

Changing Perception of Students toward Hospitality Industry: A Comparative Analysis

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Abstract

Hospitality Management Institutes have seen a tremendous growth in the recent years. More and more students are inclining to pursue hospitality related course from the institutes at national level or at different universities or from private institutes. The popularity of this course among the young aspirants is because of various factors such as, job opportunities, different avenues, popularity of various television program based on cooking skills, parents of students already into hotel business, eligibility criteria, entrepreneurship plans, overseas job opportunities, passion and interest, etc. Whenever a student takes admission to the hospitality course he does think positive about the industry. But by reaching to the final year this positivity turns into the negativity and the student takes a decision either not to join the industry or to pursue something else. Therefore, a study is conducted to understand the difference between the perception of 1st year and final year students studying hospitality courses toward the hospitality industry. A structured questionnaire was designed in which 21 variables were included on the basis of review of the literature. Further, T-test was applied to find out the significant difference between the perceptions of 1st year and final year students. Fifteen variables were found where no significant difference exists between the perception of 1st year and final year students. Six variables were found with a significant difference between the perception of 1st year and final year students. The results show that overall a significant difference is there between the perception of 1st year and final year students and null hypothesis is rejected. The study also reveals the fact that 1st year students do have positive perception toward the industry as compared to the final year students.

Keywords

Perception, Hospitality, 1st year, Final year, Students.

Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the largest segments under the services sector of the Indian economy. Tourism in India is a key growth driver and a significant source of foreign exchange earnings. In India, the sector's direct contribution to gross domestic product is expected to grow at 7.8% per annum during the period 2013-2023. The tourism sector in India is flourishing due to an increase in foreign tourist arrivals and a larger number of Indians traveling to domestic destinations. According to statistics available with the World Travel and Tourism Council, revenues gained from domestic tourism rose by 5.1% in 2013 and is expected to increase by 8.2% this year. Hotels are also an extremely important component of the tourism industry. The Indian hospitality sector has been growing at a cumulative annual growth rate of 14% every year, adding a significant amount of foreign exchange to the economy. The gross annual manpower demand in the hospitality industry has crossed 5 lakh in 2010 and likely to grow to almost 9,20,000 in 2020. The above discussion clearly shows that there are ample opportunities of growth in the tourism and hospitality sector. Moreover, media is also playing a pivotal role in shaping of the young aspirants toward hospitality industry. Various TV channels like Food, TLC, NDTV Good Times, Khana Khazana as well as various programs on television like Master Chef, Highway on Plate etc., are popular among the audience and help in drawing huge pool of young aspirants to opt hospitality as a career. This positive marketing and plethora of employment opportunities provided by the hospitality sector led the young aspirants to opt for hospitality as a career. The new entrants are filled with high expectations and enthusiastic to work

in the industry, but it is observed that until the time they reach the final year of their graduation, their perceptions and interest to work in the hospitality industry declines. This has instigated us to pursue the current study to investigate the difference in the perception of 1st year and final year students and to know the nature of their perception.

Review of Literature

The subject of research needed an extensive review of earlier work to understand the concept and how to go about further in the study. Though commendable research work has been done at international level but very limited research work is available in the Indian context.

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 toward the industry, but the final year students who were exposed to the industry were not having equally positive attitude.

Barron and Maxwell (1993) found that in general, the new students had a positive image of the industry, whereas the students with supervised work experience were having less positive in their views.

Emenheiser et al. (1997) found in his study that a majority of final year students were satisfied with their internship which strengthened their problem-solving ability in the hospitality industry, hence have a positive perception about the industry.

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 that 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 toward an industry that is a cause of concern for the 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.

Leslie and Richardson (2000) surveyed that student's pre-internship perceptions and post-internship experiences influence students to avoid career in hospitality/tourism industry.

Jenkins (2001) in his study stated that work experience as a trainee in the industry affected senior students' perceptions in a negative way.

Collins (2002); Lam and Ching (2007) found that poor or no stipend, poor employee relations, unorganized work environment, limited or no delegation, long working hours, and overall a hectic working environment faced by the final year graduates during internship are the most common factors that create dissatisfaction and decreased motivation toward industry and internship.

Roney and Öztin (2007) highlighted that students' negative internship experiences resulted in the 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 the industry.

Yafang and Gongyong (2008) emphasized that final year hospitality students who were exposed to real work conditions in hotels during their internship period develop negative perception toward industry due to lack of coordination between schools and employers', "opportunities for self-development," "pay and welfare," "work pressure," "opportunity for work rotation," "interesting and challenging work," and "autonomy involved in the work."

Park and Kim (2011) have stated that the post-internship perceptions generally have lower mean values than pre-internship expectations for most career factors, thereby implying that final year students after internships become pessimistic regarding their future jobs.

Kasli and Ilban (2013) in their finding revealed that the final year students who have undergone a training have developed a perception of trainees viewed as cheap labor in the hospitality

industry and does not contribute to the professional development of them and this changes the perception of the senior students negatively.

Datta et al. (2013) explained that there was difference in expectation between senior students who had completed internship and juniors who were yet to undergo industrial training. The students who had completed their training had a more negative perspective toward the hotel industry.

The previous conducted study shows that a difference in the perception exists, between the senior and junior students. Therefore, the current study was conducted with the following objectives.

Objective of the study

The current investigation was carried to fulfill the following objectives.

1. To study the perception of 1st year and final year students studying hospitality courses toward the industry.
2. To find out whether this perception toward the industry is in the positive side or negative side.

Hypothesis of the study

On the basis of objective no.1 following hypothesis was framed which will be tested with the help of statistical tools.

H₁: Overall, there is no significant difference between the perception of the 1st year and final year students.

Research Methodology

Sample

Total 372 students participated in the survey out of which 221 students were studying in 1st year of their graduation, while 151 were studying in the final year of their graduation. The questionnaire was filled by the students studying in University Teaching Department, Government owned Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) and private Hotel Management Institutes (HMI). State Institute of Hotel Management, Rohtak, Institute of Hotel Management, Pusa, New Delhi, Ganpati Institute of Hotel Management, Yamunanagar, Institute of Hotel and Tourism Management, Maharshi Dayanand University, Rohtak and Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra were the main participating institutes.

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire which consists of two parts was designed in which Part A was developed to collect the demographic profiles of the respondents though the Part B was designed to record the perception of students toward the hospitality industry. The perception of students was recorded on a Likert five-point scale in which 5 was scored as strongly agree, 4 as agree, 3 as neutral/not sure, 2 as disagree, and 1 as strongly disagree.

Analysis

The data were analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5. As the objective of the research was to find out the significant difference between the perception of 1st year and final year students, therefore, independent sample *t*-test was applied to find out the significant difference between

the two groups. Further, to know whether this perception is in the positive side or in the negative side mean and standard deviation was used.

Results and Discussions

Demographic profile of respondents is elaborated by Table 1. Data given 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 years. Students from commerce background were more 38.2% followed by non-medical 29.6%. Students from the 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 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. To find out the significant difference between the perception of 1st year and final year students independent sample t-test was applied the results of the same are expressed in subsequent tables.

Of 21 variables, 15 were found where no significant difference was found between the perception of 1st year and final year students. Though there is difference in the mean score of

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

	Frequency	Valid percent
Gender		
Male	324	87.1
Female	48	12.9
Age (years)		
<18	36	9.7
18-20	227	61
20-22	96	25.8
>22	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 and 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		
1st 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 and research	8	2.2
Others	32	8.6

IHM: Institute of Hotel Management, HMI: Hotel Management Institutes, UTD: University Teaching Department

Table 2: Variables where no significant difference is found between the perception of 1st year and final year students (N=372 [1st year - 221, final year - 151])

Variables	Year of graduation	Mean score	F-value	Sig.	Difference
Good salary perspective	1 st year	3.84	2.064	0.152	NSD
	Final year	3.50			
Platform to interact with new people	1 st year	4.51	0.497	0.481	NSD
	Final year	4.46			
Job security	1 st year	3.23	2.543	0.112	NSD
	Final year	3.17			
Opportunity to travel to different places	1 st year	4.28	0.815	0.367	NSD
	Final year	4.13			
Opportunity to work abroad	1 st year	4.32	6.493	0.011	NSD
	Final year	4.11			
Respectable jobs	1 st year	3.54	0.576	0.440	NSD
	Final year	3.28			
Chances to meet celebrities, sportsmen, politicians	1 st year	4.19	0.310	0.570	NSD
	Final year	4.19			
Glamorous and charming jobs	1 st year	3.60	2.421	0.121	NSD
	Final year	3.48			
Reasonable workload	1 st year	3.28	6.511	0.011	NSD
	Final year	2.94			
Opportunities to deal with foreigners	1 st year	4.37	0.598	0.440	NSD
	Final year	4.34			
Parents will feel proud	1 st year	3.95	7.000	0.008	NSD
	Final year	3.62			
One will get suitable life partner	1 st year	3.48	0.131	0.718	NSD
	Final year	3.32			
Interesting and challenging jobs	1 st year	4.21	0.352	0.553	NSD
	Final year	4.07			
Opportunity for self-development	1 st year	4.24	1.399	0.238	NSD
	Final year	4.13			
One can work as an entrepreneur	1 st year	3.99	4.537	0.034	NSD
	Final year	3.83			

NSD: No significant difference

Table 3: Variables where significant difference is found between the perception of 1st year and final year students (N=372 [1st year - 221, final year - 151])

Variables	Year of graduation	Mean score	F-value	Sig.	Difference
Good working environment to its employees	1 st year	3.81	32.702	0.000	SD
	Final year	3.43			
Fast career growth	1 st year	3.79	15.836	0.000	SD
	Final year	3.50			
Job Satisfaction due to meeting daily new challenges	1 st year	3.88	24.041	0.000	SD
	Final year	3.66			
Rewards for good performance	1 st year	4.07	9.520	0.002	SD
	Final year	3.87			
One will get sense of achievement from the work	1 st year	4.09	15.064	0.000	SD
	Final year	3.85			
Managerial positions can be achieved	1 st year	2.93	8.788	0.003	SD
	Final year	3.15			

SD: Significant difference

perception of 1st year and final year students, but t-test shows that this difference is not significant which means that both 1st year and final year students have almost same perception as far as these variables are concerned. Table 2 explains about the variables with no significant difference and these variables are “good salary perspective,” “platform to interact with new people,” “job security,” “opportunity to travel to different places,” “opportunity to work abroad,” “respectable jobs,” “chances to meet celebrities, sportsmen, politicians,” “glamorous and charming jobs,” “reasonable workload,” “opportunities to deal with foreigners,” “parents will feel proud,” “one will get suitable life partner,” “interesting and challenging jobs,” “opportunity for self-development,” and “once can work as an entrepreneur.”

On remaining 6 variables, 1st year and final year students differ in their opinion. Moreover, t-test reveals that this difference in opinion is also significant (Table 3). “Good working environment to its employees,” “fast career growth,” “job satisfaction due to meeting daily new challenges,” “reward for good performance,” “one will get sense of achievement from the work,” and “managerial positions can be achieved” are the variables where a significant difference is found between the perception of 1st year and final year students. The results are also expressed with the help of Table 3.

The second objective of the study was to find out whether the perception of students is in the positive side or negative side. Interestingly, out of total 21 variables selected for study only one variable named as “managerial position can be achieved” is found where the 1st year students have a negative perception and final year students have a positive perception (Table 4) as the mean score of final year students is greater than the mean score of 1st year students.

One variable named as “Chances to meet celebrities, sportsmen, politicians” is found where the mean score of 1st year and final year students is exactly the same which is 4.19 and elaborated by Table 5, which shows that both 1st year and final year students thinks exactly the same.

Remaining 19 variables were found where the 1st year students have a positive perception as the mean score of 1st year students is greater than the mean score of final year students (Table 6).

The variables where the mean score of 1st year students is higher than that of final year students are “Good salary perspective,” “Platform to interact with new people,” “Job security,” “opportunity to travel to different places,” “Opportunity to work abroad,” “Respectable jobs,” “Glamorous and charming jobs,” “Reasonable workload,” “Opportunities to deal with foreigners,” “Parents will feel proud,” “One will get suitable life partner,” “Interesting and Challenging jobs,” “Opportunity for self-development,” “One can work as an entrepreneur,” “Good working environment to its employees,” “Fast career growth,” “Job Satisfaction due to meeting daily new challenges,” “Rewards for good performance,” and “One will get sense of achievement from the work.”

Position of hypothesis

H₁: Overall, there is no significant difference between the perception of the 1st year and final year students.

Table 4: Variables with positive perception among final year students (N=372 [1st year - 221, final year - 151])

Variables	Year of graduation	Mean score
Managerial positions can be achieved	1 st year	2.93
	Final year	3.15

Table 5: Variables with same perception among 1st and final year students (N=372 [1st year - 221, final year - 151])

Variables	Year of graduation	Mean score
Chances to meet celebrities, sportsmen, politicians	1 st year	4.19
	Final year	4.19

Table 6: Variables with positive perception among 1st year students (N=372 [1st year - 221, final year - 151])

Variables	Year of graduation	Mean score
Good salary perspective	1 st year	3.84
	Final year	3.50
Platform to interact with new people	1 st year	4.51
	Final year	4.46
Job security	1 st year	3.23
	Final year	3.17
Opportunity to travel to different places	1 st year	4.28
	Final year	4.13
Opportunity to work abroad	1 st year	4.32
	Final year	4.11
Respectable jobs	1 st year	3.54
	Final year	3.28
Glamorous and charming jobs	1 st year	3.60
	Final year	3.48
Reasonable work load	1 st year	3.28
	Final year	2.94
Opportunities to deal with foreigners	1 st year	4.37
	Final year	4.34
Parents will feel proud	1 st year	3.95
	Final year	3.62
One will get suitable life partner	1 st year	3.48
	Final year	3.32
Interesting and challenging jobs	1 st year	4.21
	Final year	4.07
Opportunity for self-development	1 st year	4.24
	Final year	4.13
One can work as an entrepreneur	1 st year	3.99
	Final year	3.83
Good working environment to its employees	1 st year	3.81
	Final year	3.43
Fast career growth	1 st year	3.79
	Final year	3.50
Job Satisfaction due to meeting daily new challenges	1 st year	3.88
	Final year	3.66
Rewards for good performance	1 st year	4.07
	Final year	3.87
One will get sense of achievement from the work	1 st year	4.09
	Final year	3.85

Table 7: Overall perception

Variables	Year of graduation	Mean score	F-value	Sig.	Difference
Overall perception	1 st year	3.88	19.663	0.000	SD
	Final year	3.72			

SD: Significant difference

The proposed hypothesis given above is rejected. T-test confirms (Table 7) that a significant difference is found between the overall perception of 1st year and final year students.

Conclusion

Some interesting facts are revealed by the research work conducted. First of all, overall a significant difference is found between the perception of 1st year and final year students. When a student takes admission to the hospitality program because of many reasons he does have a very positive perception about the industry. Similarly, because of many reasons by reaching to the final year this positive perception changes to the negative perception. One of the reasons for this changing perception of students is the interaction with the industry. Therefore the industry, while interacting with the hospitality graduates must take care of certain points, so that there should not be any change in the perception. The training programs should be designed in such a way that the students enjoy the training sessions and not treat it as a burden. Moreover, the need for future research also arises here. The future research will be conducted to find out the reason for this negative perception. Further exposure to the industry is one of the reasons for this negative perception. Therefore, the impact of training on the perception of students will also be studied.

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