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Hospitality undergraduates' and graduates' perceptions of careers in the international hospitality industry

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Abstract

This PhD by Publication explores hospitality undergraduates' and graduates' perceptions of careers in the international hospitality industry. The thesis is based on eight published articles; the first published in 1990 and the final one in 2018. The selected papers include conceptual and empirical work, and used a variety of research methods including questionnaires, interviews and case studies.

This thesis argues that, although past studies recognised that many hospitality students chose not to follow a hospitality career after they graduated, they did not attempt to understand sufficiently when their career intentions changed or to explain why. My work posits that the high attrition rate of hospitality graduates can only be understood by taking an approach at three different levels (individual, organisational and societal) and incorporating the views of undergraduates, graduates and employers. It is argued that the experiences and changing attitudes of these actors need to be examined in a variety of organisational and cultural contexts.

The overarching focus of my work is the concept of a career and I have made an original contribution to knowledge by examining hospitality undergraduates' perceptions of the hospitality industry as a career identifying ways that their career constructions were shaped by factors at these three different levels. In addition to employing this multi-level analysis, my work has shown potential links between the different levels, which has enabled me to contribute to knowledge by creating a more expansive understanding of hospitality undergraduates' career aspirations.

My research encompassed undergraduates and graduates working in small firms, challenging the assumptions of the government and policy makers at that time and, it provided evidence regarding the suitability of the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector for developing and utilising graduate skills. My work stressed that a critical concern was not whether an SME employed a graduate, but rather how a graduate was used. Moreover, my research questioned the suitability of some small tourism and hospitality firms as employers for graduates wishing to develop a career that was appropriate to their qualifications.

Overall, this body of work contributes to a deeper understanding of undergraduates' and graduates' changing perceptions of careers in both small and large firms in the international hospitality industry. Moreover, it provides an analysis and explanation for the high attrition of hospitality graduates.

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Table of Contents

List of tables

Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief background to the published work, the aim and objectives and an outline of the chapter structure.

1.1   Background

There is an abundance of academic literature on graduate employment and the graduate labour market in general (see e.g. Hewitt, 2020; Herbert *et al*., 2020). However, research focusing on tourism and hospitality graduates is limited (see e.g. Sibanyoni, Kleynhans and Vibetti, 2015; Nachmias and Walmsley 2015). Research on undergraduate placements and graduate employment in small hospitality firms is even less evident (see e.g. Pittaway and Thedham 2005; Nachmias, Paddison and Mortimer 2014). This is surprising as the hospitality industry is dominated by small firms (Morrison and Thomas, 1999).

One of the major challenges facing the hospitality industry is to attract and retain highly educated and highly skilled employees (see e.g. Baum 2019b; Kaewsaeng-on, Kane and Vundla 2015). This has been exacerbated by the consequences of Brexit and COVID-19 but has been a perennial problem worsened by the fact that around 50% of hospitality graduates do not enter the hospitality industry (see e.g. Jenkins, 2001; Kim, Jung and Wang, 2016; Richardson 2009; Johns and McKechnie 1995).

Hospitality students choose to study this specialism but then many of them acquire skills and knowledge on their degrees that are transferable to other employment fields offering them graduate jobs with higher rates of pay and better working conditions (see e.g. Amissah et al. 2020).
Hospitality graduates have a 'market advantage' in gaining access to hospitality jobs, but they are prepared to forfeit this advantage and transfer their skills and knowledge into other areas of employment Blomme, Van Rheede and Tromp (2009).

This is a major problem for hospitality employers who face management skill shortages, see for example Altman and Brothers (1995) and Baum (2019a), but many hospitality educators also recognise this as a problem Jenkins (2001).

It could be argued that it does not matter if a hospitality graduate chooses to take a non-hospitality graduate job. In fact, authors such as Tews and Van Hoof (2011:127) have argued that hospitality management education also 'prepares students for careers beyond the traditional hospitality context' and they give examples of hospitality graduates choosing careers in other service industries such as retail and financial services. Obviously, there is value in education 'for the sake of education' and it is not being suggested here that a university degree in hospitality management is simply and narrowly only preparing graduates for careers in one industry. However, most hospitality students specifically chose to study hospitality with the intention of pursuing a career in the industry and it is clear that this intention has weakened in some cases. See for example De Silva, Jayasinghe and Dissanayake (2022) and Anthony, Mensah and Amissah (2021). This could be rightfully interpreted as a 'cost', both in terms of time and money, on the part of these students, many of whom have had negative experiences in the hospitality industry, which altered their perceptions of the sector as a suitable potential employer.

It seems like this has become a perennial issue but so far research has failed to understand or explain why these attitudes change over the course of a degree. Research in this area (see for example, Lee, Lee and Dopson 2019) has tended to focus on exploring the extent to which different influential career decision-making factors influence hospitality management students, rather than attempting to explain why these attitudes change. It is argued here that it is too naïve to simply focus on the conditions in the hospitality industry as some authors (Blomme, Van Rheede and Tromp 2009 and Richardson 2010) have done. A much more nuanced approach needs to be taken to understand how undergraduates and graduates perceive the hospitality industry as a career choice.

Something obviously happens to hospitality students during their programme of study. The hospitality industry continues to face management skill shortages, and it needs highly qualified employees, so it is important to examine and explain why hospitality students reject the hospitality industry as a choice of career. This is a serious waste of potential talent as these students made a choice to study hospitality management and have committed three or four years undertaking a hospitality management degree. Moreover, in the face of rising costs and growing market

competition, course providers are increasingly forced to show their relevance and value (see for example Lugosi and Jameson 2017), so it is essential to appreciate how and why students' commitment to the hospitality industry evolves during their studies. This thesis seeks to explain changes in hospitality undergraduates' and graduates' perceptions of careers in this sector during their degree, whilst on placement and during their first graduate job.

1.2 Aim and objectives

The aim of this PhD by publication was to critically examine undergraduates' and graduates' perceptions of careers in the hospitality industry and to evaluate the impacts of sector-specific employment and employers on career decision making.

The objectives were:

1) To critically examine the core themes of graduate identity and career construction theory within the context of hospitality undergraduates' career perceptions.
2) To critically evaluate the experiences of undergraduates in small firms, using the concept of graduate identity.
3) To assess the impacts of undertaking placements in small firms on experiential learning and graduate career choice.
4) To critically examine the role of hospitality employers and hospitality undergraduates' perceptions of the industry on career intentions and career decision making.
5) To contribute to knowledge within the fields of graduate identity, career construction theory and hospitality undergraduate career decision making.

1.3 Chapter structure

The chapters in this critical appraisal address the criteria for the award of a PhD by Publication from Oxford Brookes University.

Chapter 1 describes the background to the articles and outlines the aim and objectives.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature in the field and the position of my work in the context of this literature.

Chapter 3 discusses my research journey regarding the methods and methodologies that have been employed in the production of the published papers.

Chapter 4 demonstrates the coherence of the published work.

Chapter 5 summarises the original contribution to knowledge represented by the published work.

Chapter 6 provides an overview of where the critical appraisal achieves the objectives, where the criteria for the award of a PhD by Publication have been met and some suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 A review of the literature in the field and the position of my work in the context of this literature

This chapter provides an overview of the published work, where and when the research was undertaken, my percentage contribution to each article (signed statements by each co-author can be found in appendices 9-14), the number of citations for each article and the journal ranking for each article. The chapter then provides a review of the literature in the field and the position of my work in the context of this literature.

	Publication	Where and when the research was undertaken	My percentage contribution	Number of citations	Journal ranking
1	Jameson, S. M., and Hargraves, S. (1990) 'A comparative analysis of the job offered to hotel and catering graduates'. *Personnel Review*,19(6), pp. 25-32.	UK 1989 -1990	50	5	SSCI Impact factor 3.899 Scopus Citescore 4.7
2	Holden, R. J., and Jameson, S. M. (1999). 'A preliminary investigation into the transition and utilisation of hospitality graduates in SMEs'. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1(3), pp. 231-242.	UK 1996 -1999	50	24	SSCI Impact factor 3.74 Scopus Citescore 5.4
3	Jameson, S. M., and Holden, R.J. (2000) 'Graduateness - who cares? Graduate identity in small hospitality firms'. *Education and Training*, 42(4/5), pp. 264-271.	UK 1996 -2000	50	72	SSCI Impact factor 3.469 Scopus Citescore 5.3
4	Holden, R., Jameson, S., and Lashley, C. (2005) 'Graduate transition into employment in	UK 2002 -2005	40	6	Scopus Citescore 2.3

	hospitality SMEs: On a road to nowhere?'. *Industry and Higher Education*, 19(1), pp. 65-73.				
5	Walmsley, A., Thomas, R., and Jameson, S. (2006) 'Surprise and sense making: Undergraduate placement experiences in SMEs'. *Education and Training*, 48(5), pp. 360-372.	UK 2002 -2006	30	90	SSCI Impact factor 3.469 Scopus Citescore 5.3
6	Walmsley, A., Thomas, R. and Jameson, S. (2012). 'Internships in SMEs and career intentions'. *Journal of Education and Work*, 25(2), pp. 185-204.	UK 2002 -2012	30	51	Scopus Citescore 1.7
7	Jameson, S.M. (2018) 'Hospitality and tourism career perceptions: Time for a new research agenda?'. *International Journal of Excellence in Tourism, Hospitality and Catering*, [Online], 8(1).	UK 2016 – 2018	100	0	Not available
8	Mooney, S., and Jameson, S. (2018) 'The career constructions of hospitality students: A rocky road'. *Hospitality and Society*, 8(1), pp. 45-67.	UK and New Zealand 2015 - 2018	50	16	Scopus Citescore 1.8

Table 1: List of the published articles.

Article 1 Jameson and Hargraves (1990) explored job packages offered to graduates. It examined 20 companies that hospitality students had applied to in the final year of their degree. This included hospitality and non-hospitality companies. It compared the packages offered by hospitality companies with those offered by non-hospitality companies. It concluded that hospitality employers had failed to regard themselves as competing in the wider graduate labour market and that this could be detrimental to attracting hospitality graduates in a turbulent and dynamic labour market.

Article 2 Holden and Jameson (1999) conducted a study on graduate employment in small hospitality firms. It discovered that although graduates and their managers were satisfied with levels of performance, much of the graduates' time was spent on relatively low-level tasks and responsibilities and they were working at mainly operative and supervisory levels. The graduates also tended to rely on pre-degree level learning. It concluded that graduate labour in particular types of small firms may remain underutilised and underdeveloped. It also questioned assumptions from the government and policy makers at that time about the future for graduate labour within certain types of small hospitality firms.

Article 3 Jameson and Holden (2000) presented results of a project on graduate employment in small hospitality firms. The views of both graduates and their managers were examined. It used the concept of graduate identity and found that a complex relationship existed between graduates, their managers and graduate identity and that hospitality graduates in small firms failed to develop a sense of graduate identity. It was argued that this could impact on graduate job satisfaction in such firms and the actual firms themselves which were not benefitting from graduate level skills.

Article 4 Holden, Jameson and Lashley (2005) was written in the context of the UK government's target of 50% participation by young people in higher education. At the time, issues relating to the use of graduates in small firms assumed renewed significance. Increasing attention was being paid to the potential for SMEs to absorb a larger number of new graduates. This article analysed survey data on the employment and use of graduates by hospitality SMEs. Characteristics of firms employing graduates and owner-managers' perceptions of graduate labour were examined. Questions were raised about the extent to which the skills of graduates employed in hospitality SMEs were being used. This article argued that it was not simply a question of whether or not an SME employed a graduate, but what was critical was how a graduate was used. It discovered that a substantial number of SMEs were using graduates in an operative capacity.

Article 5 Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2006) explored undergraduate placement experiences in small and medium-sized tourism and hospitality

enterprises (SMEs), focusing on the notions of surprise and sensemaking where the student is testing (and making sense of) their placement experiences to inform their future career decisions. It argued that surprises and sensemaking were important elements not only of the adjustment process when entering new work environments, but also of the learning experience that placements provided. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 students who had recently completed placements in small hospitality/tourism firms. The research discovered that the surprises that students encountered were not as dramatic as the literature on organisational entry had previously suggested. This was partially explained by the fact that students had already gained substantial amounts of work experience, prior to their placements. The article raised questions about the value of undergraduate placements in an age of mass higher education where many students work part-time. The article also suggested that placements in small hospitality firms were not achieving their potential for experiential learning due to an apparent lack of reflection on the part of the students.

Article 6 Walmsley, Thomas, and Jameson (2012) reported the findings of a British study and contested the unproblematic treatment of the relationship between SME placement and career intentions in the context of hospitality education. An explanatory model was developed to show how an interplay of factors come together to undermine the influence of largely positive SME internship experiences on SME employment intentions. The implications of this analysis for both policymakers and researchers were particularly important at a time of upheaval in the graduate labour market as this article questioned the assumption that because an undergraduate spent their placement period in an SME that they were then likely to pursue a career in an SME.

Article 7 Jameson (2018) provided a critique of literature on hospitality and tourism students' and graduates' perceptions of a career in these sectors. The article suggested that almost all research on hospitality graduates' perceptions of careers was quantitative in nature and was usually conducted on one cohort of undergraduates or graduates at one particular point in time. The article argued for a new research agenda to include longitudinal research at several academic

institutions in several countries examining changing perceptions of careers over the students' entire degree.

Article 8 Mooney and Jameson (2018) presented the first set of data from a three-year longitudinal study, exploring how hospitality undergraduates developed a career identity during their studies. Previous studies discovered that many hospitality students chose not to follow a hospitality career after they graduated; however, these studies did not attempt to discover when their career intentions changed or explain why. This New Zealand study employed an interpretative, social-constructionist approach informed by intersectional theorizing. Career construction theory was used to interpret positive or negative career adaptive behaviours, and their effects were analysed at macro, meso and micro levels. Age, gender and ethnicity-based intersections were evident in the ways students developed career adaptive behaviours.

The chosen articles for this thesis explored undergraduate and graduates' changing perceptions of careers in the hospitality industry. Having briefly described the content of individual articles in the previous section, I will now explore the relationship between my work and previous work, explaining how my work differs and contributes to knowledge in this area.

The term 'hospitality' shall be used throughout the thesis and this incorporates research conducted in the tourism field.

The main focus of my research is graduate employment in the hospitality industry. All eight articles explored this. Three different actors were examined. These were undergraduates, graduates and hospitality employers. Although the context for my research is the hospitality industry, some of the research was specifically in small firms and some of the research was conducted in the particular time frame of the placement period. The term 'placement' is often used interchangeably with 'internship'. In general, placements tend to last longer than internships and placements are usually part of a formal qualification. The term placement shall be used here.

Table 2 provides a summary of the different contexts and actors examined in each article, the methodology and methods employed, the primary focus, main findings and where the discussion of the article is located in the thesis.

Title of publication	Focus	Context/s	Actor/s	Methodology/ Method	Primary focus and main findings	Location of discussion in the thesis
1. Jameson, S. M., and Hargraves, S. (1990) 'A comparative analysis of the job offered to hotel and catering graduates'. *Personnel Review*,19(6), pp. 25-32.	Graduate employment.	Hospitality industry.	Undergraduates. Employers.	Mainly quantitative. Postal questionnaires sent to the Graduate Recruitment Manager of 20 organisations.	• This article compared the packages offered by hospitality companies with those offered by non-hospitality companies. • It concluded that hospitality employers had failed to regard themselves as competing in the wider graduate labour.	2.0 2.3 3.1 4.2 4.4 5.2.2 5.2.3 5.2.4
2. Holden, R. J., and Jameson, S. M. (1999) 'A preliminary investigation into the transition and utilisation of hospitality graduates in SMEs'. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1(3), pp. 231-242.	Graduate employment.	Hospitality industry. Small firms.	Graduates. Employers.	Qualitative. Grounded theory approach. Five case studies. Unstructured, depth interviews.	• This article reported on a study on graduate employment in small hospitality firms and discovered that much of the graduates' time was spent on low-level tasks. • It concluded that graduate labour in particular types of small firms may remain underutilised and underdeveloped.	2.0 2.2 3.2 4.2 4.3 5.1.4 5.2.1 5.2.2
3. Jameson, S. M., and Holden, R.J. (2000) 'Graduateness" - who cares? Graduate identity in small hospitality firms'. *Education and Training*, 42(4/5), pp. 264-271.	Graduate employment.	Hospitality industry. Small firms.	Graduates. Employers.	Qualitative. Grounded theory approach. Five case studies. Unstructured, depth interviews.	• This article presented the results of a project on graduate employment in small hospitality firms. • It used the concept of graduate identity and found that a complex relationship existed between graduates, their managers and graduate identity and that hospitality	2.0 2.2 3.2 4.2 4.3 5.1.4 5.2.1 5.2.2

					graduates in small firms failed to develop a sense of graduate identity.	
4. Holden, R., Jameson, S., and Lashley, C. (2005) 'Graduate transition into employment in hospitality SMEs: on a road to nowhere?' *Industry and Higher Education*, 19(1), pp. 65-73.	Graduate employment.	Hospitality industry. Small firms.	Employers.	Quantitative. Survey using a postal questionnaire of more than 1,300 small hospitality firms.	• This article analysed survey data on the employment and use of graduates by hospitality SMEs. • It argued that it was not simply a question of whether or not an SME employed a graduate, but what was critical was how a graduate was used. • It discovered that a substantial number of SMEs were using graduates in an operative capacity.	2.0 2.2 3.1 5.1.4 5.2.1 5.2.2
5. Walmsley, A., Thomas, R., and Jameson, S. (2006). 'Surprise and sense making: undergraduate placement experiences in SMEs'. *Education and Training*, 48(5), pp. 360-372.	Placement experiences in small hospitality firms.	Hospitality industry. Small firms. Placement experience.	Undergraduates.	Qualitative. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 hospitality undergraduates.	• This article explored undergraduate placement experiences in small and medium-sized tourism and hospitality enterprises (SMEs). • The research discovered that the surprises that students encountered were not as dramatic as the literature on organisational entry had previously suggested. • The article raised questions about the value of undergraduate placements in an age of mass higher education where many students work part-time.	2.0 2.4 3.2 4.2 4.3 4.4 5.2.1. 5.2.3
6. Walmsley, A., Thomas, R. and Jameson, S. (2012) 'Internships in SMEs and Career Intentions', *Journal of Education and*	Placement experiences in small hospitality firms.	Hospitality industry. Small firms. Placement experience.	Undergraduates.	Qualitative. Two rounds of in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 hospitality undergraduates.	• This article contested the unproblematic treatment of the relationship between SME placement and career intentions in the context of hospitality education. • An explanatory model was developed	2.0 2.4 3.2 4.3 4.4 5.2.1 5.2.3

Work, 25(2), pp. 185-204.					to show how an interplay of factors come together to undermine the influence of largely positive SME internship experiences on SME employment intentions.	
7. Jameson, S.M. (2018) 'Hospitality and Tourism Career Perceptions: Time for a New Research Agenda?' *International Journal of Excellence in Tourism, Hospitality and Catering*, [Online], 8(1).	Graduate employment.	Hospitality industry.	Undergraduates. Graduates. Employers.	Conceptual paper.	• This article (2018) provided a critique of literature on hospitality and tourism students' and graduates' perceptions of a career in these sectors. • The article argued for a new research agenda to include longitudinal research at several academic institutions in several countries examining changing perceptions of careers over the students' entire degree.	2.0 2.1 5.5.1
8. Mooney, S., and Jameson, S. (2018) 'The career constructions of hospitality students: A rocky road'. *Hospitality & Society*, 8(1), pp. 45-67.	Graduate employment.	Hospitality industry.	Undergraduates. Employers.	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 hospitality students.	• This article presented data exploring how hospitality undergraduates developed a career identity during their studies. • This study discovered that a fusion of global and societal factors, parental influences and individual motivations significantly influenced career constructions.	2.0 2.1 3.2 4.2 4.5 5.1 5.1.1 5.1.2 5.1.3. 5.2.2

Table 2. A summary of each article

2.1 The individual undergraduate

Previous research on perceptions of careers in the hospitality industry had provided valuable insights; however, most of it was quantitative in nature, mainly using questionnaires (see e.g. Richardson, 2009; Richardson and Butler, 2012). Nachmias and Walmsley (2015) and Grant and Perren (2002) have also argued that the real gain in understanding graduate employment would come from detailed, situational, qualitative work and this might be particularly true for hospitality students and graduates, where most research to date has relied on survey data. Jameson (2018) extended this argument, critiquing previous research on hospitality undergraduates and their perceptions of careers. I argued (Jameson 2018) that although this research had provided some useful data, it could not dig deeply enough to aid our understanding of hospitality undergraduates' complex relationship with the hospitality industry. This paper argued for greater use of qualitative approaches in research on graduate employment in hospitality.

Richardson (2009) and Weaver (2009) also suggested that qualitative interviews would enable researchers to represent voices and views captured in the research setting more effectively. My research responded to this suggestion, and I used qualitative interviews to explore undergraduates' career perceptions in greater depth than questionnaires allowed (Mooney and Jameson 2018).

Although mixed methods (an online survey and individual interviews) have been used recently by Wen and Kwon (2019) to explore this area, most contemporary research in this area has continued to be quantitative, using questionnaires (Anthony, Mensah and Amissah 2021; Omar, Ali, and Manaf 2021). I would still argue that questionnaires are of limited value when examining changing perceptions of careers and it is interesting that even though the main authors in the field (and I) suggested that qualitative approaches would be more useful, authors as recently as 2021 were still limiting themselves to surveys.

Most research in the area at the time I was writing, had collected data from one cohort of students, at a particular point in time, see for example Kokt and Strydom (2014). Other researchers, for example Blomme, Van Rheede and Tromp (2009) had focused on different students at different stages of their degree. I argued (Jameson

2018) that it would be much more useful to 'track' a cohort of hospitality undergraduates through their university experience and to examine their perceptions of a career in the hospitality industry, before, during and after their degree. Blomme Van Rheede and Tromp's (2009) study was a comparison of the hospitality beliefs and expectations between three groups and not a longitudinal research study of a cohort of students. There was no indication of how these beliefs and expectations had developed at an individual level. My suggestion for a new 'research agenda' (Jameson 2018) attempted to remedy this and I began to do this in Mooney and Jameson (2018).

Most research in this area has taken place in one academic institution (e.g., Richardson, 2008), or in several academic institutions in one country (Lu and Adler 2009; Nachmias, 2015). In Jameson (2018) I suggested that research should take place in several academic institutions in several countries. Jenkins (2001) who conducted research in the UK and the Netherlands, also recommended that further research should be undertaken, both domestically and internationally at a larger number of institutions. Nachmias and Walmsley (2015) also suggested that further studies in other cultural and labour market contexts might usefully explore similarities and differences that do not emerge when examining one particular location. Mooney and Jameson (2018) achieved this by using a different location and cultural context.

In summary, various authors have suggested a more qualitative, longitudinal approach in different geographical contexts and I have been able to do this. Surveys using samples at one point in time can only produce limited data which cannot fully explore the real reasons why undergraduates' perceptions of the hospitality industry change throughout their degree. Surveys may be a useful starting point but cannot reveal the complexities of the changing relationship between undergraduates and the hospitality industry. My work, in contrast to much of the literature, offers a deeper, and more useful understanding and explanation of graduate attrition in the hospitality industry.

2.2   The individual graduate

Traditionally, graduate employment has taken place in large organisations (Williams and Owen, 1997), and research and research funding on graduate employment has reflected this (e.g., Harvey, Moon and Geall,1997; Holden and Jameson 2002). Although the main focus of my work has been graduate employment, from 1999-2012 my research concentrated on graduate employment in the context of small firms. At the time of writing about graduate employment in SMEs, the Association of Graduate Recruiters were raising expectations about the potential impact of an increasing number of graduates seeking employment in SMEs (Stewart and Knowles, 1999). It was argued that this assumption was driven by evidence that employment in SMEs was growing, which would be reflected in a corresponding rise in graduate jobs (Avery, 1994; McLarty, 1997).

Holden and Jameson (1999) suggested that this was a potentially problematic assumption. This article argued that the government and AGR's expectations were based on a set of questionable assumptions about employment opportunities in SMEs. The article suggested that there was a lack of empirical data on graduate job creation in SMEs. At the time, there was a total absence of data on UK graduate demand in SMEs. This lack of research based in a sector of the economy that was expected to recruit significantly more graduates was, therefore, problematic.

Holden, Jameson and Lashley (2005) partially remedied this. The article analysed survey data on the employment and use of graduates in 1,300 SMEs. As far as the characteristics of firms was concerned, Storey (1994) and Matlay (1999) had suggested that the SME was 'a hugely complex sector' (Holden and Jameson, 1999:231). Authors such as Pittaway (1999) had suggested that the small firms' sector could not be treated as a homogenous whole. Holden and Jameson (1999) further developed this notion that the small firms' sector was complex and heterogenous and discovered that many small firms were unsuitable for graduate employment. Holden, Jameson and Lashley (2005) also focused on the complexity of the sector and argued that as far as the characteristics of firms was concerned, size was an important variable when examining graduate employment. Research in SMEs generally (e.g. Storey 1994; Matlay, 1999) suggested that many firms were micro businesses (i.e. fewer than ten employees), with few aspirations for growth

and where attitudes to training and development suggested that the market for graduate employment may be significantly limited.

My research (Holden Jameson and Lashley 2005) discovered a presence of graduates in micro-firms and I supported the findings of Storey and Matlay arguing that the possibility of a graduate developing 'graduate skills' and a career in such a small firm was unlikely. In addition to the actual size of the firm, owners' aspirations were found to influence graduates. Pittaway (1999) discovered that owners' aspirations for growth were likely to have an important influence on current and future graduate recruitment. My research (Holden, Jameson and Lashley 2005) supported this and discovered that although some graduates were employed in non-growth-oriented firms, graduates were more likely to find employment in growth-oriented ones. In relation to growth and non-growth, there was some slight evidence that growth-focused firms regarded graduate skills more positively and weaknesses less critically than non-growth firms.

Underemployment and underutilisation of graduates were not new phenomena (see e.g. Connor and Pollard, 1996; Institute of Personnel and Development, 1997). The Institute of Personnel and Development is now called the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. Holden, Jameson and Lashley (2005) argued that the issue was not so much whether or not SMEs employed graduates, but how they used them. My data showed that a substantial majority of the firms employing graduates deployed them in a 'mainly operative' capacity. This article argued that this was a critical issue as using graduates as operatives contrasted strongly with the data in this project, which indicated an overwhelmingly positive view of graduate skills.

In relation to management skills, it was inferred that 70% of those employers who identified shortages in management skills, under-used their graduate labour. Even in growth firms, and in firms in which the owner-manager was positive about employing graduates, they were used in a predominantly non-managerial capacity (Holden, Jameson and Lashley 2005). Such findings implied that many small hospitality companies were simply not making the most of the graduates they had employed. This was an important finding and supported the work of Pittaway (1999) and Ingram *et al.* (2000). Holden, Jameson and Lashley (2005) raised questions about the extent

22

to which the employment of graduates in hospitality SMEs offered the prospect of a proper use of 'graduate skills'. The research brought into doubt the suitability of small tourism and hospitality firms as employers for graduates wishing to develop a career that was appropriate to their qualifications. The research discovered that variables such as size and growth-orientation may not have been such important variables as was first thought.

In 1999, Holmes examined the role of graduates in small firms. Holmes drew on Mason's (1995) work and argued that the concept of graduate identity offered real potential for the study of graduates in small firms. Although the hospitality industry was dominated by small independent operators (Morrison and Thomas 1999), research in the hospitality industry had been predominantly located in the context of large multinational enterprises (Jameson, 1996). Jameson and Holden (2000) focused on hospitality graduates in small firms and addressed this gap in the literature. It presented the second phase of a project on graduate employment in small hospitality firms using the concept of graduate identity. Research using graduate identity had mainly been used for graduates in large firms and it had never been used in the hospitality context.

If Holmes' (1999) view is accepted that higher education is a process by which an individual develops their identity as a graduate, "as one who is highly educated", then this work contrasts with Holmes' findings. Specifically, the graduates in the case studies were highly educated, but appeared to be failing to develop their identity as graduates and their managers lacked understanding on how to utilise graduate labour in small firms. Once the graduate started to work in the firm, it seemed to be the case that the employers' expectations of them appeared to be low. This is at variance with Holmes' claim that employers expect graduates "to make a difference".

Although Holmes is clear that identity is not fixed, and is formed over time, there is no evidence to suggest that these graduates have begun to tread on the path of developing a graduate identity. Harre's (1983) work is also useful in this context as none of these graduates appeared to be seeking to attain and maintain uniqueness and individuality as far as the graduate labour market was concerned. At best, they seemed to be underselling themselves; at worst they were almost rejecting any

notion of graduate identity. It would be foolish to speculate if the reason for this was unique to the hospitality industry, but it does appear to be the case that graduate identity, as far as the graduates in my work were concerned, was underdeveloped. The implications of this impact both on the graduate, who may become disillusioned and may leave the organisation and the sector, which does not benefit from an employee with graduate level skills and abilities.

However, given the burden of responsibility that was placed on the SME labour market to absorb increasing numbers of graduates, Holden and Jameson (1999) suggested that there was a need to question, much more strongly, any assumptions that small firms had a huge potential to absorb increasing numbers of graduates. My research was significant as it questioned the assumptions of government and policy makers at that time and provided evidence that it was simply not the case that just because the number of graduates was growing, that the SME sector, as far as hospitality was concerned, was a particularly suitable type of organisation within which to develop and use graduate skills.

Recent research on small firms in hospitality has concentrated on 'Talent management' (Chung and D'Annunzio-Green 2018) or Human Resource Development (Nolan, Garavan, and Lynch 2020). There has been no specific recent research on hospitality graduates in SMEs and this may be due to government and educational institutions concentrating on the impact of the global pandemic on graduates and graduate employment in general, rather than focusing on a particular firm size.

2.3   Hospitality employers

When I started researching graduate employment (Jameson and Hargraves 1990), I argued that previous research regarding graduate job choice had focused on the decision-making processes of the graduates. I suggested that very few researchers had considered the demand side of the graduate labour market, the employers, and the graduate jobs they offered to prompt that choice. Authors such as McCleary and Weaver (1988) had examined the expectations of hospitality students regarding entry level positions in the hospitality industry. Although they discovered that many

hospitality undergraduates did not want to enter the hospitality industry upon graduation, they failed to address the demand side of the labour market (the employer) and they did not try to discover what these non-hospitality employers were offering to attract hospitality students. Jameson and Hargraves closed this gap in the literature and took both graduates and employers (hospitality and non-hospitality) into account.

Wang and Tsai (2014) adopted a more balanced view of both sides of the labour market as they examined graduate and industry perspectives. However, recent research (Gong and Jia 2022) conducted a systematic review of hospitality and tourism students' career intentions and it is clear that there is still a heavy focus on the student rather than the employer.

Research at the time of Jameson and Hargraves (1990) tended to treat the hospitality industry as 'one industry' and failed to differentiate between the sectors, (see e.g., Pavesic and Brymer 1989). These authors did admit to defining hospitality 'in a very broad sense' (1989:268) and they acknowledged that various subsectors existed, but this did not inform their research design. My research in Jameson and Hargraves deliberately segmented the hospitality industry into subsectors and this enabled me to offer a more sophisticated explanation of supply and demand in the graduate labour market.

When I started doing research on graduate employment, Churchill (1989) stated that the graduate salaries offered by the hospitality industry tended to be lower than in other industries chasing the same recruits. My research (Jameson and Hargraves, 1990) discovered that several sectors in the hospitality industry were offering salaries competitive with companies outside the sector. I argued that it is naïve to treat the hospitality industry as 'one industry' as different subsectors offer different packages to graduates. It is simply not the case that the entire hospitality industry is uncompetitive as an employer in the graduate labour market. It would be much more useful for academics and students to segment the hospitality graduate labour market to identify which sectors are more attractive to graduates.

As a result of my focus on non-hospitality as well as hospitality companies (Jameson and Hargraves 1990), I was able to demonstrate why hospitality students were attracted to non-hospitality companies. Most research at that time and since (see e.g. Brown, Arendt and Bosselman 2014; Gong and Jia 2022), when mentioning employers, only considered hospitality employers. I maintain that this is flawed as 50% of hospitality graduates do not enter the hospitality industry so it is important to discover why hospitality students are attracted to these companies.

Most previous research has focused solely on undergraduates (see e.g. Chuang and Dellmann-Jenkins 2010; Richardson 2008). It has treated the hospitality industry as a singular homogenous entity and it has neglected to find out why non-hospitality companies are attracting hospitality students. In contrast, my research has examined both sides of the graduate labour market, has segmented the hospitality industry into sectors and has included non-hospitality companies. I would argue that it is only possible to explain graduate perceptions and graduate attrition in hospitality by taking this approach.

2.4   Placements

Placements can be seen as an important part of career development. Often, universities use placements to enable students to develop a range of skills and to help clarify and refine employment intentions and career goals. Traditionally, most placements have taken place in large organisations (Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson 2006). In contrast, Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2006) and Walmsley Thomas and Jameson (2012) examined hospitality undergraduates' experiences of placements in small firms. At the time, authors such as Johnson and Tilley (1999) and Booth (2004) were explicitly calling for increased linkages between SMEs and higher education institutions to raise awareness of employment opportunities in such businesses. Policymakers were encouraging placements in SMEs. Initiatives existed that deliberately targeted SMEs as placement destinations with a view to increasing subsequent graduate employment in such firms (Westhead, 1998).

However, evidence of the efficacy of these initiatives was weak with emphasis being placed on employers' attitudes rather than on those of the students and graduates

(Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson 2012). Walmsley Thomas and Jameson (2006) refuted the notion from Government and Higher Education that the small firm was the most likely location for graduate employment. This article raised questions about the value of undergraduate placements in an age of mass higher education where many students work part-time. The article also suggested that placements in small hospitality firms were not achieving their potential for experiential learning. The government at that time was encouraging graduates to pursue careers in small firms and the placement period can be an important part of that career development process. This article argued that the small firm was not such a suitable type of organisation as previously thought. It provided evidence which contrasted with the assumptions of government and policy makers.

Westhead's (1998) study was one of few to examine the impact of placements on employment intentions. His analysis suggested that SME placements were of little significance in terms of the increased likelihood of SME employment. Placements did not, it seems, overcome the positive attributes associated with large firms, and implicit in this were the perceived negative attributes of SMEs. Critically, however, Westhead (1998) did not investigate the relationship between attitudes and employment outcomes. In contrast, Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2012) addressed this deficiency by examining how attitudes, and the impact of undertaking an SME placement, influenced employment intentions and decisions in the hospitality sector. This article supported Westhead's (1998) findings but went further and discovered a more complex and nuanced understanding of the transition from student to graduate employment. This work found that, in contrast to economic rationalism (Hodkinson and Sparkes 1997) and theories that draw on expected utility calculations (Quiggin, 2012), the role of chance events, or happenstance, was increasingly acknowledged as being influential in determining career outcomes (see e.g., Bright, Pryor and Harpham 2005; Krumboltz, 1998).

This was an important finding as career intentions were largely treated as unproblematic in the literature. Critically, the very undecided and vague nature of career intentions appeared not to have been taken into account in a number of studies that looked at the impact of placements on career intentions (see e.g., Kusluvan, Kusluvan and Eren 2003; Leslie and Richardson 1999; Purcell, Pitcher

and Simm 1999). My work does not categorically reject that career interventions such as the internship will influence career intentions. However, from analysing the internship's impact on intentions to seek SME employment, it can be argued that the role of such interventions can easily be, and often are, overstated. The lesson here is to be cautious when making assumptions about career intentions and interventions and not to always assume a positive outcome.

In 2021, a systematic review of the literature on hospitality internships was undertaken by Zopiatis, Papadopoulos and Theofanous (2021). Although 69 articles were reviewed, the small firm context as a placement venue was only the main feature of one article – Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2012).

In conclusion, my work has investigated these three actors (sometimes in the specific context of a small firm) but always within the overarching theme of graduate employment in the hospitality context. In some cases, my work has supported the findings and arguments of authors in the field but in others it refuted these. My work has added to knowledge in the field and has aided our understanding of the complex relationship between hospitality undergraduates and graduates and the graduate labour market. My work has shed light on some of the reasons for the high rates of attrition of hospitality graduates and has explained how this is a result of many different factors.

My qualitative approach has made a difference to our understanding of how these three actors interact with each other and the graduate labour market and how this has had an impact on changing perceptions of careers. The inclusion of different cultural contexts is important for a global industry such as hospitality. It has also been important to include small firms as most research in hospitality has been conducted on large firms. For these reasons, my work has addressed gaps in knowledge and has offered a clearer and more complete explanation of why many hospitality graduates choose not to enter the hospitality industry when they graduate.

Chapter 3 Methodological appraisal and reflections

This chapter will discuss my research journey regarding the methods and methodologies that have been employed in the production of the published papers that are submitted as part of this thesis. Each paper that contains empirical work (1-6, 8) has an explicit methods section detailing the sampling, data collection and analysis procedures, including the rationale for that approach, so this information will not be repeated here. The methodological stance and the methods employed in each paper were adopted depending on the phenomena under investigation, the issue or problem being addressed and the particular research question.

Table 3 provides an overview of the method or methods employed in each article.

	Title of publication	Method/methods employed	Where this method is discussed in Chapter 3
1	Jameson, S. M., and Hargraves, S. (1990) 'A comparative analysis of the job offered to hotel and catering graduates'. *Personnel Review*,19(6), pp. 25-32.	Postal questionnaires were sent to the Graduate Recruitment Manager of 20 organisations that hospitality undergraduates had applied to for graduate jobs.	3.1
2	Holden, R. J., and Jameson, S. M. (1999) 'A preliminary investigation into the transition and utilisation of hospitality graduates in SMEs'. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1(3), pp. 231-242.	Grounded theory approach. Five case studies were chosen. These were small hospitality firms with less than 50 employees. Focused, unstructured, depth interviews were conducted in each organisation. A total of 8 hospitality graduates and 5 managers were interviewed.	3.2
3	Jameson, S. M., and Holden, R.J. (2000) 'Graduateness" - who cares? Graduate identity in small hospitality firms'. *Education and Training*, 42(4/5), pp. 264-271.	Grounded theory approach. Five case studies were chosen. These were small hospitality firms with less than 50 employees. Focused, unstructured, depth interviews were conducted in each organisation. A total of 8 hospitality graduates and 5 managers were interviewed.	3.2

4	Holden, R., Jameson, S., and Lashley, C. (2005) 'Graduate transition into employment in hospitality SMEs: on a road to nowhere?' *Industry and Higher Education*, 19(1), pp. 65-73.	Data were collected using a postal questionnaire survey of more than 1,300 (from a sample of 4,500) small hospitality businesses throughout the UK.	3.1
5	Walmsley, A., Thomas, R., and Jameson, S. (2006). 'Surprise and sense making: undergraduate placement experiences in SMEs'. *Education and Training*, 48(5), pp. 360-372.	In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 hospitality undergraduates who had recently completed a 48-week placement in a small firm.	3.2
6	Walmsley, A., Thomas, R. and Jameson, S. (2012) 'Internships in SMEs and Career Intentions', *Journal of Education and Work*, 25(2), pp. 185-204.	Two rounds of in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 hospitality undergraduates who had recently completed a 48-week placement in a small firm.	3.2
7	Jameson, S.M. (2018) 'Hospitality and Tourism Career Perceptions: Time for a New Research Agenda?' *International Journal of Excellence in Tourism, Hospitality and Catering*, [Online], 8(1).	Conceptual paper	A research method was not employed for this paper as it was a conceptual paper.
8	Mooney, S., and Jameson, S. (2018) 'The career constructions of hospitality students: A rocky road'. *Hospitality & Society*, 8(1), pp. 45-67.	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 hospitality students in the first year of their degree in New Zealand.	3.2

Table 3. An overview of the methods employed in each article

I am aware of the importance of research ethics and all my work conforms fully to institutional requirements regarding research ethics. Sultana (2007:382) argues that 'It is critical to pay attention to positionality, reflexivity, the production of knowledge

and the power relations that are inherent in research processes in order to undertake ethical research'. My philosophical position in relation to knowledge creation has evolved over the years from a positivist, realist stance – testing hypotheses using questionnaires – to an interpretative, social-constructionist approach, underpinned by feminist intersectional theorising. As far as positionality is concerned, it is important to critically reflect on my cultural, political and social contexts and to examine how these have influenced my research and scholarship. Culturally, I started life as a white, working class, 'Ulster Protestant'. Ulster Protestants tend to have rather narrow political views rooted in religious bias with a tendency to lean to the right of the political spectrum. Northern Ireland was in the middle of 'the troubles' when I lived there and there was (and still is) extreme segregation. I never encountered anyone other than other white Ulster Protestants. I moved to England to embark on a degree in Hotel and Catering. Because of my degree (especially a strand in the degree entitled 'Labour studies') my political views changed dramatically and I embarked on a Master's degree, which examined trade unions and shop stewards in the hotel industry. This was at variance with my religious and cultural background in Northern Ireland but this change in political view has been a major influence on my research. I began to take a much more critical stance on industrial relations, feminism and the Monarchy than I would have had if I had stayed in Northern Ireland. I began to question the 'rights' of management, the concept of patriarchy and the role of the Monarchy.

My research topic for this thesis (graduate employment) focuses on hospitality undergraduates and graduates and their relationship with the graduate labour market. I was a hospitality undergraduate and graduate and decided not to enter the sector upon graduation (mainly because of the inequalities in the industry regarding issues such as gender, poor pay and the lack of career progression) so I realise and acknowledge that I am part of the social world that I am researching. My background (having been a hospitality student) and my position (rejecting the hospitality industry as a career) affected what I chose to research and how I studied it (interrogating why hospitality undergraduates choose not to pursue a career in the sector). I have reflected on this and have been explicit about my stance in my work.

Insider research has been defined by Coghlan and Brannick (2005) as research conducted by people who are already members of the organization or community they are investigating as a result of education or employment. As my work involved interviewing my own students, I was conducting insider research. Butler (2002:240) suggests that: 'Traditionally, the sphere of research ethics encompasses intrinsic deontological principles around our duty to respect the autonomy and privacy of our fellow human beings as well as extrinsic consequentialist principles around maximizing the benefits and minimizing the harms which flow from our research'. This is particularly important when conducting research with one's own students. Mercer (2007) discusses the power relationships within which the researcher and the researched co-exist and suggests that the power dimension needs to be addressed in insider research. I had a dual role as an educator and researcher so the students could have perceived me as an authority figure.

The Institutional Review Board of Columbia University (2023) states that when conducting research on one's own students the potential for coercion or undue influence increases and additional protections are required. The Review Board (2023:1) suggests that coercion happens when 'an overt or implicit threat of harm is presented by one person to another to obtain compliance'. It goes on to suggest that real coercion is rare in research, but the perception of coercion can be just as problematic in obtaining voluntary informed consent. The Board goes on to argue (2023:1) that: 'Regardless of how well a classroom teacher presents the recruitment and option not to participate, students may feel compelled to participate, or risk having their non- participation impact their grade or relationship with their teacher'. I, and all of my co-authors in the selected articles made it clear at the consent stage of the research that participation was voluntary and that students were under no obligation to participate, and that they could withdraw at any stage of the project. Students were also assured that no consequences would follow if a student decided not to participate in the research or decided to withdraw after consenting to participate. I use anonymous marking in all of my modules so there was no possibility that a student's mark could have been influenced as a result of participating in the research. Students were also assured of confidentiality and anonymity so there was no possibility that a particular student could be identified.

The Institutional Review Board at Columbia University suggests that researchers must ensure that the recruitment and informed consent process must minimize the possibility of coercion or undue influence by ensuring that the study should not disrupt typical classroom learning. I was careful to schedule interviews at different times to teaching sessions and I made sure that interviews took place in rooms other than my university office so that students could distinguish between required course activities and voluntary research activities and could see that I was in the role of researcher rather than lecturer. Another way of minimising the possibility or coercion or undue influence is to be reassure students that the study would not prioritise time for research participants over non-participants. I made it clear to my students that all students who participated and did not participate would still have access to equal amounts of my time as a lecturer and as a personal tutor. Students who participated would not be prioritised as far as my time was concerned.

The selected papers for this thesis have used secondary data and primary data collected through qualitative and quantitative methods. My research journey began with cross-sectional, survey-based studies and gradually adopted complex, in-depth interviews to examine the phenomena. The following sections outline the methods that I have used in the selected articles and my reflections on them.

3.1   Questionnaires

My first article (Jameson and Hargraves, 1990) took a positivist approach using postal questionnaires to test a hypothesis. The sample was small (20) but I learnt that although questionnaires could provide some useful data, the results were limited. I used postal questionnaires again as part of a large national survey of more than 4,500 small businesses (Holden, Jameson and Lashley 2005). Although the sample size was much larger, I still found the data superficial in terms of individuals' experiences and the meanings they associated with them, so my research increasingly used interviews to provide nuanced insights into subjective perceptions and attitudes.

3.2   Interviews

My submitted articles have employed different types of interviews. From semi-structured to unstructured and open-ended. Some of my interviews explicitly used theory in a framework to guide questions and other interviews deliberately did not use theory to frame the data collection.

Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2006) used interviews guided by Wengraf's (2001) biographic-narrative-interpretive method. The notion of "understanding" in a Weberian sense (Weber, 1964) was important for this research, especially at the level of the individual. Therefore, in-depth interviews were deemed a suitable data collection method for the study. Initially interviews were unstructured but then during the second round of interviews questions became more specific. This bridged the gap between a wholly open, inductive stance and an entirely theory-led method. Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson (2012) also used an interpretive methodological approach that relied on collecting rather rich data from relatively few participants. Lightly structured depth interviews focused upon the elicitation of narratives. It comprised three stages of conversational questioning with minimum researcher input and prompting in initial stages, which grew with each successive stage. The interviews were not entirely open and conformed to Kvale's (1996) notion of qualitative research interviews being focused around topics or themes rather than a list of pre-determined questions (Bryman 2004).

Holden and Jameson (1999) and Jameson and Holden (2000) used a less theoretically dependent methodological approach. The data were generated inductively without an existing conceptual or theoretical framework. Given an absence of basic knowledge and a lack of theory in the area, the rationale was that an initial exploration of the phenomena was needed to identify key concepts and issues that could be used to design future studies. A qualitative approach was considered most appropriate for the project (see, for example, Walker, 1985; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It pursued 'naturalistic' enquiry (see Robson, 1993), which meant the research design was created through the study, and theory was developed from the data through inductive analysis. The research adopted a case study strategy, examining a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 1989).

It was decided to pursue a number of exploratory case studies, to improve the potential transferability of findings. There was no intention of promising generalisability, however, the findings could be relevant to other (non-hospitality) small firms who employ graduates and the fact that the findings were from five case studies improves the likelihood that the findings could be transferred to other contexts.

The specific method employed was focused, unstructured, depth interviews. Depth interviews enabled me to probe more deeply, and I was able to have conversations with the graduates which were not constrained by set questions. This enabled the graduates to talk about their experiences. This uncovered new ideas and new dimensions of the issue of graduates in small firms. Depth interviews were of immense value in this area which had been under-researched. Structured interviews would have 'stifled' the conversations and I would have had a much narrower and diluted understanding of the graduates' experiences. Depth interviews provided a richer picture of the feelings and attitudes of the graduates and the findings unearthed a much more complex story of hospitality graduates' experiences in small firms.

I also achieved a more in-depth approach in Mooney and Jameson (2018), which took a longitudinal approach and used interviews. Career construction theory and the concept of a 'career calling' are developmental concepts pertinent to hospitality career motivations, so a longitudinal research design was especially valuable when teasing out developmental patterns and identifying cause and effect relationships in career behaviours (Praskova, Hood and Creed 2014). The approach to collecting and analysing data in this study followed an interpretative, social-constructionist approach, underpinned by feminist intersectional theorizing, to investigate the development of individual career understandings. A feminist approach was adopted because feminist research focuses on the experiences of women where the aim is to make women visible, (Holloway and Wheeler 2013). The majority of hospitality undergraduates are female and a feminist approach aimed at giving female students 'a voice' questioning the social order which has existed since time immemorial and in which men are dominant. A feminist approach enabled students to talk about their experiences in a patriarchal society in a male dominated industry and students were

able to talk about how these experiences contributed to their career decisions. A feminist method was used which focused on a rich reflexive analysis of data from a small pool of participants. The findings provided useful insights about why and how a phenomenon happened in a specific context, rather than providing a more generalisable result. A feminist approach is again in direct contrast to my cultural and societal upbringing and emerged from the changes in my political views due to the teaching on my degree.

A criticism frequently levelled at qualitative hospitality and tourism studies is that sample sizes are small and results are not generalisable. This positivist orientation (see Figueroa-Domecq *et al*. 2015) is incompatible with more contemporary understandings, for example, those revealed in intersectional studies, on how gender, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation influence the ways social roles are performed in society. This methodological approach challenged me to reflect on my original positivist stance and I realised that my intersectional study enabled me to understand, at a much deeper level, why hospitality students' career decisions changed.

The lack of attention paid to critical perspectives is not unique to the hospitality and tourism academy. Career researchers Roper, Ganesh and Inkson (2010) decried the lack of contextual 'meaningful' career studies and diversity researchers Ŏzbilgin *et al.* (2010) echoed their call for more local or organization/sector-specific studies to expose hidden aspects of diversity. Mooney and Jameson (2018) argued that the quantitative approach prevalent in the tourism academy discourages the use of innovative critical approaches, especially those using feminist methods, which frequently focus on rich reflexive analysis of data from a small pool of participants. The findings of such studies yield useful insights about why and how a phenomenon happens in a specific context, rather than providing generalisable results.

This article adopted an interpretive approach, rather than another survey, that could encompass aspects of identity such as race/ethnicity and gender when investigating hospitality students' early career experiences. Therefore, nimble intersectionality (Mooney 2016) was chosen as a suitable methodological approach for the study as it is 'a paradigm or tool that can help researchers convey the separate and cumulative

effects of being "different" in more than one dimension' (Mooney 2016: 9), within the specific context of the hospitality sector. I had moved from collecting data from a large sample to having the experience and confidence to understand that when the sample population and research parameters are clearly defined, data saturation could be achieved through 6-12 interviews. I had evolved from a positivist orientation to a more nuanced understanding, often used in intersectional studies to investigate how gender, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation influence the ways social roles are performed in society. Recently, I have also tried to focus on why and how a phenomenon happens in a specific context, rather than trying to provide generalisable results.

My methodological journey, using various methods across different studies, has provided a unique constellation of works representing a contribution to knowledge regarding hospitality undergraduates' and graduates' perceptions of careers.

Chapter 4 The coherence of the published work

Oxford Brookes University's regulations for the Award of the Degree of PhD on the Basis of Published Work, 7.2 (ii), requires a candidate to: 'describe the overall programme of research and its aims and discuss how the individual items of published work submitted fit into this'. The University regulations also require a candidate to 'establish the coherence between the items of published work', 8.5 (ii). I have produced a unified body of work over a sustained period (1990 - 2018), exploring undergraduates' and graduates' changing perceptions of careers in the hospitality industry and the aim of my thesis encapsulates this. As mentioned in chapter 2, the main focus of my research is graduate employment in the hospitality industry. Three different actors were examined. These were undergraduates, graduates and hospitality employers. Some of the research was specifically in small firms and some of the research was conducted in the particular time frame of the placement period.

4.1   The individual undergraduate and graduate

All the articles perceived the individual undergraduate or graduate as an 'actor' and all articles, in different ways, examined the relationship between this actor and the graduate labour market. As the focus of each article is either on undergraduates or graduates, there are common themes and links between the selected articles which build on each other to present a coherent picture of undergraduates and graduates in different contexts and their developing relationship with the graduate labour market. None of the selected articles dealt with hospitality management education and this was deliberate. Although I have published work on this area (see for example Lugosi and Jameson 2017 and Lashley et al. 2001), I decided that including these works would dilute the thesis' core theme. Including an additional theme of education would have weakened the coherence of the selected articles.

4.2   The organisation/role of the employer

Careers do not evolve in a vacuum and the role of the organisation and employer can influence perceptions of careers. All eight articles examined hospitality

employers and their role in hospitality undergraduate or graduate career perceptions and career decision making. It was important to select articles that included the employers' impact on undergraduate and graduate career decision making as an examination of undergraduates and graduates in isolation would not give a clear or complete picture of how perceptions of careers in hospitality changed due to experiences of working in the hospitality industry. Although all 8 selected articles examine the role of hospitality employers in changing career perceptions and this provides coherence, on reflection, I could have strengthened this aspect by including my work (Lashley et al. 2001) which dealt specifically and solely on hospitality employers' views of hospitality management qualifications. However, at the time of the article selection, I decided that this work placed too much emphasis on qualifications rather than the actual graduates and decided not to include it.

4.3   Small firms

It was important to include articles on small firms as they dominate the hospitality industry (Chung and D'Annunzio-Green, 2018). Selecting publications based solely on large firms would present an incomplete picture of the sector. Also, a substantial part of my research journey has been spent examining undergraduates and graduates in small firms. I was immersed in small firm research for over 12 years and my research activities included research on graduates and small firms commissioned by the UK government (Holden, Jameson and Parsons 2002). This research project advised the government on graduates' contribution to the small firms' sector, which culminated in a presentation to, what was then, the Department of Trade and Industry. This publication was not included here because it was a government report and thus defined as 'grey literature', but it does provide evidence of my contribution to the debate on the role of graduates in small firms.

4.4   Placements

Placements can be perceived as 'stepping stones' to the graduate labour market and this experience can influence undergraduates' perceptions of careers. It was important to include articles on placements as they can form an important part of career decision making.

As far as the selected articles are concerned, the insights on placements link articles and connect ideas regarding hospitality undergraduates and placements. However, this focus is then extended and adds to knowledge about the impact that placements have on career decisions, which further strengthens coherence between the individual articles. The selected articles can shed light on the role of placements on graduate career decision making, but this is limited empirically to placements in small firms.

4.5   Careers

The 'golden thread' in my published work is the concept of a career. This is present in all selected articles. However, on reflection, until Mooney and Jameson (2018) it was implicit, rather than explicit. Before 2018, I had used the concept of a career but had not used any career theory such as career construction theory (Savickas 2013). On reflection, as this theory focuses on the 'career journey', rather than a career at one particular point in time, it would have been a useful theoretical framework within which to locate my research. As the undergraduate/graduate is the actor in the context of the graduate labour market, it is the career, and within this, career intentions, aspirations and perceptions that 'mould' the undergraduate in their journey to become a graduate in the labour market. Actors construct their career trajectories through these intentions, aspirations and perceptions and the actual experiences that they have from the time they choose a university course to entering the graduate labour market. Career construction theory would have been valuable in framing my research and 'making sense' of these intentions and aspirations.

Career intentions are an important part of career construction. All articles examined career intentions in slightly different ways; however, on reflection, career construction theory could have enhanced my understanding of these changing career intentions, offering a potentially useful lens to examine how and why these intentions changed using the themes of actor, agent and author (Savickas 2013).

Although I used Holmes' (1999) and Harre's (1983) notion of graduate identity in the context of small firms, on reflection, this would have been useful in all sizes of firms when examining graduates as it could have shed light on graduates' views of

themselves and graduate careers in hospitality. Graduate identity may also have been useful as a conceptual tool when researching undergraduates as it may have helped explain why some hospitality graduates did not think that the hospitality industry was a suitable career for a graduate.

In conclusion, I have examined the individual hospitality undergraduate and graduate as actors, constructing careers in the context of the labour market. I have investigated the graduate labour market from both the supply and demand perspectives, through the lens of the employer and employee. This has produced a holistic approach, which has explored small and large firms in domestic and international contexts. There are common themes across my chosen articles all linked together by the 'golden thread' of a career, which represents a coherent contribution to a greater understanding of hospitality undergraduates and graduates changing perceptions of careers. There are limitations in any research project but I have reflected and been critical of my own research and publications. I am aware of the alternative ways that I could have approached these research topics, which has also been an important part of ongoing learning and development.

Chapter 5 The original contribution to knowledge represented by the published work

5.1   Theoretical contribution

I have contributed to knowledge by examining hospitality undergraduates' perceptions of the hospitality industry as a career identifying ways that their career constructions were shaped by factors at individual, organisational and societal levels (Mooney and Jameson 2018). In addition to employing an analysis at these three levels, I have been able to demonstrate links between the different levels and this has enabled me to contribute to knowledge by offering an explanatory framework which provides a deeper and more holistic understanding of hospitality undergraduates' career aspirations.

I have also made a theoretical contribution to the concept of graduate identity in the specific context of small hospitality firms.

5.1.1   Individual undergraduates' perceptions of hospitality careers

My contribution to knowledge begins with my proposal that scholarship in the area of hospitality undergraduates' perceptions of careers has failed to appreciate sufficiently the differences between undergraduates. I have argued that within one group of hospitality undergraduates, there are differences between the students based on individuality and individual identity. Consequently, I have suggested (Mooney and Jameson 2018) that an undifferentiated approach to one group of hospitality students cannot help to understand or explain hospitality undergraduates' complex and changing relationship with the sector. Previous approaches to research in this area have tended to treat hospitality undergraduates as a homogenous group of students, rather than individuals with diverse backgrounds, see for example Blomme, Van Rheede and Tromp (2009) and Brown, Arendt and Bosselman, (2014). I have claimed (Mooney and Jameson 2018) that it is more useful to examine career perceptions at the level of the individual. More specifically, I applied career construction theory (Savickas 2013), which suggests that individuals actively construct their career identities over longer timeframes. Adopting this framework enabled me to examine individual student's changing perceptions of the hospitality industry as a suitable career.

Furthermore, methodologically, I have suggested that the change in attitude towards the hospitality industry cannot be understood by using single data points, which examines hospitality undergraduates' views of the industry as a career at one particular point in time and only offers a partial insight into their career aspirations. Moreover, I have suggested (Jameson, 2018) that the 'changes' offer a more meaningful explanation for why 50% of hospitality undergraduates decide not to enter the industry after graduation. Given this high rate of attrition in the industry, it is important to discover why this changed.

My work moved the emphasis from undergraduates' views at one point in time and shifted research in this area beyond a superficial level confined by the boundary of one glimpse into an undergraduate's career (Jameson 2018). My work is of consequence and develops thinking in the field as I have rejected the approach of many researchers who have treated hospitality undergraduates as a group and I have moved the focus to changes in undergraduates' perceptions, which is a much more dynamic approach than the static approach taken by many scholars in the field. This approach, which sees the changes as crucial to our understanding of perceptions of careers, can clearly be seen when the individual student is viewed in the context of their experiences in hospitality organisations.

5.1.2 The influence of hospitality employers and hospitality organisations on career perceptions

I made a theoretical contribution through adopting the concept of a 'calling' or passion (Mooney and Jameson 2018). I suggested that hospitality employers need to be aware that they can potentially have an impact on these changing perceptions and there is a possibility that they can alter negative perceptions to more positive ones. Individuals with a 'calling' or passion for their chosen career are more likely to demonstrate the career-adaptive traits required for a lengthy hospitality career. This concept of a calling has been used in careers research, but previous studies have not explained at what stage such passion ignites (or diminishes) and how a hospitality career identity is created, challenged or maintained. My research has contributed to knowledge as it has shown that this calling or passion is linked to job satisfaction and that it can be enriched or reduced depending how hospitality employers treat younger workers (Mooney and Jameson 2018). Although in itself this

is not unusual, in an industry with managerial labour shortages, this finding can alert potential employers to the importance of early career experiences. Formative experiences (which could be part-time jobs prior or during a degree or placement experiences) can have a strong influence on perceptions of the hospitality industry as a desirable career.

Mooney and Jameson (2018) showed that negative workplace experiences appeared to change students' motivation to follow a hospitality career because they reduced an individual's belief of being suited to the industry. This finding can shed light on the type of student who is likely to pursue a career in hospitality and it is important for employers to recognise this calling and to nurture it, rather than reducing the impact of this passion or calling because of poor organisational experiences. If hospitality employers were more aware of this, they could intervene and reduce the likelihood of hospitality undergraduates pursuing careers in other industries. My conceptual link between the individual and organisational levels is that I discovered that an individual hospitality student can aspire to join the hospitality industry at the start of their degree, but that experiences in hospitality organisations during their degree can influence their aspirations either positively or negatively. This is the case for most industries but is particularly important for hospitality organisations with high graduate attrition and a loss of potential talent.

5.1.3 The influence of society on career perceptions

My contribution to knowledge has gone further than arguing that perceptions of hospitality careers should be examined at the level of the individual and the organisation. Mooney and Jameson (2018) proposed that a fusion of global and societal factors influenced the construction of participants' professional hospitality identities. Using career construction theory and career identities, Savickas, (2013) maintained that changing career aspirations were a result of personal characteristics rooted in society and culture. He suggested that careers began to be constructed in infancy when children began to understand the family and started to absorb the cultural discourses that surrounded it. My contribution to understanding how hospitality undergraduates constructed their careers was to take account of societal and cultural influences which had an impact on their changing career aspirations.

This had not been done before in previous research and it is important to take account of these influences on careers as hospitality undergraduates are from diverse cultural and societal backgrounds, which affects their changing career perceptions and ultimately their decision to join the hospitality industry upon graduation, or not.

This is significant for future research because my work has shown that the diverse backgrounds of hospitality students are critical factors in career intentions and the construction of careers and career identity, and the likelihood of hospitality students entering the hospitality industry after graduation. It was clear from my research that the cultural background of hospitality students had a significant impact on their career aspirations in general and more specifically on whether the hospitality industry was perceived as a suitable graduate employer or not. This was a novel approach as it rejected the previous practice of reducing hospitality undergraduates to a homogenous whole, almost devoid of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. I then decided that a more nuanced approach was needed which took account of intersections which affected career constructions and career identities, Mooney and Jameson (2018). Intersectionality is used in employment research and has its roots in the feminist research of Crenshaw (1991) who explored the discrimination and oppression experienced by black women in the United States. She ignited a debate about how women and men experience inequalities, shaped not only by gender but also by the interactions of gender with other social categories of difference. It has been argued by Britton and Logan (2008) that gender and race cannot be studied in isolation and that intersections between gender, race, class and age should be addressed in employment research. Consequently, I adopted an interpretative social-constructionist approach, informed by intersectional theorizing, and proposed that this offered a more credible way to examine and explain why career intentions change. My work has taken account of intersections of age, class, race, gender and ethnicity, all of which have influenced students' perceptions of the hospitality industry as a suitable career.

My work contributes to knowledge, not only for careers research specifically, but also for hospitality workforce research in general. It highlights that it is no longer appropriate to separate and isolate gender, age, social class or ethnic background. I

45

have argued that hospitality and tourism researchers needed to be more aware of intragroup differences (Mooney and Jameson 2018). Intragroup group differences acknowledge and takes account of the fact that, for example, not all women in the category 'women' will share the same experiences, likewise, individual student experiences will be influenced by age, ethnicity and other aspects of identity.

I have thus argued that future research in the hospitality industry should attempt to use intersectionality to better understand workforce issues (and perhaps even consumer issues).

This approach at three different levels has responded to Baum et al.'s (2016) call for hospitality and tourism workforce studies to move beyond the unilateral focus of individual careers in separate organisations. It has enabled me to provide an explanatory framework, which examines hospitality undergraduates' perceptions of the hospitality industry as a career at three different levels and makes important links between the levels. These links enrich scholarship in the subject as they provide an explanation as to why some hospitality undergraduates decide not to join the sector after graduation. The conceptual links between individual, organisational and societal levels has produced a more meaningful and holistic understanding and explanation of graduate attrition in the hospitality context. My contribution to knowledge is that the three levels cannot be separated and understood in isolation and that they are interlinked and all have an impact on undergraduates' career decisions.

5.1.4 Graduate identity

I have made a theoretical contribution to knowledge in Jameson and Holden (2000) by exploring graduate identity in small hospitality firms. The main author in the field of graduate identity, Holmes (1999), considered higher education as a process by which an individual may develop his/her identity as a graduate, as one who is highly educated. Holmes et al. (1998) also argued that "being a graduate" has social significance and that it serves to differentiate between people in ways that are consequential. They suggested that being a graduate makes a difference in terms of employment opportunity and outcome. All of the participants in Jameson and Holden (2000) were graduates but my research findings were in stark contrast to the work of Holmes (1999) and Holmes et al. (1998). Although all of the participants in Jameson

and Holden (2000) were graduates and therefore, in the words of Holmes 'were highly educated', none of them developed their identity as a graduate in the small hospitality firms that they worked in. None of the graduates in my sample felt that they were 'making a difference' in the small firms that they were working in because they were in operational roles and some even claimed that they were relying on 'pre-degree' learning. As far as the hospitality graduates in my research were concerned, being a graduate had not had social significance and had not made a difference in employment opportunities and outcomes.

Harre (1983) used the concept of "identity project" when considering the process of becoming a graduate. As far as Harre was concerned, an "identity project" is the continuing process by which a person seeks to attain and maintain uniqueness and individuality (personal being) whilst also being socially recognised (social being). The graduates in my research were not attaining uniqueness and individuality. My research therefore challenges the claims of both Holmes (1999) and Harre (1983) insofar as being a graduate, in the specific context of small hospitality firms, did not 'make a difference' either to the identity of the graduate or their employment opportunities.

This is theoretically significant as my work suggested that the concept of graduate identity is not a generic concept, applicable to firms of all sizes in all sectors. The literature on graduate identity (Holmes 1999 and Harre 1983) has (understandably) predominantly focused on the graduate, rather than the context. My work has demonstrated that the context (size of firm and sector) has a significant impact on a graduate's ability to develop a graduate identity. It is the combination of size and sector that illustrates this, rather than either of these in isolation. This is important, theoretically, as the concept of graduate identity has been found to be of little value in the context of small hospitality firms. An alternative theorisation of graduate identity is needed and this needs to be interpreted as a discontinuous development process for the graduate. My research has demonstrated that a hospitality student may leave university as a graduate, but the graduate identity development process may be disrupted when a hospitality student enters a small hospitality firm. An alternative theorisation of graduate identity in the specific context of a small hospitality firm would interpret the development of graduate identity, not as a linear

process, but a discontinuous process which stops and starts depending on the level of the firm that the graduate is working in. So, a graduate in a small hospitality firm may develop graduate identity as they move up to a more managerial position. This is obviously problematic in a small firm which normally has a small number of employees and very few managers. It may also be the case that the discontinuous process of developing a graduate identity in the small firm hospitality context may only starts again when the graduate leaves the small firm. The theoretical extension of graduate identity to a discontinuous development of graduate identity would thus offer a more credible and transferable understanding of hospitality graduates in small firms.

5.2 Practical contribution

I have made practical contributions targeted at policy makers, employers, educators and students and these contributions are based on solid evidence from my research.

5.2.1 Policymakers

At the time of writing (1999-2012), policy makers were heavily promoting SMEs as suitable graduate employers. The UK government, the Association of Graduate Recruiters and Higher Education were strongly arguing that SMEs could absorb the increasing number of graduates. My contribution to knowledge was to suggest that this notion was simplistic and that policymakers and government should not have treated the small firms' sector as a homogenous group of companies and that it was naïve to assume that all small firms would be suitable for graduate employment, without empirical evidence to support this (Holden and Jameson 1999; Jameson and Holden 2000 and Holden, Jameson and Lashley 2005).

My empirical research on small firms Holden and Jameson (1999) has supported the view of other academics (e.g. Matlay 1999; Pittaway 1999) that the small firms' sector is complex and heterogenous, However, I have gone further than this and have discovered that some small firms were more appropriate for graduate employment than others (Holden, Jameson and Lashley 2005). My research found that some small growth firms were more appropriate for graduates but I have also discovered that some types of SME underutilized graduates (Holden and

Jameson,1999). My contribution to knowledge is that policy makers need to be aware of the complexity and heterogeneity of the small firms' sector and the fact that not all small firms are suitable for graduates before they promote careers in this sector. My contention was that policy makers could be seen as being irresponsible and that graduates could be wasting their time and energy starting careers in organisations which were unsuitable for graduates.

Policy makers were also encouraging undergraduates to pursue internships in SMEs as a potential 'springboard' into the SME sector as a choice of graduate career. My research (Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson, 2006, 2012) has illustrated that experiences in SMEs (although largely positive) did little to encourage undergraduates to pursue a graduate career in an SME. This finding should contribute to policy makers thinking on internships in SMEs.

5.2.2 Employers

My contribution is aimed at hospitality employers in general and then, more specifically, at employers in the small firms' sector. My research suggests that hospitality students are committed to careers in the hospitality industry when they choose a hospitality degree. Employers need to be aware that students' perceptions change throughout the course of the degree and then around 50% of these students never work in the hospitality industry after graduation. Employers need to take some responsibility for these changes in attitudes and aspirations. My research (Mooney and Jameson 2018) discovered that negative hospitality workplace experiences appear to change students' motivation to follow a hospitality career because they reduce the individual's belief of being suited to the industry whereas positive career experiences help to form a strong career construct. My research has argued that human resource managers in the hospitality industry need to ensure hospitality graduates maintain their passion for the industry (Mooney and Jameson, 2018) and employers, (if they want to attract and retain hospitality students) need to try to reduce these negative workplace experiences.

Employers should also be aware and validate the idea of 'the hospitality career as a calling' (Mooney and Jameson 2018) by recruiting and developing highly motivated

employees and facilitating the development of a professional hospitality identity in their younger workers. This finding (Mooney and Jameson 2018) can shed light on the type of student who is likely to eventually pursue a career in hospitality. This is important for employers as the hospitality industry cannot afford to lose this talent bank of graduates who have invested three to four years studying hospitality and gaining experience in the industry. As career 'calling' or passion is linked to job satisfaction, hospitality employers should recognize and respect the professional identity of their younger workers by providing adequate rewards, rather than treating them as unskilled transient workers. They must also guard against the possibility of over-work and burn-out associated with passion (Mooney and Jameson 2018). As my research has taken a sectoral approach (Hargraves and Jameson, 1990), I have suggested that hospitality employers need to offer job packages which are competitive in the graduate labour market as a whole and not just within the hospitality sector. I would argue that this is still the case at the present time and even more important post Brexit and due to the consequences of Covid.

My second contribution to employers is aimed specifically at employers in the small firms' sector. My research (Holden and Jameson 1999; Jameson and Holden 2000 and Holden, Jameson and Lashley 2005) has demonstrated that not all small firms are suitable for graduates. My suggestion to employers is that they should think carefully about the opportunities that their firm could offer a graduate, as my research discovered that the majority of small firms employing graduates used them in an operative capacity. This could lead to graduate dissatisfaction and eventually labour turnover. My research also showed that managers in small firms often lacked knowledge and understanding of how to use graduate labour and managers expectations of graduates were low. Again, this could lead to a lack of job satisfaction on the part of the graduate as graduates may feel that they are being underutilised and there is no opportunity for career progression in these firms. If 'graduate skills' cannot be used in these firms and careers cannot be developed which are appropriate to the graduates' qualifications (as graduates in some of these firms never used 'management' skills), then employers in this sector need to be cautious about recruiting graduates or they need to rethink how they utilise this labour. In some firms, there may not be the size or scope to enable a graduate to develop graduate/managerial skills.

5.2.3 Educators

Although educators did not participate in the projects in the chosen articles, my research can contribute to the work of hospitality educators. My contribution targeted at educators is to convince them that they need to move away from the 'large firm bias' in teaching and research. I have also argued in the past that the higher education 'capability curriculum' has been strongly influenced by the expectations of, and feedback from, the large employers of graduates and the large firm has been used to guide the 'capability curriculum' and as the research base (Jameson 1996). Other authors have found careers advice to be biased towards larger enterprises (Booth 2004; Pollard, Williams and Hill 2004). Clarke and Gibson-Sweet (1998) have also argued that most business courses are structured around the large business paradigm.

It is important for hospitality educators to include small firms in their teaching and research as not only is the hospitality industry composed of predominately small firms, but many undergraduates are unaware of opportunities for graduate employment in the SME sector (Walmsley Thomas and Jameson 2012). Although not all small firms are suitable for graduate employment, it is still the case that the hospitality industry comprises mainly small firms and this should be reflected in teaching.

Traditionally hospitality educators' teaching (and research) has been dominated by the hotel sector. Many hospitality educators also promote the hotel sector as the most likely location for graduate employment. My research (Jameson and Hargraves 1990) discovered that the hotel sector has strengths and weaknesses as far as the graduate job offer is concerned but other sectors of the hospitality industry offered better employment opportunities. Although hospitality educators were not part of this research project, the findings can contribute to the need to be aware of this when teaching and promoting careers to their students. Hospitality educators should make students aware of the diversity of the hospitality industry and should base their teaching on a variety of sectors which make up the hospitality industry. This could be enhanced by using case studies from different sectors and inviting employers and alumni from a diverse range of sectors.

My research (Walmsley, Thomas and Jameson 2006, 2012) has raised questions about the value of undergraduate placements in an age of mass higher education where many students work part-time. I have also discovered that placements in small hospitality firms were not achieving their potential for experiential learning. My research also found that a lack of reflection raised doubts as to whether placements were achieving their potential for experiential learning in small firms and this needs to be addressed by educators. Although the role of placements has changed since I conducted this research and it is not the case that all students on all hospitality degrees are required to do a placement now as part of their course, it might be prudent to re-evaluate the role and importance of the placement in a hospitality degree.

5.2.4 Students

Students should already be aware that the hospitality industry comprises a variety of sectors. My research (Jameson and Hargraves 1990) has shown that different sectors offer different graduate packages and graduates should be aware that some hospitality sectors can be competitive with non-hospitality companies. Instead of rejecting the entire hospitality industry as a career option, students should investigate what is on offer in different sectors of the hospitality industry. Traditionally, hospitality students tended to pursue careers in the hotel sector. Although this is still the case for many European 'Hotel Schools', in most other countries hospitality students choose to work in many sectors, including hotels. Instead of being attracted to the 'glamour' of hotels (which is a myth) students should be aware of what is being offered in other sectors of the industry. If students were made more aware of the opportunities offered by a more diverse range of sectors, it might be the case that they would be more likely to do placements and pursue careers in sectors other than the hotel sector.

In conclusion, I have demonstrated a theoretical and practical contribution to knowledge in understanding and explaining undergraduate and graduates' perceptions of careers in the hospitality industry. I have identified ways that careers are constructed at an individual, organisational and societal levels and I have

contributed to knowledge in the area of graduate identity with specific reference to small hospitality firms.

Chapter 6 Conclusion and future research

The first part of this chapter provides an overview of where the critical appraisal achieves the objectives set out in Chapter 1.

The second part of the chapter demonstrates where the criteria for the award of a PhD by Publication have been met.

The final part of the chapter provides suggestions for future research.

6.1 How the critical appraisal achieves the objectives set out in Chapter 1.

The following commentary provides an overview of how the critical appraisal achieves the objectives set out in Chapter 1.

Objective 1) To critically examine the core themes of graduate identity and career construction theory within the context of hospitality undergraduates' career perceptions.

Graduate identity has been explored in the thesis and I have been able to demonstrate in the articles on graduates and small firms that the concept of graduate identity is of limited use in small hospitality firms. I have provided a theoretical extension of graduate identity which will be of value in the specific context of small hospitality firms. I have used career construction theory to explore hospitality undergraduates' career perceptions and I have extended the use of career construction theory by combining this with an intersectional approach which has enlightened our understanding of the diverse nature of hospitality undergraduates and their perceptions of hospitality careers.

Objective 2) To critically evaluate the experiences of undergraduates and graduates in small firms, using the concept of graduate identity.

The experiences of undergraduates and graduates in small firms have been examined in the thesis and although my research discovered that hospitality

undergraduates and graduates were not developing graduate identity in these firms, I would still argue that graduate identity is a useful concept to use as a framework when considering the narratives of both the graduate and the employer. Using graduate identity enabled me to think carefully about the level and types of jobs these undergraduates and graduates were doing and it was a very useful concept to use when listening and interpreting what the managers were saying about graduate employment. Without the use of this concept my work would have been much more descriptive and less useful to our understanding of hospitality graduates in small firms. However, my main finding regarding graduate identity was that it had been assumed in the literature that it was useful in all sizes and types of firms. My articles in this thesis have demonstrated that graduate identity is of limited value as a concept in small hospitality firms.

Objective 3) To assess the impacts of undertaking placements in small firms on experiential learning and graduate career choice.

The thesis has assessed the impacts of placements on experiential learning and discovered that placements in small firms were not achieving their potential for experiential learning as the students were not reflecting enough on their placement experiences. The selected articles examined the impact of placements on graduate career choice and highlighted that the more exposure a student has to the hospitality industry, the more their commitment to the industry weakens. All of the articles have demonstrated that hospitality employers need to take action to avoid this talent drainage, especially in the current economic climate.

Objective 4) To critically examine the role of hospitality employers and hospitality undergraduates' perceptions of the industry on career intentions and career decision making.

All 8 of the selected articles examined the role of hospitality employers on career intentions and decisions and I have argued, throughout all of the articles, that hospitality employers have had mainly negative impacts on hospitality students' career intentions. It is clear from all of the articles in the thesis that hospitality undergraduates' perceptions of the hospitality industry change as they construct their careers and that their career intentions towards the sector diminish because of their

industry work experience. This is a serious issue for the hospitality industry which continues to experience severe labour shortages.

Objective 5) To contribute to knowledge within the fields of graduate identity, career construction theory and hospitality undergraduate decision making.

I have made a contribution to knowledge on graduate identity as my work has refuted the claims of well-known authors in the field of graduate identity. I have contributed to knowledge on career construction theory as I extended this theory to take an intersectional approach to career construction which has not been done before. All of the articles in the thesis have extended our understanding of hospitality undergraduate decision making as far as careers are concerned and I have contributed to knowledge in the field by examining undergraduates, graduates and the role of employers in these changing decisions.

6.2   Achievement of the criteria for the award of a PhD by Publication.

The criteria for the award of PhD by Publication from Oxford Brookes University as set out in Regulation 7.2 have been achieved as follows.

7.2
(i) Review the general literature in the field and place the candidate's submitted work in the context of this literature:

 This has been achieved in chapter 2. A review of the general literature in the field has been provided and the candidate's work has been positioned in the context of this literature. An explanation has been given of how the candidate's work has contributed to literature in the field.

(ii) Describe the overall programme of research and its aims and discuss how the individual items of published work submitted fit into this:

 This has been achieved in chapter 1 and chapter 4. Chapter 1 provides a background to the research and sets out the aim and objectives of the programme of

research. Chapter 4 demonstrates how the individual items of published work form a coherent whole and achieve the aims.

(iii) Analyse the research methodology used where this is not covered in the published work:

  This has been achieved in chapter 3. An evaluation of the methodologies and methods used in the published work has been provided.

(iv) Analyse and assess the original contribution to knowledge represented by the published work submitted:

  This has been achieved in chapter 5. The original contribution to knowledge represented by the published work and this thesis has been analysed and assessed.

(vi) In the case of multi-authored work, describe the extent and scope of the candidate's contribution in relation to the other authors.

  Appendices 9-14 contain signed copies of all co-authors confirming my contribution to the co-authored articles.

In conclusion, the aim of the research programme and all objectives have been achieved. All criteria for the award of PhD by Publication from Oxford Brookes University as set out in Regulation 7.2 have also been achieved.

6.3   Reflections on my research journey

I have arrived at the end of my research journey and my teaching career. I have thoroughly enjoyed teaching hospitality students and listening to their changing views of the hospitality industry as a potential career. I have always found it interesting to listen to students when they embark on a hospitality degree and almost all of them aspire to be general managers (with the 'penguin suit' and bunch of keys) in luxury hotels. After the placement experience, almost all of them decided that the last place they want to spend their careers in was a hotel. Many of them decided that

they wanted to work in a functional specialism such as human resource management or marketing and many wished to work in other sectors of the hospitality industry rather than hotels. By the end of their hospitality degree, sadly, approximately half did not want to join the hospitality industry. However, those that did not pursue careers in hospitality found worthwhile careers in other industries using the transferable skills that they acquired on their hospitality degrees. I have celebrated with them when they have shared their career successes in other industries with me, but I still believe that the contemporary hospitality industry needs this talent, now, more than ever. My research tried to address this and I have learnt that the relationship between hospitality undergraduates and the labour market is complex and it is necessary to examine critically hospitality undergraduates' subjective experiences, their interactions with various course stakeholders and the processes they encounter throughout the course of their degree. I have realised that the diminishing commitment to the hospitality industry is a result of a combination of factors including experiences of the hospitality industry whilst on placement and working part-time. However, I have also learnt that, irrespective of personal experiences, students' cultural background is a strong determinant of the likelihood of entering the hospitality industry upon graduation.

6.3   Future research

The perennial problem of graduate attrition in the hospitality industry has been exacerbated by Brexit and the global pandemic. Future research could focus on graduate employment in the hospitality industry but could focus on other stakeholders, rather than just the undergraduates and graduates. Future research could concentrate on government, hospitality educators and industry to explore ways of stemming this flow of talent.

Future research could also examine why graduates who do not have a hospitality degree decide to work in the hospitality industry when they graduate. It would be interesting to understand which aspects of the industry attract non-hospitality graduates and if they had prior experience of working in the industry or not. This would be important for hospitality employers as the industry cannot rely solely on

hospitality graduates for future labour. It would also be important to establish how long these graduates remain in the hospitality industry.

Future research could focus on hospitality graduates who have decided to work in the hospitality industry upon graduation. A longitudinal approach could be taken and the reasons for staying (or leaving) the industry could be explored. The research could differentiate between different sectors in the industry and different sizes of organisation. Graduate identity and career construction theory could be used to discover how graduates construct their careers in different types and sizes of organisations.

The concept of graduate identity could be used on new research in small hospitality firms to establish if graduates are being utilised and developed in line with their qualifications.

Research could be undertaken to establish if the role of placements has changed and to establish the impact placements now have on experiential learning and graduate career choice.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Jameson, S. M., and Hargraves, S. (1990) 'A comparative analysis of the job opportunities offered to hotel and catering graduates'. *Personnel Review*,19(6), pp. 25-32.
doi: 10.1108/EUM0000000000784

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Appendix 2: Holden, R. J., and Jameson, S. M. (1999). 'A preliminary investigation into the transition and utilisation of hospitality graduates in SMEs'. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* **1(3)**
doi: 10.1177/146735849900100304

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Appendix 4: Holden, R., Jameson, S., and Lashley, C. (2005) 'Graduate transition into employment in hospitality SMEs: On a road to nowhere?', *Industry in Higher Education* **19(1)**
doi: https://doi.org/10.5367/0000000053123574

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Appendix 5: Walmsley, A., Thomas, R., and Jameson, S. (2006) 'Surprise and sense making: Undergraduate placement experiences in SMEs', *Education + Training* **48(5)**
doi: 10.1108/00400910610677063

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**Appendix 6: Walmsley, A., Thomas, R. and Jameson, S. (2012).
'Internships in SMEs and career intentions',** *Journal of
Education and Work* **25(2)
doi: 10.1080/13639080.2011.573774**

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Appendix 7: Jameson, S.M. (2018) 'Hospitality and tourism career perceptions: Time for a new research agenda?', *International Journal of Excellence in Tourism, Hospitality and Catering* 8(1)

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Appendix 8: Mooney, S., and Jameson, S. (2018) 'The career constructions of hospitality students: A rocky road',
Hospitality and Society **8(1), pp. 45-67**
doi: 10.1386/hosp.8.1.45_1

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Appendix 9: Co-author Simon Hargraves' statement of contribution (article 1).

Jameson, S. M., and Hargraves, S. (1990) 'A comparative analysis of the job offered to hotel and catering graduates'. *Personnel Review*,19(6), pp. 25-32.

Sadly, Simon Hargraves is deceased.

Appendix 10: Co-author Dr. Rick Holden's statement of contribution (articles 2,3 and 4).

Submission by Stephanie Jameson for PhD by existing published work:
Statement by Dr. Rick Holden.

1) Holden, R. J., and Jameson, S. M. (1999) A preliminary investigation into the transition and utilisation of hospitality graduates in SMEs. *Tourism and Hospitality Research,* 1 (3), pp. 231-242.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Stephanie Jameson co-designed the research instrument and co-developed the case studies. She collected the data alongside Dr. Rick Holden and wrote approximately half of the article - mainly the section on the graduate labour market and hospitality graduates. She also co-wrote the sections on the method employed and the findings.

Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 50%

2) Jameson, S. M., and Holden, R.J. (2000) "Graduateness"
- who cares? Graduate identity in small hospitality firms. *Education + Training,* 42 (4/5), pp. 264-271.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: This article used data from a previous project and used the concept of graduate identity as a framework within which to interpret these data. Stephanie wrote approximately half of the article, specifically the sections on the concept of identity and 'graduateness'.
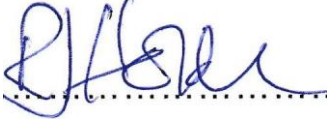
Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 50%

3) Holden, R., Jameson, S., and Lashley, C. (2005) Graduate transition into employment in hospitality SMEs: on a road to nowhere? *Industry and Higher Education,* 19 (1), pp. 65-73.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Stephanie Jameson was active in the decisions on research design and reviewed the existing literature on the topic. She wrote

the sections on the SME graduate labour market, the hospitality sector and the methods employed in this article.

Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 40%

Dr. Rick Holden………. ……………………..

Date: 5th October 2021………………... ……… …… …… …

Appendix 11: Co-author Professor Conrad Lashley's statement of contribution (article 4).

Submission by Stephanie Jameson for PhD by existing published work: Statement by co-author Professor Conrad Lashley.

Holden, R., Jameson, S., and Lashley, C. (2005) Graduate transition into employment in hospitality SMEs: on a road to nowhere? *Industry and Higher Education*, 19 (1), pp. 65-73.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Stephanie Jameson was active in the decisions on research design and reviewed the existing literature on the topic. She wrote the sections on the SME graduate labour market, the hospitality sector and the methods employed in this article.

Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 40%

Professor Conrad Lashley

08/10/2021

Date……………………………………………………………………….

Appendix 12: Co-author Dr. Andreas Walmsley's statement of contribution (articles 5 and 6).

Submission by Stephanie Jameson for PhD by existing published work: Statement by Dr. Andreas Walmsley.

1) Walmsley, A., Thomas, R., and Jameson, S. (2006). Surprise and sense making: undergraduate placement experiences in SMEs. *Education+Training*, 48 (5), pp. 360-372.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Drafting of literature review and development of theoretical framework and methodological approach. Review and support with interpretation of primary data and assistance with writing.

Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 30%

2) Walmsley, A., Thomas, R. and Jameson, S. (2012) Internships in SMEs and Career Intentions, *Journal of Education and Work,* 25 (2) pp. 185-204.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Drafting of literature review and support with interpretation of primary data and writing.

Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 30%

Dr. Andreas Walmsley

Date 2nd October 2021

Appendix 13: Co-author Professor Rhodri Thomas' statement of contribution (articles 5 and 6).

Submission by Stephanie Jameson for PhD by existing published work: Statement by Professor Rhodri Thomas.

1. Walmsley, A., Thomas, R., and Jameson, S. (2006). Surprise and sense making: undergraduate placement experiences in SMEs. *Education+Training*, 48 (5), pp. 360-372.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Drafting of literature review and development of theoretical framework and methodological approach. Review and support with interpretation of primary data and assistance with writing.
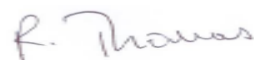
Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 30%

2. Walmsley, A., Thomas, R. and Jameson, S. (2012) Internships in SMEs and Career Intentions, *Journal of Education and Work,* 25 (2) pp. 185-204.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Drafting of literature review and support with interpretation of primary data and writing.

Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 30%

Professor Rhodri Thomas

Date   3rd October 2021

Appendix 14: Co-author Dr. Shelagh Mooney's statement of contribution (article 8).

Mooney, S., and Jameson, S. (2018) 'The career constructions of hospitality students: A rocky road'. *Hospitality & Society*, 8(1), pp. 45-67.

Submission by Stephanie Jameson for PhD by existing published work: Statement by co-author Shelagh Mooney.

Role of Stephanie Jameson: Stephanie Jameson initiated this longitudinal research project. She designed the research instrument with Dr. Shelagh Mooney. She wrote the first half of this article on the literature review and background to graduate careers in the hospitality industry. She also contributed to the conclusion.

Estimated contribution of Stephanie Jameson: 50%

Dr. Shelagh Mooney

1st October 2021