Changing perception of students towards Hotel Management Course while pursuing the course

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Abstract

Hotel Management Institutes have seen a tremendous growth in the recent years. More and more students are inclining to join / pursue this course at from the institutes at national level or at different universities or private institutes. The popularity of this course amongst the aspirants is because of many career opportunity factors such as, job opportunities, different avenues, popularity of various television programme based on cooking skills, parents of students already into hotel business, eligibility criteria, entrepreneurship plans, overseas job opportunities, passion & interest etc. The study aims at finding out about if the purpose of pursuing this course in the first year of education remains the same throughout the course period or are there any influencing factors which may lead to changing their perception about the programmes in due course. The primary data for this study has been collected through questionnaire from five prominent hotel management institutes affiliated to University of Pune and the same has been presented in graphical form for clear understanding while the secondary data has been collected through literature review of various research papers, articles and books.

Key Words: Hotel Management, Career Opportunities, Influencing Factors, Programmes Perception

1 Introduction

Indian hospitality industry is growing leaps and bounds. This is definitely because of the increasing demand of hospitality in domestic and global market. According to Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India, India currently has over 200,000 hotel rooms spread across hotel categories and guest-houses and is still facing a shortfall of over 100,000 rooms. Hospitality is a booming industry in India. Tourism and hospitality are the third largest net earners of foreign exchange in India and they are expected to be number very soon.

The ninth five year plan has predicted a shortage of 30,000 trained professionals every year. The stakeholder's realization is that the country is in need of professionals who can provide an excellent standard of products and services in hospitality. Thus, the growth opportunity for this sector is

immense and fast. The growing hospitality sectors have given rise to mushrooming of the number of hotel management schools in the country with the aim of providing trained professionals. With increasing globalization, career opportunities in this field are not only unlimited within the country but there are chains of hotels, which operate internationally providing scope of a career abroad.

It is a glamorous profession, which has a bright future. With the growth of hotel industry propelled by foreign and domestic tourism and business travel, the demand for well-trained quality personnel too has grown impressively.

Career in the hospitality industry is sensational; growth oriented and offers rewarding prospects for a hardworking individual who has the taste of entertaining guests. The Hospitality Industry can provide lifelong career and its areas of expertise vary from marketing to cooking, engineering to public relations and from security work to accounting. The recent growth in hotels in different category has been witnessed by us in Pune city. The ever rising demand of the manpower in this industry has contributed in inclining a large segment of student population to opt for the perusing hotel management course from number of hotel management schools in Pune city.

The hotel management schools have been offering programmes with the aim of preparing the students to take up jobs in hospitality sector at either at entry level, mid management level or management level in various core departments of the hotel. The recent trend which has been observed amongst the hospitality students is that of taking up post graduate studies and move abroad, subsequently the number of students joining the hotels is dropping consistently. The study aims at identifying the factors contributing to the selection of hotel management course by aspirants. And during the course what are the changes that happen in their perception about the course and what are the factors which contribute to these changes. The study also tries to explore the opportunities available to the aspirants and the factors which lead to selection of the same by the students.

The secondary data has been collected from books and journals whereas the primary date has been collected through quantitative research methods, observations and interviews/discussions.

2 Definition

Hospitality: Hospitality is the relationship between the guest and the host, or the act or practice of being hospitable. This includes the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers. SOURCE: Wikipedia

Hotel industry (India): In India hospitality is based on the principle *Atithi Devo Bhava,* meaning "the guest is God". This principle is shown in a number of stories where a guest is literally a god who rewards the provider of hospitality. From this stems the Indian approach of graciousness towards guests at home, and in all social situations. SOURCE: Wikipedia

Hotel: A hotel is an establishment that provides lodging paid on a short-term basis. The provision of basic accommodation, in times past, consisting only of a room with a bed, a cupboard, a small table and a washstand has largely been replaced by rooms with modern facilities. SOURCE: Wikipedia

Hotel management: Hospitality Management is the study of the hospitality industry. A degree in the subject may be awarded either by a university college dedicated to the studies of hospitality management or a business school with a relevant department. Degrees in hospitality management may also be referred to as hotel management, hotel and tourism management, or hotel administration. SOURCE: Wikipedia

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3 Review of Literature

- Andrew Kevin Jenkins, 2001 mentions that students have a distinct preference for certain hotel departments, hotel chains and sectors of the industry. Most expect to be general manager / corporate manager ten years after graduating. As the degree progresses, the students' perception of the industry deteriorates.

- Baum T., 2006 states that drawing on wide-ranging, international academic and application sources to illustrate the debates and vital issues that exist within people management in this sector, this book is designed to develop students' critical understanding of why things operate in the manner that they do and how the international context creates diversity in the application of management principles. In addition, this process of reflecting on human resource issues will allow students to arrive at ideas and solutions that will assist them in the workplace.

- Breiter D., 1991 details the problems of recruitment and retention in the hospitality industry are highlighted as deserving the attention of industry professionals and educators alike. There is a need to dislodge the negative perceptions about entry level positions in hotels and restaurants. New ways of thinking about relationships among employees, guests and organizations are also needed. Training, motivation and corporate culture are closely linked in terms of those relationships. Employees should feel that their development, both professionally and personally, matters to the organization. Motivating environments that are conducive to such development must be created. Training methods for entry-level employees must begin to address non-technical skills. Social skills, relationship management, tolerance of contact and decision-making skills deserve the attention of training managers and supervisors.

- Deery M and Shaw R, 1999 stated that the incidence of high turnover rates in the hotel industry has been the subject of a substantial number of studies. Much of the research has focused on isolating the causes of employee turnover and devising strategies for employee retention. Little attention, however, has been given to the impact of high turnover rates on the culture of an organization.

- Getz D., 1994 mentions that the majority in both years had actual work experiences in the tourism and hospitality sector, but attitudes towards a potential career in the industry had become much more negative over the 14 years. Explanations are found in the absence of local training, current problems in the local tourism industry and a perception that such jobs are not desirable. Implications are drawn for education and training.

- Giri Jogaratnam, Polly Buchanan, (2004) have stated that stress can be viewed as a positive or negative experience in the lives and performance of today's college students. This study examined exposure to stressors among student-employees (i.e. those enrolled in hospitality programs while concurrently employed in the hospitality industry). Results could not only help employers, but also hospitality program administrators and faculty more aptly meet the needs of this group by providing services that would help manage student stress and thus enhance well-being and increase retention.

- Kusluvan S and Kusluvan Z, 2000 describe the scale-development process and presents the results of the testing of the new scale among a sample of four-year tourism and hotel management school students in Turkey. Overall, unfavorable or negative evaluations towards different dimensions of working in the tourism industry are reported. Implications for the travel industry, the public sector and tourism and hotel management schools are also discussed.

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- National Tourism Investment Strategy Consultative Group, 2006 "Chapter 10: Workforce and training". In National tourism investment strategy: Investing for our future, Edited by: Australian Government, Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources. 63–70

- Pauze, E.F., Johnson, W.A., & Miller, J.L., (1989) state that the expected confirmation that many organizations need assistance in developing and launching an internship program. Most are positive about the possibility to help FM students and at the same time, benefit from low or no-cost assistance.

  Petrillose, M.J., & Montgomery R., (1998) states that by describing the level of organizational commitment interns possess, the hospitality industry will have new insight into the success of internship programs. The correlation between structured and unstructured internship program's organizational commitment can clarify, for the academic field, if there is a difference between the two programs.

- School of Behavioural Sciences, (1987) "Research and design statistics for the School of Sciences" Course notes, Sydney, Australia: Macquarie University, School of Behavioural Sciences.

- Scott Richardson, (2009) explains areas that students have concerns over include respondent's relationship with their managers, promotion opportunities, career paths, and the pay and conditions offered within the industry. Possibly the most alarming finding to come out of this study is that more than 50% of respondents are already contemplating careers outside the industry. Of those with work experience in the industry, 43.6% claim that they will not work in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation, with 96.3% of these respondents' citing working experience in the industry as the main reason for this decision.

- Waryszak, R., Morda, R., & Kapsalakis, A., (1999) imply that the internship program has proved effective in contributing towards the development of management competencies for this cohort of students and it has complemented the management competencies they developed during their coursework. Some of the students' management competencies have exhibited greater development than others.

- Wen-Hwa Ko, (2008) emphasized that training classes made a significant difference in satisfaction with the supervisor and educational program. The regression analysis showed that training satisfaction played a positive role as a predictor of participants' job satisfaction and confidence about future careers. The effect of satisfaction with training on participants' confidence about future careers was mediated by their satisfaction with the internship. The administration and learning factors in connection with participants' satisfaction during the internship were found to be significant predicators of their confidence about future careers, but supervision, environment, and interpersonal relations were not.

4 Objectives of the study

- To understand the factors influencing the students choice for pursuing Hotel management course
- Does industrial training of 20 weeks have any impact on changing their perceptions?
- To study the pattern of career options selected in the final year of the course
- To understand if there is any change in perception from first to final year of the course

5 Research Methodology

5.1 Data collection: The primary data required for the research was collected using the following techniques:

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Personal interviews: The researcher conducted personal interview with students of reputed hotel management colleges affiliated to Pune University.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire bearing straight forward and relevant questions was drafted and handed over to the sample to obtain their responses.

5.2 Sample technique: The population being "students of hotel management college" and due consideration to the fact that the study is done in colleges affiliated to Pune University, the sample comprised of five major Colleges affiliated to Pune University which were selected for the study.

Apart from the above mentioned tools the relevant secondary data for the research was collected from journals, books and internet.

6 Observations and Discussions

- **Selecting of Hotel management course**

   The aspirants seeking admission for Hotel management course are the students who already have their family business and want to gain knowledge in the same fields or the students who have passion to join Hospitality profession because of glamour and the sparkling physical evidence of hotels.

   There also is a category of the students who probably do not have a good score in their HSC and hence look for this as a career option since it requires less score of 45% for admission

   Now a days because of the TV shows and programmes like master chef and travel & leisure also has contributed to the gaining popularity of this course.

   Hospitality is one Industry which requires more of physical traits and skills than excellent academic score and with the growth of service sector students are well versed with the career opportunities available to the students and that attracts them to pursue this course.

- **Knowledge / awareness about the course content taught in hotel management before joining the course**

   It has been observed that students seeking admission to hotel management are mainly attracted to it because it involves cooking. The students are not much aware of other equally crucial subjects which are taught in this programme as food and beverage service or rooms division or for that matter accounts, hotel engineering and catering science. But the same knowledge is procured through the well designed brochure available on net or in college prospectus.

- **Perception about future prospects on completion of hotel management course**

   Most of the students want to peruse this course because they want to opt for a career in hospitality sector directly or indirectly. Few students however want to continue with their study and pursue masters or higher studies with the aim of better career prospects. Students also like to start with their own outlets as restaurant household catering, Hotels. These students are those either with sound financial back up or those who have their own hospitality business.

- **Students Training**

   Industrial Training is one of the important milestones in this programme because most the students make up their mind about their chosen profession finally. Some students get motivated through the learning that takes place during training and industry exposure which they get for the first time but a small percentage of students are observed to have a negative impact of the training as they cannot cope up with the long Hours, work pressure, and the hardship of the hospitality sector. In our study it was noticed that 87% of the students are happy with the training they received in all that departments of the hotel and would like to continue with the course, whereas 13 % felt to quit the course.

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- **Perceptions about the course before and after completion of your industrial training.**

    Training plays an important role in changing the perception of the students .It has been observed that students can actually relate the curriculum they study with the practical exposure they get in the industry. They find that the course content is relevant to what if required by the industry today. However there has to be inclusion of latest trends in various operational areas in the curriculum.

    The students see a significant change in their personalities, knowledge, skills, attitude and confidence level after the training and this contributes in their overall development of personality. The students understanding about the course content taught to them is found to improve. This is because the students can connect to the subjects well as they have gained practical knowledge about these subjects during their training.

- **Perceptions about the industry before and after completion of industrial training**

    The perception of the students towards Hospitality Industry has not changed but we can say has become clearer and broadened. The exposure which they get during the Industrial Training helps to them to know the industry more closely.

    The study however does not show any drastic change in their perception about the culture of the organization and the type of work they had to carry out, which means the students had knowledge about the nature of work involved during training.

    Long working hours of the hotels also sometimes becomes a drawback for the students to opt for hospitality profession. But the students are well aware of this when they join hospitality sector.

    During the training the students get hands on experience of different departments of the hotels. This exposure helps them in deciding the department they would like to actually work in after the course.

- **Changes in perception about hotel management while pursuing the course**

    Once the student takes admission in the course he or she is aware but not experienced the content and practicality of the course which they are exposed to while pursuing the course. Some students however are not able to match up with the requirements of the course as English language being mandatory, or the hard ship and work involved in the course. And hence may decide to quit.

    But study indicated that the Industrial training is the most influential factor which contributes in changing student's perception about the course.

- **Career options: perception in the first year and opportunities in the final year**

    The student knows are aware of the career options available and they would like to select in their first year itself. And the student when they reach their final year retain the same ambition and a very few students have shown a change in their final career option as compared to their first year option in our study.

    This indicates that the students are focused about their career plans.

- **Satisfaction of the hotel management course**

    The satisfaction level of the students is observed to be pretty high and hence is a positive indication for other aspirants who wish to pursue this course.

7 Findings

Analysis of data obtained from hotel management students from various institutes and colleges.

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All questions listed were asked to hotel management students and the result obtained from them is presented graphically. In all 100 hotel management students of different hotel management institutes and colleges were given the questionnaire.
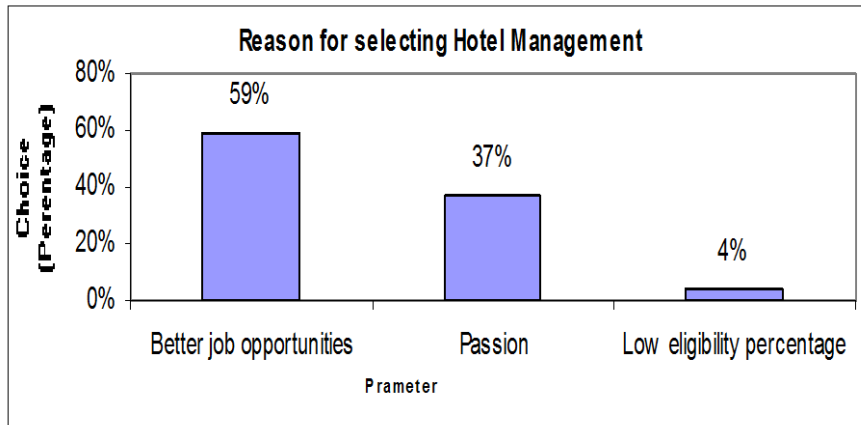

Figure 1 shows the students preference to join hotel management course due to better job opportunities is at the highest.
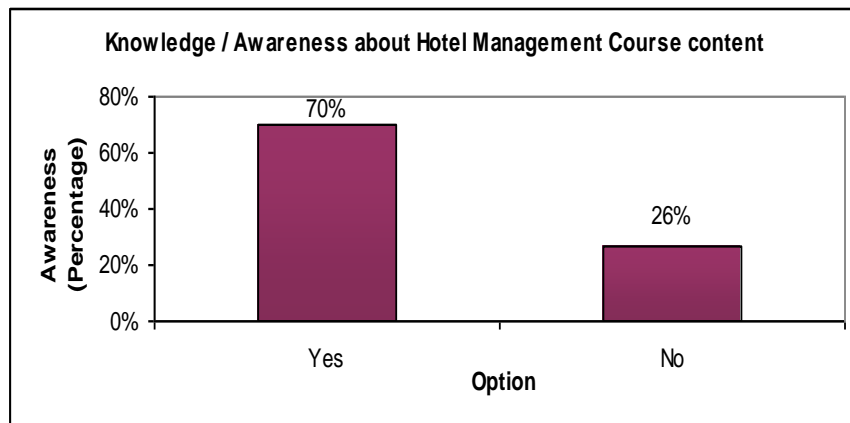

Figure 2 shows that most of these students were aware of the contents taught in the hotel management course before joining the course
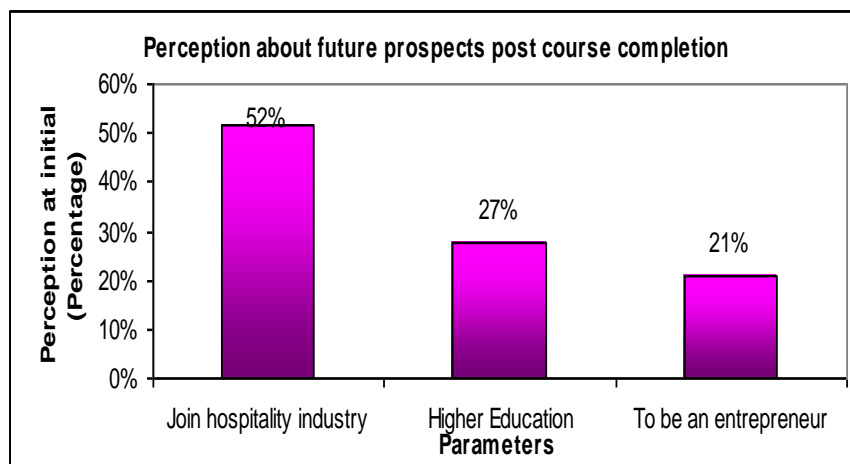

Figure 3 shows the perception of the students about future prospects on completion of hotel management course where joining the hospitality industry was the highest.
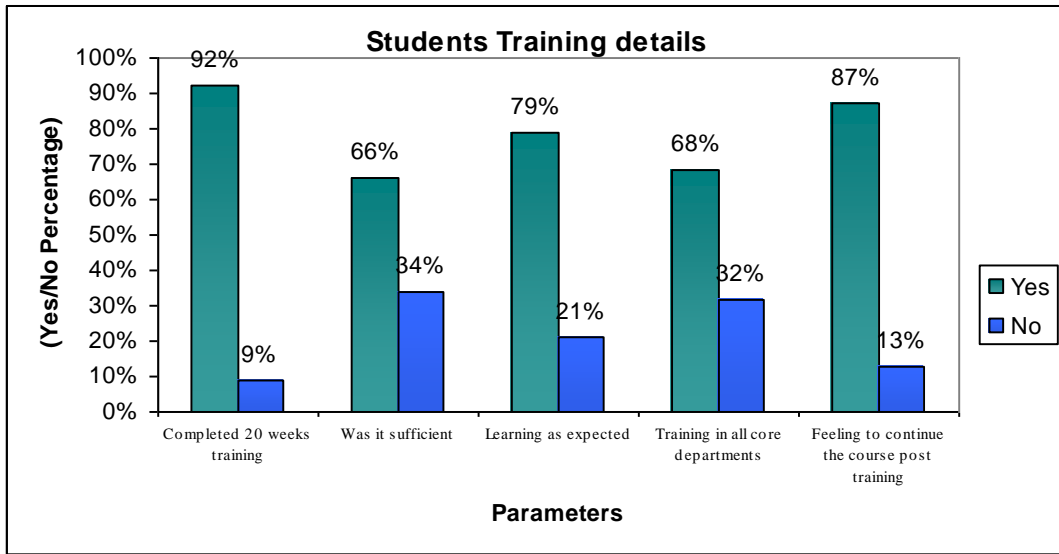
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Figure 4 shows the various parameters during the industrial training of the student that could influence their choice of the hotel management course

V Students' perceptions about the Hotel management Course before and after the completion of industrial training
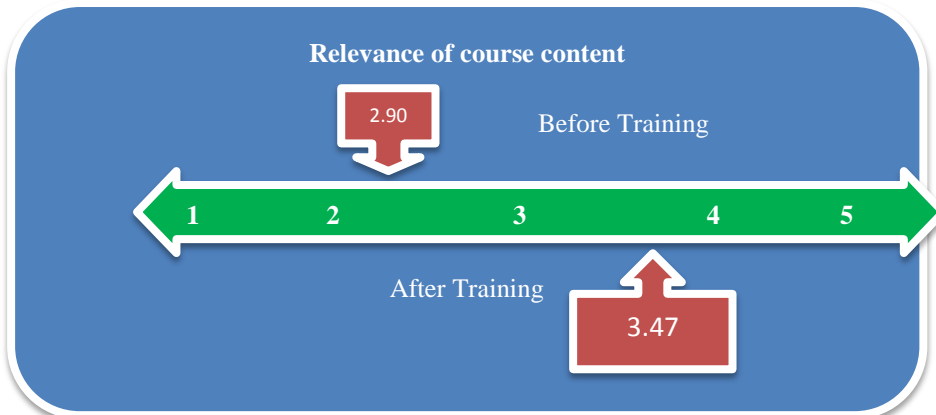

Figure 5 shows a marginal change in perception where course content is concerned
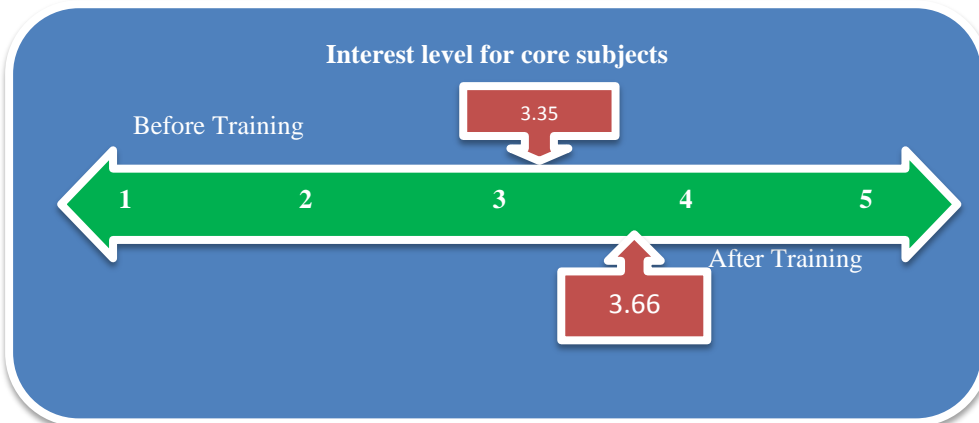

Figure 6 shows that the interest level for the core subjects is marginally influenced

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Interest level for practical subjects

Before Training

3.41

1   2   3   4   5

After Training

3.91

Figure 7 shows the interest level for practical has increased post industrial training

Understanding of subjects taught

Before Training

3.27

1   2   3   4   5

After Training   4.07
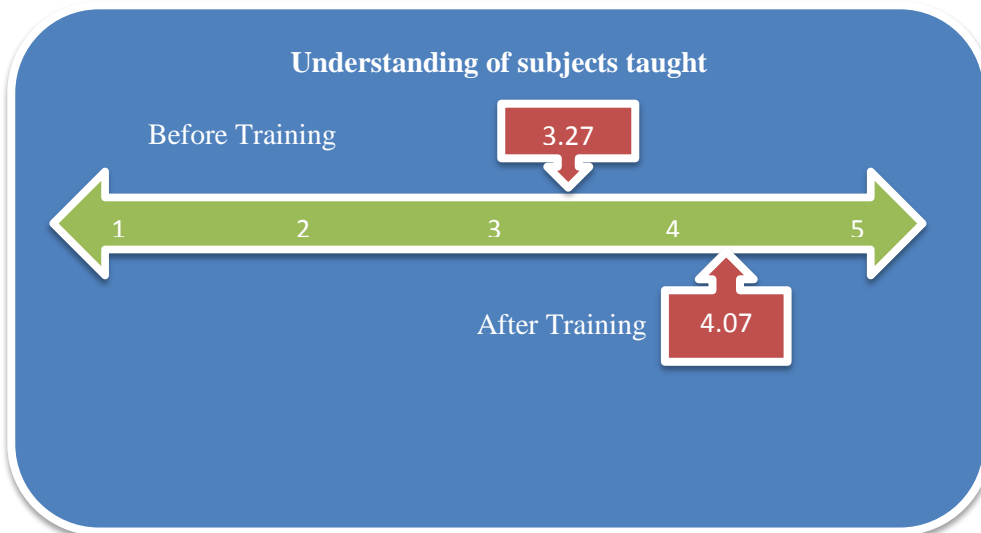
Figure 8 shows that post industrial training the students are able to understand the subjects better.

Overall Personality of student
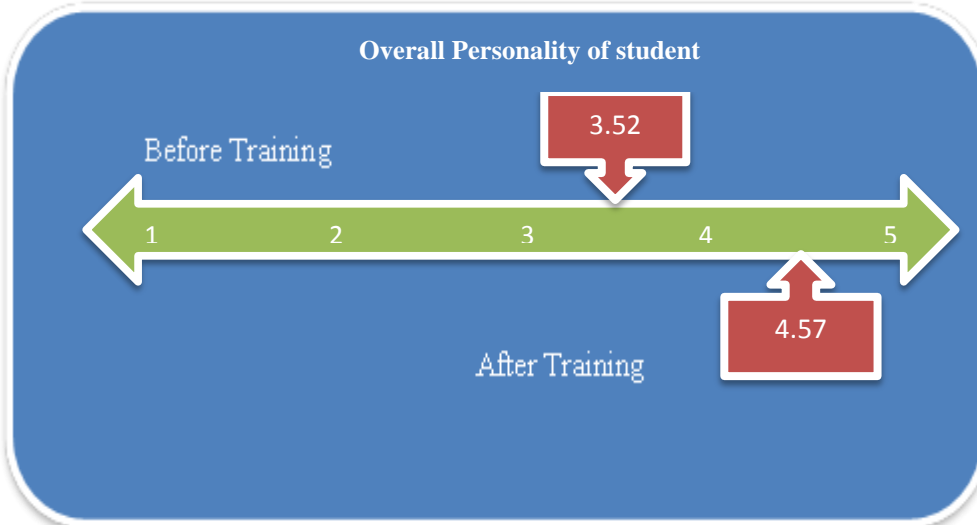
Before Training

3.52

1   2   3   4   5

After Training   4.57

Figure 9 shows that there is a significant change in the overall personality of the student post industrial training

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VI Students' perceptions about the Hospitality Industry before and after the completion of industrial training

Nature of Work

Before Training   3.36
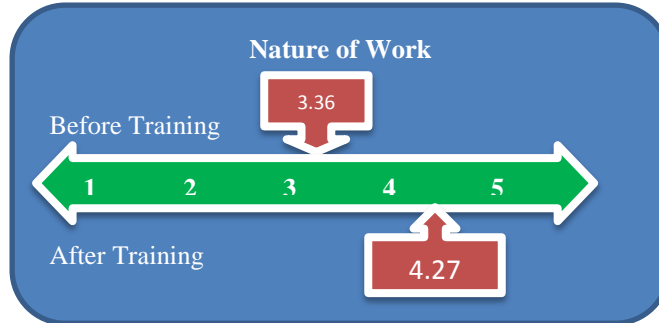
1   2   3   4   5

After Training   4.27

Figure 10 shows a marginal change in perception where nature of work is concerned

Growth Opportunities

Before Training   3.24

1   2   3   4   5

After Training   3.86

Figure 11 shows that the growth opportunities is marginally influenced post industrial training

Working Hours
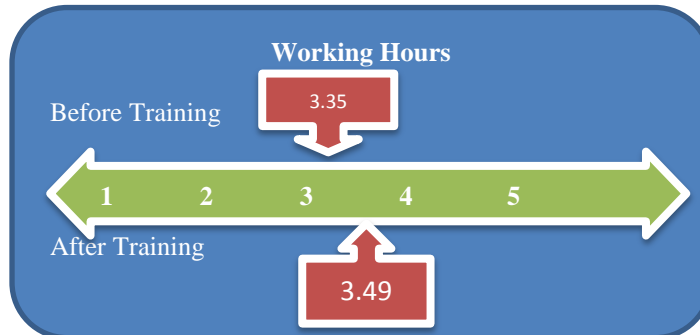
Before Training   3.35

1   2   3   4   5

After Training   3.49

Figure 12 clearly indicated that the students are well aware the work hours they need to put in for the hospitality industry.
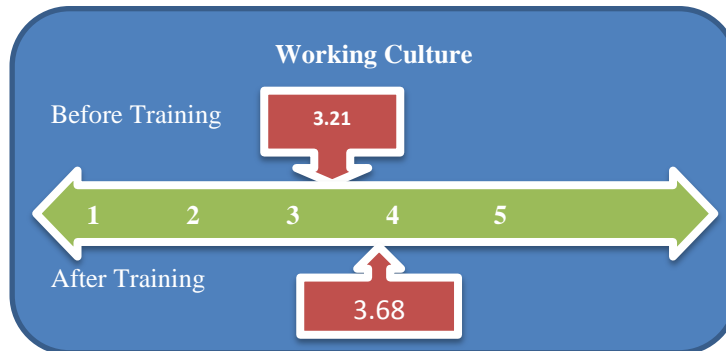
Working Culture

Before Training   3.21

1   2   3   4   5

After Training   3.68

Figure 13 shows that there is a small deviation in the work culture influence

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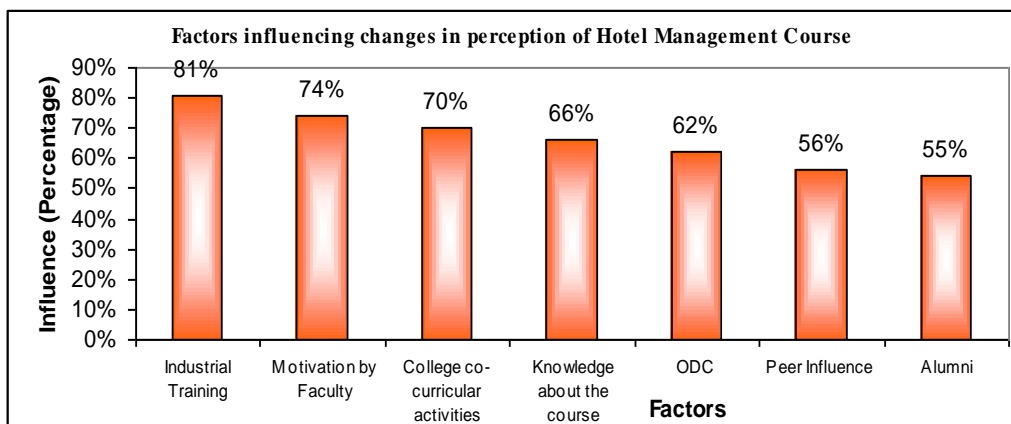
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Figure 15 shows the factors that are the most and the least influential in changing the perception of hotel management course.
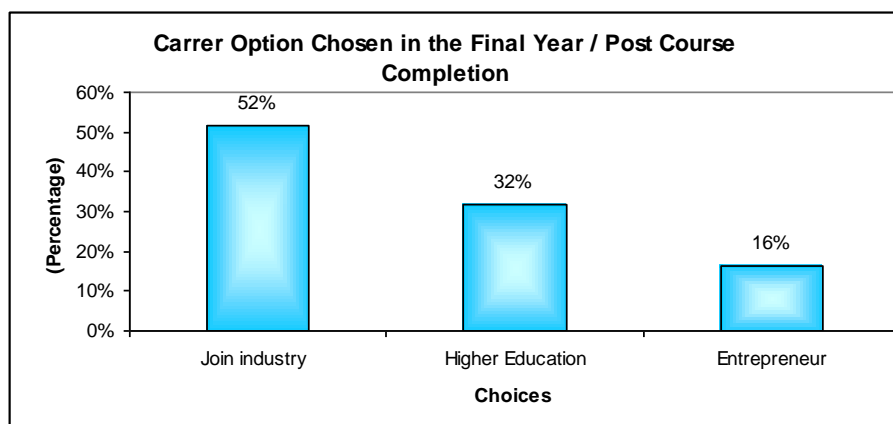

Figure 16 shows that joining the hospitality industry is maximum preferred career option of students post course completion
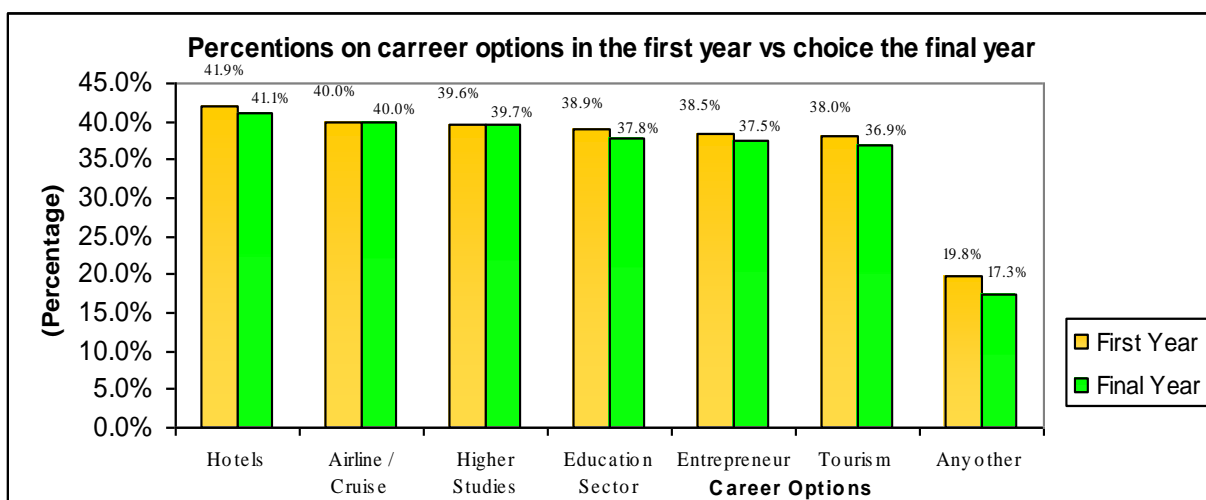

Figure 17 shows the career options perceived by the students in the first year of education and final year of education

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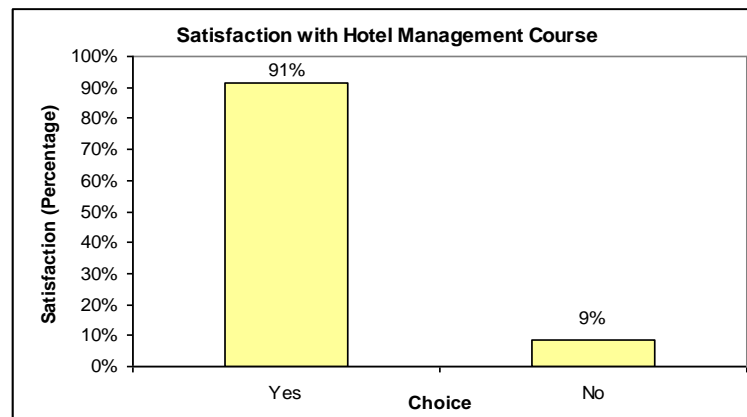**PAPER ID: IJIFR/V1/E9/018**

Figure 18 shows the satisfaction level of students with hotel management course they are pursuing

8 Recommendations and Suggestion

- It is suggested that the latest trends followed by hotels should be included in the curriculum and the curriculum designed by the University should be upgraded on regular basis.
- The faculty of respective colleges must counsel students about the course and the nature of work the students will be experiencing while perusing the course and during their training period.
- Based on the student's feedback about the Industrial training, which they undergo during their course, it may be suggested that hotels should have policy for limited working hours and training in all the core departments for the trainees instead of continuing in one or two departments for the entire training duration.
- It is also suggested that a well designed training module prescribing the training outcome should be followed by all the hotels.

9 Conclusion

This study on, changing perception of students towards hotel management course while pursuing the course is based on the students of the hotel management course of various institutes in Pune. It is a study to find out about the perceptions of the students of hotel management before they join the course, during and after the completion of the course and even after their industrial training.

Post analysis of the hotel management students and their perceptions towards the hotel management course and hospitality industry before and after their industrial training, this study concludes that:

The students select the hotel management course with a background of good knowledge about the course and are also aware of various career opportunities available to them after completion of the course. Although some students are not able to cope up with course content, working hours and the hardship, still most of them are found to continue with the course and complete the same in due course. Industrial training help the student in gaining actual knowledge of hoe the hotel Industry work and it also contributes in improving their learning as they co-relate theory with what they observe in the Industry operations. The training also aids them in improving their personalities and overall confidence. With this most of the students want to opt for hospitality as their career option while some of them would like to go for higher studies and others want to join their family hotel business or become entrepreneurs.And ultimately it may be concluded that the students are satisfied with the course.

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