

Exploration on the Differences Between Hotel Practitioners' Professional Cognition and Public Cognition from the Perspective of Role Theory

Yanxia Liu¹ Chunxi Lin² Lin Shi³

^{1,2} School of Tourism, Zhuhai College of Science and Technology, Zhuhai, Guangdong, China

³ School of Marxism, Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai, Zhuhai, Guangdong 519041, China

ABSTRACT

After the lifting of the epidemic situation, the recovery and development of the tourism industry require talent support, but the hotel industry shows a mismatch between talent supply and demand. On the one hand, some people have misunderstandings about the hotel industry, and on the other hand, hotel practitioners have different perceptions of their profession. With the development of society and the increase of industries, the hotel industry has begun to lose its attractiveness and is facing the problem of talent shortage. From the perspective of role theory, this article takes the current status of professional cognition of hotel practitioners as the starting point, investigates the current status of professional cognition of hotel practitioners, compares and analyzes the differences between professional cognition of hotel practitioners and public cognition, and proposes targeted suggestions to reduce cognitive differences.

Keywords: Hotel industry, Professional cognition, Public cognition, Role theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

Professional cognition has been a research hotspot in the field of cognitive psychology in recent years. At present, most hotel practitioners have varying perceptions of their profession. Therefore, this article conducts a study on the professional cognition of hotel practitioners. Numerous scholars in China and foreign countries have studied professional cognition from different professions and perspectives. Due to different research subjects, there is currently no clear and unified definition of "professional cognition" in the Chinese academic community. Overall, scholars' studies are mainly divided into two perspectives: static and dynamic. From a static perspective, some scholars believe that professional cognition is a stable state; From a dynamic perspective, some scholars believe that professional cognition is a constantly changing process. In this study, the definition of professional cognition is an individual's perception and understanding of their

profession and professional roles, and their gradual recognition, development, and confirmation of their professional roles in professional practice.

2. DEFINITION OF RELEVANT CONCEPTS

Role theory is a social psychology theoretical orientation that attempts to explain the emergence and changes of social psychology and behavior from the perspective of human social role attributes. R. Linton (1936) believed that when individuals realize their rights and obligations based on their status in society, they will play a corresponding role. In this study, the definition of role theory is to analyze and study a person's social behavior from the perspective of roles.

Bandura proposed in "Occupational Sociology" in 1971 that professional cognition is the foundation for individuals to form occupational awareness and identity, including the recognition and understanding of the essence, purpose, value, and role of work and work norms [1]; Wise had constructed a framework of "professional

Chinese Library Classification Number: C915 Literature
Identification Code: D

cognition" based on work and cognitive dimensions, which includes four aspects: self-definition, career preferences, professional cognition, and career values [2]; Westbrook believed that professional cognitive ability is mainly reflected in aspects such as understanding the work field and working conditions, ability to choose work, educational time required for work, mental state, and responsibility [3].

The author believes that the definition of public cognition is an individual's understanding and understanding of a specific thing, which will undergo corresponding changes over time and environment. This study takes hotel practitioners as the research object, and from the perspective of role theory, investigates the current situation of professional cognition among hotel professionals, analyzes cognitive differences and the underlying reasons by comparing with public cognition, and attempts to find ways to narrow cognitive differences, in order to help society better attract, cultivate, and retain talents for the hotel industry, fill the talent gap in the industry, and promote the sustainable and healthy development of the Chinese hotel industry.

3. A SURVEY ON PUBLIC COGNITION AND PROFESSIONAL COGNITION OF HOTEL PRACTITIONERS

As for public transportation, living and transportation in daily life cannot be separated from the support of hotel management profession. However, how is the public's understanding of this profession different from that of real hotel professionals? In order to gain a deeper understanding of this difference, an investigation and research were conducted, and the specific analysis is as follows:

3.1 Public Cognition Survey

With the development of the era of online we-media, social media has become the main media factor that dominates public cognition. By crawling data texts related to popular social media platforms such as Weibo, Douban, Zhihu, and Bilibili, and hotel related topics, the researchers conduct cognitive analysis around hotel practitioners from multiple perspectives to understand the contemporary public's understanding of hotel practitioners. After extracting high-frequency vocabulary, it is manually screened, transformed, standardized, and standardized to obtain a partial understanding of hotel practitioners among the public.

Table 1 High frequency vocabulary related to public cognition

Public cognition	Related high-frequency vocabulary
High salary and benefits	The manager starts with an annual salary of 300,000 yuan; High salary income
Low social status	Hotels serve people; Hotel attendants are inferior; A lower level job
Industry bias	Hotels are equivalent to nightclubs; Hotel practitioners are too smart, and will swindle money out of customers; Complex and chaotic interpersonal relationships
Poor industry development	Hotels are the industry that eats youth meals; Hotel practitioners have a high turnover rate and strong mobility
Decent work	The hotel practitioners dress brilliantly, speak and behave appropriately, and are well trained in handling affairs, making them feel upscale

From the above "Table 1", it can be seen that the public has a certain degree of stereotypes and biases towards the hotel industry and hotel practitioners. The authors select five representative phrases from them and added them to the hotel professional cognition survey questionnaire to understand the level of recognition of hotel practitioners towards public cognition.

3.2 Questionnaire Survey on Professional Cognition of Hotel Practitioners

By distributing a survey through the wjx.cn platform, the researchers can have a basic understanding of the hotel practitioners' professional cognition, role cognition, and their

views on public cognition. The principle of random sampling survey was adopted in this sample. A total of 214 questionnaires were distributed to hotel practitioners on professional cognition through multiple channels such as Weibo, Douban, and WeChat. Among them, 210 were valid questionnaires, with a validity rate of 98%. The survey results show that the majority of the survey samples are women, aged between 21 and 30 years old. Most of them have a bachelor's degree, and the types of hotels they work for are mostly business and vacation hotels. The proportion of ordinary employees and below is 59.1%, which is roughly consistent with the distribution of hotel positions. The proportion of employees with a working experience of less than 1 year is relatively large, but the overall distribution is relatively balanced, with an average monthly salary of about 5,100 yuan. This survey has basically ensured the coverage level and scope of the sample, which can to some extent represent the current professional cognition status of hotel practitioners.

The following conclusions were obtained through data statistics and analysis of effective questionnaires:

- Hotel practitioners have a moderate or above level of professional cognition and a clear understanding of the profession they are engaged in;
- Career choices are most affected by good career development opportunities, accounting for approximately 46%;
- The level of professional recognition and sense of achievement is relatively high, with compensation and benefits having the greatest impact, exceeding 40%;
- Role cognition is greatly influenced by job rank and department;
- They agree with the public' cognition that their labor intensity is high, but do not agree with high salaries and benefits.

3.3 Interview on Professional Cognition of Hotel Practitioners

The authors have conducted in-depth interviews with hotel practitioners from different departments, genders, and job levels in an international five-star hotel in Shenzhen to understand the current status of the interviewees' professional cognition and their views on public cognition, and to collect suggestions for narrowing their cognitive differences. Based on the concept of professional

cognition of hotel practitioners and the actual work experience of hotel practitioners, a total of 7 interview outlines are designed. According to the outline, the researchers conduct an interview for about 30 minutes and ask the interviewee to act as a hotel practitioner to answer.

Based on the interview results, the authors conduct an analysis from eight aspects: professional cognition, influencing factors of career choice, career recognition, sense of career achievement, influencing factors of role cognition, hotel practitioners' perception of the public cognition, influencing factors of cognitive differences, and suggestions for reducing cognitive differences between schools and enterprises.

In terms of professional cognition, most interviewees have a cognition of being stable, being hardworking, and being busy, as well as promising job prospects, and strong stress resistance towards their careers as hotel practitioners. The professional cognition of hotel practitioners varies depending on gender, age, job level, and department. In terms of individual gender, most women believe that the hotel profession is stressful, laborious, and busy, but has good development prospects. Most men believe that the hotel profession is relatively stable but has a long operating time. In terms of individual age, young people who have just entered the hotel industry generally believe that the hotel profession brings dual physical and mental fatigue, but can achieve rapid growth. However, hotel practitioners over the age of thirty often believe that the hotel profession has high stability and good industry prospects.

In terms of influencing factors for career choice, good career development opportunities, interest or talent in the service industry, teamwork and social interaction, and good employee benefits all account for over 40%, indicating that these four factors have a significant impact on hotel practitioners' career choices.

In terms of career recognition, among the five options of industry prospects, salary and benefits, personal development space, social recognition, and others, salary and benefits account for the highest proportion at 41%, followed by personal development space and industry prospects, accounting for 21.9% and 21%, respectively. This indicates that salary and benefits, personal development space, and industry prospects have a significant impact on the career recognition of hotel practitioners.

As for sense of career achievement, among the five options of workplace interpersonal relationships, work environment, salary and benefits, professional values, and others, salary and benefits account for the highest proportion at 42.4%, followed by workplace interpersonal relationships and professional values, accounting for 21.4% and 20.5%, respectively. This indicates that salary and benefits, workplace interpersonal relationships, and professional values have a significant impact on hotel practitioners' sense of career achievement.

In terms of the influencing factors of role cognition, the average gender score is 3.20 points, the average age score is 3.55 points, the average rank score is 3.86 points, and the average department score is 3.83 points, all of which are above the critical value of 3 points. This indicates that hotel practitioners have a moderate or higher level of identification with the four factors influencing their role cognition, with higher average scores for job levels and departments, indicating that hotel practitioners' role cognition is greatly influenced by different job levels and departments.

In terms of hotel practitioners' perception of the public cognition, the average score of the respondents' recognition of the public is 4.04 for high labor intensity, 3.65 for limited career development space, and 3.70 for complex interpersonal relationships, all of which are above the critical value of 3 points. This indicates that hotel practitioners have a moderate or above level of recognition for the above three public perceptions. However, the average score for high salary and benefits is 2.65 points, while the average score for low ranking in the service industry is 2.97 points. This indicates that hotel practitioners have a low level of recognition for the above two public perceptions.

According to the survey results, factors such as social perception, different perspectives, and information mismatch are the main factors that contribute to the differences in professional cognition between hotel practitioners and the general public. In the interview, most interviewees believe that the reason for the difference in professional cognition between hotel practitioners and the general public is the lack of contact and understanding of the hotel industry, as well as the bias towards the hotel industry.

There are some suggestions for reducing cognitive differences between schools and enterprises. Regarding schools, most interviewees

believe that it is necessary to provide more opportunities for students to engage in the hotel industry, practice more, and increase practical courses; In response to the issue of textbooks falling behind reality, it is a must to update teaching content in a timely manner, enhance the depth of collaborative education between schools and enterprises, and accelerate the integration of industry and education. Regarding enterprises, it is a necessity to strengthen positive publicity and let more people truly understand the hotel industry; there will be a must to put people first, increase systematic training, and provide employees with more learning opportunities.

4. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HOTEL PRACTITIONERS' PROFESSIONAL COGNITION AND PUBLIC COGNITION

The main reason for the difference between the professional cognition of hotel practitioners and the public cognition is that the distance between them is like a mountain, and the information does not match; In terms of social perception, due to historical legacy issues, some people have stereotypes or even industry biases towards the hotel industry, and old service concepts are deeply ingrained; The public has little exposure to the hotel industry and lacks understanding of the actual work of hotel practitioners; As consumers and practitioners, their perspectives on services vary.

4.1 High Salary and Benefits

Some people believe that the salary income of hotel practitioners is high, but according to the 2022 Q1 Hotel Industry Salary Supply and Demand Data Report by Maitian Information, the average salary of hotel employees is 6,212 yuan, with a median salary of 4,500 yuan, which is sufficient to reflect the gap between the salary level of hotel practitioners and public awareness. However, the hotel industry's providing free food and accommodation benefits can effectively reduce the cost of living of hotel practitioners.

4.2 Low Social Status

The hotel industry belongs to the service industry, and influenced by traditional Chinese concepts, some people believe that the social status of hotel practitioners is low. Nowadays, the majority of urban residents have only children, and this influence is constantly expanding. Many young

people are not optimistic about the hotel industry. Students in this major hope to stand out in management positions in high star hotels, but the reality of the industry requires them starting from frontline waiters. Society generally believes that serving as a waiter is a lower level job, and some parents feel embarrassed about their children continuing to serve as hotel attendants after graduating from university. These concepts and emotions can easily lead to psychological instability among interns, resulting in their unwillingness to continue engaging in service work after the internship, seriously hindering their career development.

4.3 Industry Bias

Society is constantly developing and progressing, but some people still have a subconscious bias towards the hotel industry, especially the hotel practitioners. In economically underdeveloped areas, some people equate hotels with nightclubs, bars, and other nightclubs, despise hotel practitioners, and do not allow their relatives and friends to engage in the hotel industry; Or they think that consumption in such a high-end place will definitely be slaughtered, and hotel service personnel are definitely human spirits, or the hotel practitioners may have chaotic interpersonal relationships. In fact, the hotel industry is a legitimate profession, and being engaged in hotels is also a legitimate profession. In terms of personality, it is the same as people in other industries, and in terms of character, it is also the same as all employees of legitimate enterprises. Therefore, in the current and future of continuous social development, the researchers sincerely hope that the public can completely dispel their misunderstandings about the hotel industry.

4.4 Poor Industry Prospects

Some people are not optimistic about the development of the hotel industry, believing that it can only rely on youth. In fact, there is no age or gender discrimination in recruitment in the hotel industry, and it will not result in job transfers. The public's view on the high turnover rate and strong mobility of hotel practitioners is not entirely correct. If hotels provide employees with a sense of belonging and security, actively recognize and respect employees, and make employees feel their value and importance, it can reduce the turnover rate to a certain extent. The misconception of outsiders is that the entry threshold is low and there

is little room for growth. The hotel industry needs high-quality talents to provide high-quality services to customers. As a sunrise industry, the hotel industry can provide a large number of opportunities for rapid development and promotion, with a large room for growth. With brand expansion, there are abundant opportunities for internal mobility, promotion, and going to foreign countries.

4.5 Decent Work

In the eyes of some people, hotel practitioners are seen as well dressed, dignified, well-trained, and have a high working environment. However, in fact, hotel practitioners need to possess many skills, work very hard, with high labor intensity, long working hours, frequent overtime, high work pressure, and cannot enjoy holidays. They do not have a shiny appearance, and their salary and social recognition in the industry are relatively low.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR NARROWING COGNITIVE DIFFERENCES TO FILL THE TALENT GAP IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

In today's rapidly developing hotel industry, talent shortage has become an issue that cannot be ignored. To address this issue, narrowing cognitive differences to fill the talent gap is particularly important.

5.1 Strengthening Industry Publicity

To reform social concepts, it is necessary for the public to truly establish the concept of no distinction between high and low professions, and to have a correct view of the modern service industry of hotels.[4] Various media should actively promote the important role of the hotel industry in social development under the guidance of the government, so that the public and society truly understand the importance of the hotel industry, and thus eliminate professional biases against the hotel industry. [5]

It is necessary to promote the entire hotel industry to the public, attach importance to correct values and the guidance of positive news, strengthen positive promotion of the hotel industry, broaden channels to popularize knowledge related to the hotel industry and the professional work content of hotel practitioners, shoot TV dramas or

workplace experience variety shows on the theme of the hotel industry, let the public change their views on the hotel industry and hotel practitioners through understanding, and gradually change their understanding.

5.2 *Being Kind to Hotel Practitioners*

The hotel industry needs to strengthen enterprise self-discipline, reduce vicious competition, actively promote the establishment of standardized industry systems, improve industry standardization, professionalization, and professional development, guide correct understanding, and treat hotel practitioners well. By actively improving social benefits and working environment, as well as increasing salaries and benefits, it is aimed to create a favorable social environment, enhance social recognition of the hotel industry, improve the economic and social status of hotel practitioners and the hotel industry, and make hotel practitioner a respected profession. This will attract students to choose to study hotel management and continue to work in the hotel industry after graduation.

Hotel enterprises can guide graduates of hotel management majors in colleges and universities, select outstanding talents to be included in the management trainee program, focus on cultivating management personnel with a people-oriented approach, strengthen systematic training, expand their upward space, and enhance their sense of belonging to the enterprise by providing employees with rich learning opportunities.

5.3 *Increasing Practical Opportunities*

Increasing opportunities for hotel practice can help the public to get in touch with and understand the hotel industry, encourage them to enter hotels for on-site experiences, and hold professional experience activities such as "One Day Hotel Practitioner". It will be a must to provide more opportunities for students majoring in hotel management in colleges and universities to have on-site exposure to the hotel industry. It is recommended that colleges and universities should increase the proportion of practical courses in cultivating talents, strengthen communication with enterprises, and improve the treatment of interns. The good experience of students during internships can change the cognition of college students who are about to enter society, thereby reducing negative perceptions of various factors related to

the industry and profession. [6] Enterprises should start from the perspective of talent cultivation and cannot only treat interns as cheap labor.

5.4 *Education Should Be Synchronized with Industry Development*

In terms of cultivating talents, colleges and universities should timely align with the industry and promote the "three comprehensive education", which includes all personnel (all teachers), all processes (freshmen to senior grades), and all aspects (classrooms to enterprises), gradually changing students' employment concepts, and accelerating the cultivation of innovative and skilled talents. [5] Colleges and universities should strengthen vocational planning education and emphasize the vocational skills of hotel management, emphasize theoretical disciplines such as economics, management, and marketing to better understand the basic concepts and practices of hotel management, and strengthen training on modern hotel management technologies, including computer technology, information technology, internet technology, etc., to improve the efficiency of hotel management; They should also cultivate students' innovation ability to improve the innovation and sustainability of hotel management, emphasize the social responsibility of hotel management, cultivate students' sense of responsibility, and thus better serve society.

6. CONCLUSION

From the perspective of role theory, this article takes the current status of professional cognition among hotel practitioners as the starting point and proposes four targeted suggestions to narrow cognitive differences. It is hoped that the above suggestions can gradually eliminate some misunderstandings among the public about the hotel industry and its people, improve the talent gap in the industry, and promote the sustained and healthy development of the Chinese hotel industry.

REFERENCES

- [1] Bandura, A. Social foundations of thought in social cognitive theory [M]. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1971.
- [2] Wise R.T. & Randour M.L., 1976, A Conceptual Framework for Career Awareness in Career Decision-Making, Counseling Psychologist, Vol.6, No.3.

- [3] Westbrook BW. Career maturity: The concept, the instrument, and the research. In WB Walsh&SH Osipow (Eds.), Handbook of vocational psychology: foundations [M]. 1983: 263~304.
- [4] Li Yaoqi, Weng Yuning, Pan Minmin, etc., Perceived Occupational Stigma and Turnover Intention of Tourism Practitioners:A Conservation of Resources Perspective [J]. Tourism Tribune, 2021, 36(05): 93-104. (in Chinese)
- [5] Wang Guangwei, Wu Min, The Impact of Occupational Stigma on the Employment of Hotel Management Students and Corresponding Strategies [J]. Western China Quality Education, 2022, (19): 158-160. (in Chinese)
- [6] Hong-bumm Kim; Erin Jinok Park. The role of social experience in undergraduates' career perceptions through internships [J].Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport & Tourism Education, 2013, (1)