individuals tend to move within the regional and/or national borders. As shown in orange in Figure 4, the mobility of an intra-regional trajectory covers slightly more distance compared to a stateside trajectory.

The career of this graduate has developed over a period of twenty years within the accommodation sector. This graduate is a career ‘prospector’ as most of the mobility is around Central and Southern China, moving between Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Xian and Chongqing. The graduate’s specialization is in designing and opening hotel properties, which makes mobility more likely, albeit it is likely to be driven by career opportunities than wanderlust. Even in large cities, such as Hong Kong, the number of new hotels being opened is not very high. Average length of work of this graduate is between two to four years, partly due to the project nature of work, and potential for new opportunities elsewhere.

4.2.3. Continental

A ‘continental’ trajectory reflects extensive work experience across national borders within a greater geographical area. It is best exemplified by careers developed across several European countries. Career of a graduate from an institution in Finland is used to describe this career trajectory.

During the relatively short career of ten years this graduate already has had ten different work experiences across five countries. The countries where this graduate worked include Germany, China (six months traineeship), United Kingdom, Czech Republic and Spain. The brief training experience in China is an exception for the pattern that clearly demonstrates a career focused on Europe. In the first three years of the career, this graduate worked mostly in part-time and training positions in food and beverage. In the following four years the graduate continued to acquire experience through traineeships in hotels. This graduate’s full-time employment only commenced in the most recent three years of the career. The specialization of the graduate appears to emerge more recently, with the latest two positions focusing on conference and event management at hotels. This trajectory combines high geographical and career mobilities. It can be suggested that this graduate is a ‘seeker’ in a continuous search of a most suitable place and specialization to work in.

4.2.4. Inter-regional

The career mobility of an ‘inter-regional’ trajectory is represented by work experiences that spans a broader geographical region moving between two continents. The example for such a trajectory is a graduate of an Australian institution that has had several work experiences in Australia and Singapore. The graduate travels noticeably more distance compared to stateside, intra-regional, and continental trajectories (see purple in Figure 4).

The career of this graduate is within accommodation sector. It begins in Australia and evolves across six years and four Australian cities. Consequently, the graduate moved to Singapore and has worked in four different positions across two companies. Interestingly, the most recent employment of this graduate is with one of the former employers in Australia. This career trajectory can be defined as a career of ‘two homes’, where the employee has developed a career in two geographical locations located in different regions. While Singapore is a city-state, thus limiting the mobility, it is notable that this graduate was mobile across Australia moving between east and west coasts of Australia, thus exploring the region in-depth.

4.2.5. Global

A truly ‘global’ trajectory reflects extensive work and travel across national and continental boundaries. This example comes from an institution located in the UK. The anonymized graduate from the UK institution began the career sixteen years ago in Switzerland, and has traveled vast distances globally despite relatively shorter durations in each work experience (see red in Figure 4).

For seven years, this global ‘wanderer’ has worked in a range of hotel properties belonging to one of the major hotel chains in Switzerland, Japan and Greece. The graduate then moved to another major hotel chain and over the next five years worked in Germany, Egypt and Qatar. The most recent employments have been with different hotel brands in UK and Germany. This career spans across Europe, Middle East and East Asia. From starting in the food and beverage department the graduate has been more recently a general manager of several properties. Interestingly, the graduate has not become committed neither to any property nor country.

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5. Discussion

The results of the present study contribute to hospitality and tourism in several ways. They contribute to a general understanding of career mobility patterns by extending insights from the radiation model of human mobility. From an industry perspective, this study provides a basis for continuous discussions on the role of mobility in global knowledge and local talent management. From an education perspective, this study highlights implications for institutions on the internationalization of curriculum that is needed to foster a pool of global talents in hospitality and tourism.

5.1. Extending insights from the radiation model to career mobility

From a conceptual perspective, the results of this study are largely supportive of the radiation model of human mobility. The findings suggest that employee mobility is generally lacking, especially if the graduate's institution is located in a large and densely populated area. Most mobility trajectories occur between or to large urban centres, such as between the East and West coast of the US, capital cities in Europe, and large cities in Asia.

An interesting addition to the radiation model in the case of hospitality and tourism employees is the importance of not only density of resident population, but also of tourist population. Career mobility appears to be influenced by where tourists go. Employees are not only drawn to urban centers, but also popular coastal areas such as the Mediterranean and Southeast Asia. In this case, the results of this study suggest that while the radiation model may work for general patterns and short to medium range mobility, there could be limitations on observations of long-haul career mobility. For example, why would a graduate from Hong Kong bring his/her talent to Ghana, or why would a graduate from UK work in Bali,

Indonesia? Some of these cases can be explained by the instances of international students being present in the sample. However, the question remains the same, are there general governing rules applied for long-haul mobility?

In the case of present study, insights to the above questions reflect the continuous mobility of global career ‘wanderers’. This finding provides support to Pappalardo *et al.* (2015)’s model of ‘explorers’. In this study, the wanderer did not stop changing the place of work after achieving a general manager position, and geographical mobility was highly unpredictable spanning across three geographical areas.

5.2. Global knowledge and local talent management

An observation in the present study is that working for an international hotel chain could lead to international mobility. This is reflected in the anonymized profiles of two mobility trajectories: intra-regional and global. This suggests that international hotel chains may post their staff abroad for new hotel openings or re-designs, for example. In this cases, multinational corporations are managing their talent through global knowledge transfer and labor mobility (Shaw and Williams, 2009). In return, employees could potentially speed up their career progression. In contrast, in cases when a valuable employee leaves an organization to join a competitor, an inter-firm knowledge transfer could occur.

Robinson *et al.* (2014) suggest that one of the future challenges regarding human resources management will be the drive of workers from periphery to urban centers. In the current findings for the US and Hong Kong cases, local context and closer cooperation with local partners could be beneficial employees as the vast majority of graduates exhibit limited regional and/or international mobility. While it could be compelling for multinational organizations to promote global intra-firm opportunities to local employees to facilitate knowledge transfer as per the aforementioned benefits, the organizations must nevertheless

recognize that in the end, these employees may be reluctant to move internationally. Instead, these employees are competing for jobs domestically within close geographical proximity of the graduating institution.

In addition to urban centers, the current study finds that employees are attracted to major tourist destinations. Albeit, the supply of labor in the periphery has been reported as insufficient (Baum *et al.*, 2016). Companies located in the pleasure periphery may struggle to recruit talent if education providers are not located within the area, as the radiation model predicts that a densely populated area closer to the place of residence will be a first choice for a job seeker. As such, talent management needs to identify incentives that could entice individuals to move to pleasure periphery regions for employment. For example, Generation Y reported interest in work-life balance and lifestyle (Baum *et al.*, 2016), which may provide possible solutions to this issue.

5.3. Implications for education institutions

One of the major trends in higher education is towards internationalization: of curriculum, of staff and of students. Internationalization of education is supposed to prepare graduates to compete in a globalized workplace (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013; Henard *et al.*, 2012; Kehm and Teichler, 2007). In hospitality and tourism education this may appear as a commonsense. Moreover, students in hospitality and tourism degrees overwhelmingly state that they chose this major due to interest in travel (Tung and King, 2016). However, the results of the present study demonstrate that international, especially global careers are rare.

The mobility trajectories in the present study include international graduates who return to place of origin after graduation. In particular, a high percentage of employees who have had at least one international work experience in this study graduated from the UK,

Australia, and Finland, which corresponds to the proportion of international students for these institutions: 37.0%, 18.6%, and 9.5%, respective. In contrast, while 9.6% are international students in the US, the findings suggest that many graduates may have opted to stay and work in the country after graduation, if possible, as the international mobility of US graduates was relatively underwhelming compared to their European and Australian counterparts.

With respect to the internationalization of curriculum, the findings suggests that institutions in Europe should continue to embrace diversity and opportunities within the continent to provide global and continental mobility trajectories. Australian institutions could benefit from positioning their curriculum within the broader Asia Pacific region to foster inter-regional mobility. Nevertheless, it may be premature to provide further and more definitive recommendations to institutions given the insufficient current body of knowledge about employee global mobility. Further studies in internationalization of education amongst institutions with different local, non-local domestic and international students ratios are required to improve understanding of pedagogy that delivers best opportunities for students to succeed in a career that they are more likely to pursue. Finally, while there is a growing understanding of factors contributing to career progression in hospitality and tourism (Whitelaw, 2010), what contributes to increase or reduction in mobility is not yet understood, and requires further research. A mixed method analysis of biographies of global wanderers in hospitality and tourism should be considered.

6. Conclusion

This study evaluated the career patterns and global mobility trajectories of hospitality and tourism graduates that are relevant for global knowledge and local talent management. Geographical mobility of graduates in the field is an understudied area, however it is important to understand due to growing concerns regarding globalization of the workplace

and internationalization of education. Rich online data provides opportunity to study this topic across regions. To-date using Online Professional Networks for human resources related topic is rather novel not only in tourism academia, but in other disciplines as well. Moreover, human mobility is a growing field of study with general patterns of mobility are not completely understood. Therefore, the present study explores these themes and can serve as a departure point for future in-depth studies on more specialized aspects of career mobility in tourism and hospitality.

The results suggest differences in mobility patterns between graduates of institutions from different regions. Radiation model proposed by Simini *et al.* (2012) is generally supported by this study. Furthermore, several different patterns of career mobility are described with an example from each region. This contributes to understanding of both general patterns and individual differences in career mobility. The present study has several limitations as it uses profiles of graduates from only five institutions. It is possible that additional career mobility patterns can be drawn from a different sample. While a large sample of profiles has been gathered, the sample sizes were not even across all five institutions and it is unlikely all employees have an OPN profile, thus it can be concluded that the data is based on self-reporting. Further research is required to better understand the needs of students to prepare for both local and international careers and ensure sufficient qualified workforce development for tourism and hospitality sector in both urban and peripheral areas across different regions of the world.

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