

AN INVESTIGATION INTO PERCEPTION OF HOSPITALITY GRADUATES TOWARDS HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Hospitality industry is one of the most dynamic industries in India. It has shown its effect in country's GDP and in employment generation too. According to India Tourism statistic there is 5.9 % annual growth rate for foreign tourist's arrival and 11.4 % for domestic tourists in 2013. The hospitality industry is the 3rd largest foreign exchange earner accounting for 6.23 % of India GDP and 8.78 % of India total employment according to planning commission of India. When Hospitality industry is showing consistent growth, it also requires trained manpower to meet the demand. To full fill this demand many new institutions are coming up with hospitality courses in their profile. National council for hotel management and catering technology, the pioneer in hospitality educations in India has also increased its intake by opening of new IHMs and increasing student's intake in its current institutes. Many universities have introduced hospitality and tourism in their course content as a separate discipline. Not only this, many private institutes are also offering their diploma/undergraduate courses in hospitality field. This growth in number of students choosing hospitality as a field to study shows the changes in common people's perception towards hospitality education. Therefore a study is conducted to understand the perception of the hospitality graduates towards hospitality industry. The present study underlines the factors that influence the mindset of the youth and shape their perception in opting for hospitality programmes as their career choice. A structured questionnaire is developed on the basis of review of literature taking 21 variables. Around

325 hospitality graduates from various Institutes of Hotel Management (IHM), Private Hotel Management Institutes (HMI) and University Teaching Department participated in the study. Factor Analysis with varimax rotation is applied. As a result five factors are extracted that are found to have influence on the perception of hospitality graduates towards hospitality Industry.

Keywords: Perception, Hospitality, Graduates, Industry

Introduction

Hospitality industry has emerged as one of the most dynamic industries in India. It has shown its effect on country's GDP and in employment generation too. According to India tourism statistic there is 5.9 % annual growth rate in foreign tourists' arrival and 11.4 % for domestic tourists in 2013. According to planning commission of India the hospitality industry is the 3rd largest foreign exchange earner accounting for 6.23 % of India GDP and 8.78 % of India total employment. During the past few years, the rapidly expanding hospitality and tourism industry has also impacted hospitality and tourism education. To full fill the manpower requirements of the industry many new institutions are coming up with hospitality courses in their profile. National council for hotel management and catering technology, the pioneer in hospitality education in India has also increased its intake by opening of new IHMs and increasing students' intake in its current institutes. Many universities have introduced hospitality and tourism in their course content as a separate discipline. Not only this, many private institutes are also offering their diploma/ undergraduate courses in hospitality field. In fact, earlier hospitality education was limited to the metros only. Mostly students opting for these courses were also from big cities as they had little exposure and knowledge about the course and career prospects ahead. But in current scenario, Institutes offering hospitality courses are running successfully in remote areas of the country shows that now a day's people are aware about the career opportunities in hospitality field. This might be the major factor in getting more number of hospitality students too. In addition to this many universities have started their Master's and Doctoral programmes in tourism and hospitality; earlier it was only diploma and undergraduate courses that were popular only.

On one hand we are talking about the growth of hospitality industry as well as hospitality education, there is another side of the story too. It is observed that students who are going to join the hospitality industry mostly have negative perception towards the industry and this affect the standards of services offered to the guests. Moreover these negative perceptions also resulted into high rate of employee turnover. Therefore the current study was conducted to find out the important factors which influence the perception of

hospitality students towards the hospitality industry and to rank them from most important factor to the least important. The study is important for the point for academic point of view as it will add to the existing literature which is very limited in case of India. The study has its importance for industry also as it will help to increase the employee turnover.

Review of literature

Before going for the research related articles and research papers were reviewed to find out the concept of this research to move on this subject. It also helped a lot in understanding the subject further required for the study. (Zhao, 1991) studied that the students opt for hospitality management courses because they think that they can find a respectable job in the field of hospitality. (Casado, 1992). Conducted a study on new and final year students and found that students who just joined the institute were having very positive attitude towards the industry, but the final year students who were exposed to the industry were having less positive attitude. (Barron and Maxwell, 1993) concluded in their study that internship as a trainee in the industry also affects students perceptions in a negative way. (Brown and McIntosh, 1998) in their survey found that lower paid workers express higher satisfaction with pay than higher paid workers. The satisfaction is attributed by each individual's background differences and benchmark that determine the ideal wage which can be different between individuals. An interesting study of (Kusluvan and Kusluvan, 2000) says that most of the hospitality students have no idea about the industry when they join the course and thus when they are exposed to the actual conditions in the industry, they get negative attitude and this contributes to the high turnover rate in hospitality Industry. It implies that students' expectation will be realistic if they are informed about the real scenario of hospitality industry, and thus they will prepare themselves to confront the upcoming conditions. He further emphasized on motivation and commitment of staff in hospitality industry helps an organization to attain an edge over its competitors. But it is always felt that students who are going to join the industry mostly have negative perception towards industry that is a cause of concern for hospitality industry. As it will affect the standards of services offered to the guest. Hence it is necessary that students pursuing hospitality courses should have a positive attitude and commitment for their job. Many times the low salary structure of hospitality jobs are said to be responsible for the negative attitude of students. (Themduangkhae, 2002) found that students are motivated to choose hospitality field due to many factors, but personal interest in this field was the major motivational factor. (Hjalager, 2003) in Sweden showed that main motivational factors for students are work experience, the value of programs in tourism industries and preference to work with people.

(Roney and Öztin, 2007) concludes that Willingness to study this field and then to work in this field after graduation, work experience are important factors in choosing career in Hospitality and tourism Industry but they also added that students' negative internship experiences resulted in development of a less favorable perception of hospitality and tourism. Even when the students are having quite realistic expectations before and during their studies, still their turnover rate is high when they join industry. (Richardson, 2009) in his research found that the important factors which motivate students to join the hospitality industry, often not provided in their career in hospitality. The Hospitality industry depends heavily on the workforce for its services and if a student is not having positive attitude towards his job, customer satisfaction can't be attained. (Richardson and Butler, 2009) found that the students did not believe tourism would present significant opportunities with regard to their career in the future. (Sibson, 2011) concluded that an interesting job and a pleasant working environment are factors that have a positive effect on the career choice. (Kirsten et al, 2012) in their study on factors for choosing tourism/hospitality courses, students' indicated a number of reasons which suggests that there is an individualistic approach taken to career decisions by students, e.g. interest in the field, travel, working with people and career options etc. (Bashar et al, 2013) summarized in their study that the main reasons that drive students to study Tourism & Hospitality are "Social status" and "Job opportunities"

The above presented literature clearly shows that though number of studies has been conducted internationally to study the perception of students towards hospitality industry but very limited work has been done in Indian context. Therefore the study has its relevance in Indian context.

Research Methodology

On the basis of existing literature a structured questionnaire with 21 variables was designed which comprised of two parts. Part A for collecting demographic profile of the students and Part B for recording perception of hospitality students towards the hospitality industry. A likert 5 point scale in which 5 represented Strongly Agree, 4 as Agree, 3 as Indifferent, 2 as Disagree and 1 as Strongly Disagree was developed. The questionnaire was filled by students studying in first year and final year of University Teaching Departments (UTD), government owned Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) and privately owned Hotel Management Institute (HMI). Students studying in State Institute of Hotel Management, Rohtak, Institute of Hotel Management, Pusa, New Delhi, Ganpati Institute of Hotel Management, Yamunanagar Institute of Hotel & Tourism Management, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak and Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Kurukshetra

University Kurukshetra participated in the survey. After collecting the Data the same was analysed in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5. KMO and Barlett's test of sphericity was applied to check whether the data is fit for applying factor analysis or not and then factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied to identify the important factors which influence the perception of hospitality students towards the hospitality industry.

Analysis, Results and Discussion

Total 372 students participated in the survey. In which 79% of students were studying in Institute of Hotel Managements (IHMs). 7% were studying in the Private Hotel Management Institutes (HMIs) and 14% were studying in the University Teaching Departments. 59.4% of students were from First year of their bachelors programme while 40.6 % of students were studying in the final year of their bachelor's programme. Detailed analysis of demographic profile of respondents is elaborated by table-1. Data furnished in table-1 indicate that 87% of respondents were male, maximum number of respondents 61.0% were in the age group of 18-20 years followed by 25.8% of 20-22 yrs. Students from commerce background were more 38.2% followed y Non Medical 29.6%. Students from medical background were least in numbers (3.5%). Majority of students (79.8%) were aware about the career opportunities in hospitality industry. 51.3% of the students do already have an exposure of the hospitality industry. Friends and Relatives of 55.6% students were already working in the hospitality industry. Maximum number (62.9%) of students want to work in the hospitality industry after pursuing bachelor's degree in hospitality management and very few only 2.2% want to go in teaching and research. As the objective of the study was to identify the important factors which influence the perception of hospitality students towards the hospitality industry. Therefore Factor analysis with varimax rotation was applied to find out the important dimensions.

Before applying factor analysis KMO and Barlett's test was applied to check whether the data is fit for applying factor analysis or not. Results of the same is explained by Table 2, the value of KMO .877 clearly shows that the data is fit for applying factor analysis and the value of significance .000 indicate that all the 21 variables is having a correlation among themselves. Five factors were extracted as a result of factor analysis (table 2) which explains a variance of 51.276% (table 4). The five factors are labelled as:

Factor 1: Social & Career Prospects

The most important and crucial factor which explains the maximum variance of 26.153% (Table 3) is social & career prospects. The variables named as "Parents will Feel Proud of your Decision" "Job Security" "Respectable Job" "Good Working Environment" "You will get Suitable Life Partner" "Fast

Table 1: Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	324	87.1
	Female	48	12.9
Age	Below 18 Yrs	36	9.7
	18-20 Yrs	227	61
	20-22 Yrs	96	25.8
	Above 22 Yrs	13	3.4
Stream at 10+2	Humanities	88	23.7
	Commerce	142	38.2
	Medical	32	8.6
	Non Medical	110	29.5
Prior Information about Career Opportunity	Yes	297	79.8
	No	75	20.2
Any Exposure to Hospitality Industry	Yes	191	51.3
	No	181	48.7
Any Friends & Relatives working in the Hospitality Industry	Yes	207	55.6
	No	165	44.4
Institute Studying In	IHM	294	79
	Private HMI	26	7
	UTD	52	14
Year of Graduation	First Year	221	59.4
	Final Year	151	40.6
Future Projection after completing Graduation	Job in the Industry	234	62.9
	Want to go Abroad	43	11.6
	Higher Studies	55	14.8
	Teaching & Research	8	2.2
	Others	32	8.6

Table 2: Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.877
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1791.000
	Df	210
	Sig.	.000

Career Growth” and “Job Satisfaction due to Meeting Daily new Challenges” are included in this particular factor which is explained in Table 4.

Factor 2: Nature of Work

The another factor which explains a variance of 7.854% (Table 3) is labelled as Nature of Work in which total four variables are included which includes “Interesting & Challenging Jobs” “One Will Get Sense of Achievement” “Rewards for Performance” and “Platform to Interact with New People”

Factor 3: Opportunities

Factor 3 is labelled as Opportunities in which total 4 variables are included and these explain a variance of 6.522. The variables such as “Opportunities to Deal with Foreigners” “Opportunities to Meet with Celebrities, Sportsmen and Politicians” “Opportunities to Work Abroad” and “Opportunities to Travel to Different Places” are included in this particular factor.

Factor 4: Pay & Benefits

Factor 4 which includes 3 variables (Table 4) which are related with Salary and other benefits of hospitality industry hence labelled as Pay & Benefits. This particular factor explains a variance of 5.536% (Table 3). “Good Salary Perspective” “Glamorous and Charming Jobs” and “Reasonable Work Load” are the variables which are included in this factor.

Factor 5: Promotion Opportunities

The least important factor which explains a variance of only 5.211 (Table 3) is labelled as Promotion Opportunities in which three variables such as “Managerial Positions can be Achieved” “Once can work as an Entrepreneur”

Table 3: Percentage of Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigen Values		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.492	26.153	26.153
2	1.649	7.854	34.007
3	1.370	6.522	40.529
4	1.163	5.536	46.065
5	1.094	5.211	51.276

Table 4: Factors Affecting Perception of Hospitality Students towards Hospitality Industry

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
Social & Career Prospects					
Parents will feel proud	.640				
Job Security	.635				
Respectable Job	.620				
Good Working Environment	.499				
Suitable Life Partner	.458				
Fast Career Growth	.420				
Job Satisfaction due to meeting daily new challenges	.410				
Nature of Work					
Interesting and Challenging jobs		.794			
One will get sense of achievement from the work		.692			
Rewards for good performance		.641			
Platform to interact with new people		.409			
Opportunities					
Opportunities to deal with foreigners			.682		
Opportunities to meet celebrities, sportsmen, politicians			.678		
Opportunity to work abroad			.664		
Opportunity to travel to different places			.579		
Pay and Benefits					
Good Salary Perspective				.733	
Glamorous and Charming Jobs				.516	
Reasonable Work Load				.479	
Promotion Opportunity					
Managerial positions can be achieved					.836
One can work as an entrepreneur					.434
Self development is possible					.431

and “Self Development is Possible” are included which are explained in Table 3.

Conclusion

The study was conducted with an objective to find out the important factors which influence the perception of hospitality students towards the hospitality industry and to rank them from most import to the least one. From the above discussion it is very much clear that Social & Career prospects, Nature of Work, Opportunities, Pay & Benefits and Promotion Opportunities are the five key factors which influence the perception of the students towards the hospitality Industry. Social and Career Prospects is the most crucial factor which motivates the students towards the hospitality programmes as this particular factor explains the maximum variance of 26.153 percent. Promotion Opportunity is the least important factor which influence the perception of the students as this particular factor explains the least variance of 5.211 percent. As discussed above that hospitality industry is facing the problem of high employee’s turnover, the above research is important for the industry as it will help to understand what exactly students want before entering into the industry. If the same is provided to the new entrants by the industry the employee turnover ratio can be reduced to some extent.

Directions for Future Research

Though the above research is important for industry as well as for academia but still some questions are unanswered like is there any kind of difference in the perception of male students and female students? Similarly does providing training to the students affect the perception of the graduates? Does the perception of student’s changes as they promoted to the next year? Role of institute they are studying in developing the perception of the students towards hospitality industry. The future research will be conducted to answer the above mentioned questions.

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