

**Professional Perceptions of Final Year Hospitality Degree Students studying in Hospitality colleges in Pune**

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**ABSTRACT**

There is huge development in Hospitality and Tourism sector of India. To cater to Indian Hospitality sector there has been many Universities and NCHMCT affiliated institutions opening its doors in last few years .Many new colleges Even Pune city has seen tremendous increase in need of hospitality graduates and have opened or increased seats of hospitality colleges. To full fill humongous need of hospitality industry many universities are producing hospitality graduates who are ready to cater these needs allover India as well. If all these fresh graduates after passing out have to join hospitality industry and make successful careers, it is imperative to comprehend the final year hospitality degree students' perception just before they graduate and start their future careers in the hospitality industry. The goal of this study was to explore the career sensitivity of last year hospitality students towards the hospitality business. This study centers on sample of 60 final year students following a hospitality degree from university in Pune City ,India. It helps to investigate their views on hospitality jobs. For this survey questionnaire method is used. The outcome specifies that the students inclination to join hotel industry after completion was on top of the choices , few students wanted to pursue further education. Many students have put forth their opinion about long and poor working conditions , Internship experience and adverse opinions about the hospitality careers in this research.

**KEYWORDS****Hospitality Students, Pune, perceptions, Hospitality careers****INTRODUCTION**

Indian hospitality industry is growing leaps and bound. Many hotel chains are opening its door in Pune, Maharashtra as well. As per the latest statistics, the city has about 6,000 **hotel** rooms. The Compounded Average **growth** of 39.9 per cent registered by **Pune** between 2006-07 and 2012-13 in **hotel** room supply is the highest in India for any city.

India is a fast growing market and sees a positive growth with respect to occupancy in hotels. The Indian hoteliers are very optimistic and tourist inflow is expected to increase in the future.

With the increase in the number of international travellers and seeing India's prospective growth , many companies have invested in the tourism and hospitality sector which has also given rise to hospitality management Institutes in the country with the goal of supplying skilled experts.

The students' observations of abilities required in hospitality management seem accurate, as many of

the undergraduate students of hospitality management hopes to have recognized social skills as significant talent. Studies have commonly revealed that industry trusts organization skills are more significant in the education than practical skills. The Hospitality management colleges have been providing programs with the intention of making the students ready and join hospitality industry at entry level, middle management level or management level in a number of principal departments that too mainly hotels.. The modern development, which has been detected amid the hospitality students, is that they have started preparation after getting degree of three or four years in Hospitality Management.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Students have high aspirational value from this course and very high anticipations from Hospitality programs. The undergraduate students assume that they will get a good job in famous hotels or Tourism companies after graduation . In an Anglo-Dutch study (Jenkins, 2001) on students' future perceptions, 77.5 percent of the respondents, who were studying in a hospitality degree course in the UK and the Netherlands, believed that after graduating from their degree course they would find a job in international hotel chains, such as Starwood, Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, Intercontinental, and Accor. The large corporations tend to want to employ graduates because employers want employees who are bright in personality as well as intelligent. There are numerous organizations have their own management level programs. For example, Langham Hotels, Hilton Hotels, and Accor Hotels provide customized programmes for graduate students. Langham Hotel Hong Kong has a partnership programme with local universities (Tang, 2006). The Hilton Hotel offers an 'Elevator Program' and Accor hotels provide a 'Graduate Management Traineeship Programme'. These programmes offer different experiences that include training in all the departments of the hotel. Trainees work as full time employees during their training (Accor hotels, 2007). After concluding the program, a apprentice will grow towards a General Manager position at a quicker speed. Brien (2004) stated, "Graduates are expected to undertake ongoing professional development related to their careers, which may well include some technical training". This program creates opportunities that benefits both students and organizations. Most undergraduate students might have job opportunities of their future. Jenkins (2001) also found that 70 percent of students expected to be employed as a General Manager or Corporate Manager 10 years after graduating, and 65 percent of students expected to be a department manager five years after graduating (Jenkins, 2001). The outcomes of Jenkins' study (2001) were very close to the results of previous studies by Ladkin and Juwaheer (2000) and Harper et al. (2005). Ladkin and Juwaheer (2002) establish that the period of time to touch General Manager's position varies from 9 to 15 years. Harkison (2004b) mentioned that students were faithful in terms of the management aims they could attain after education. Students tend to have a plan to apply for middle management positions, such as in the supervisory and trainee areas, after graduation (Harkison, 2004b). In order to achieve their goals, they have to have a precise career plan, which is very important for success in their career development (Harkison, 2004b). However, Jenkins (2001) also found that no students wanted to start their own business 5 years after graduating. Only seven percent of students expected to own a business 10 years after graduating, which means not many students considered starting their own business after completing their course. Most expect to be a General Manager or Corporate Manager 10 years after graduating.

**Negative perception of students towards their career in the hotel industry:** Some primary studies recognized that many students accepted the undesirable features of the industry after preliminary toil in the hospitality industry. It is establish fact that most students in higher education institutions believed that the hospitality industry offered job openings, but students in the last year had an overall undesirable insight of the industry. These meant that they recognized negative working environments and were disappointed with the hospitality industry when they had work experience (Barron and Maxwell, 1993). Students of hospitality management have a tendency to possess great determinations for their prospective career when they initiated their education, but their determinations altered after knowing the real situations of the industry. As a consequence, some students will to do modification in their aim, which has grave effects on Students, academicians, and the Hospitality Industry.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In order to serve the aims and objectives of the study, the current study mainly relies on quantitative research approach. The sample population of the study comprises of final year degree students of private Hospitality Management college at Pune, India registered in hospitality programs during 2016 academic year. All participants were targeted with a non-probability convenience sampling technique, the most practical method in order to gather primary data. There were 78 samples done the survey and collected. However, only n=60 (sample size) surveys were found to be useful, representing 70.1% response rate from the original sample (n=85) as per the below table 1.

Students' sample (Number of final year students as at May 2016)

<b>Study Year</b>	<b>Third Year</b>
<b>Sample Count</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total Number of Count</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Response Percentage</b>	<b>91.7%</b>
<b>Total number of count</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Usable Response percentage</b>	<b>70%</b>

**DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

It is a quantitative analysis that is calculated in SPSS, measuring frequency, mean and standard deviation. The hotel career perceptions of final year students were analyzed by using a survey.

**Students' readiness to join the hotel industry after graduation**

<b>Study Year</b>	<b>Final Year</b>	<b>Total in %</b>
Probably	55	91,6%
Uncertain	5	8.3%
Count	60	100%

This study indicates that 91.6% of the final year student respondents desired to have career in the hotel industry post education. Only 8.3% of the passing out students specified they are unclear about having career in the hotel industry post education.

**Frequency Analysis of Students' Career Anticipations for progression**

Dept.	F&B	House Keeping	Front Office	Admin & General	Total
Count	28	4	11	17	60
	Frontline Employee	Mgt. Trainee	Dept. Trainee	Dept. Mgr	
Entry level Job position	28	1	7	10	60
	Low mgt.	Mid Mgt.	Top Mgt.	Self-Employ	
5 years after Graduation	9	25	18	8	60
10 years after Graduation	-	13	34	13	60

The above table outcomes indicates that student respondents favored working in Food & Beverage (F&B) departments as their major job field/department and then Administration or General, including Human Resources, Finance and Sales or Marketing Departments. Moreover, Management Trainee level was the position students thought most likely to be their job entry level. Working at a hotel as a front line employee ranked second.

Before completing education, students had perception that after completion of Hospitality degree qualification, such as BSc in Hospitality Management, they will get direct managerial level job . Housekeeping Department was their last choice and they expected to enter a high-level position. A small segment of the students anticipated that they would begin working in a Housekeeping Department as a front line employee or a Management Trainee. Many student respondents predicted their job positions to be at the Mid Management or Top Management level within five years of graduation. A total of 25 (41.6%) student respondents expected that they would work in the hotel industry as Mid Management manager (e.g. department manager) five years after graduation. A total of 34 (56.6%) student respondents expected that they would work as a top manager in the hotel industry whereas 13 (21.7%) student respondents believed that they would be businesspersons ten years after completion of education. No samples anticipated to work as a low management level employee in the hotel industry ten years after graduation.

The results of students’ career anticipation for the prospect propose that most student want to work as a Management Trainee in a Food and Beverage department in the hotel industry after finishing their education. More than half (n=34 or 56.6%) of student respondents suggested that they will work as a top manager in the hotel industry, and a large number of student respondents (n=13 or 21.7%) expected they will be entrepreneurs ten years after graduation.

**Cross-tabulation analysis of students perception on the working environment in the industry**

It shows that many student respondents (n=39 or 76.69%) have negative views of the working environments within the hotel industry; for example the industry demands working unsociable hours with poor remuneration. The table also shows that the ‘observed’ frequencies are significantly different from the ‘expected’ frequencies. Consequently, the two variables are related. Therefore, Chi-square analysis shows that there is a strong relationship between the perceptions that jobs in the hotel industry are poorly paid and that jobs in the hotel industry involve working unsociable hours (sig. to the .000 level). In other words, those who think the pay is poor also think the hours are unsociable. This outcome may focus on the reasons of growing employee turnover. This is important when hoteliers expect students to be more competent, but they themselves are not structured in human resource procedures.

Criteria for a New Employee	Knowledge & Experience	Specific Skills	Personality	Qualification		Total
Count	24	21	11	4		60
	Enthusiasm	Commitment	Willing to Learn	Specific Skills		
Count	14	22	21	4		60
	Knowledge & Experience	Specific Skills	Personality	Qualification		
Count	19	18	21	02		60
	Communication	Using Initiative	Human Relation	Problem Solving	Self Mgmt	
Count	23	7	9	13	8	60

the hotel industry needs and the requirements for potential employees’, suggest that they believed that knowledge and experience of the industry is the most significant skill for a new employee, and commitment is the most significant character trait for an employee. A total of 9 (16.1%) student respondents believed that Human Resource departments (HR) will consider knowledge of the industry and experience of the industry as being the most important factor for a new employee, and specific skills are ranked second by 18 (16.1%) student respondents. Student respondents believed that qualifications would not be considered as the most important factor for a new employee by HR. Only a minority of student respondents (4.4%) indicated that HR would consider qualifications as the most important factor for a new employee. Student responses showed that they believed that commitment was the most important characteristic for an employee (n=22 or 35.8%), while willingness to learn was ranked as second, with 21 (34.3%) of student responses. Student respondents proposed definite abilities are not the most significant factor for an worker. However, 21 (35%) student respondents indicated specific skills are the most important criterion for a new employee (ranked second). This means that some departments may require specific skills. It seems students are aware that specific skills may be important

The findings of students’ awareness of ‘what

Poor payment in hospitality industry (Chi-square .000)	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Total %
The industry demand working unsocial hours				
Observed	36	6	4	76.7 %
Expected	33	8	5	
Observed	4	5	1	16.7 %
Expected	6	3	1	
Observed	1	1	2	6.6%
Expected	2	1	1	
<b>Count</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>60</b>

for a new employee. Furthermore, the table shows that personality (n=11 or 19.7%) is considered the most important factor to possess as an employee in the hotel industry, and knowledge of the industry and experience were ranked second by 19 (24.2%) of student respondents. Communication skills (n=23 or 43.1%) are indicated as the most important skills for students' career development. Significantly, qualifications are considered a less important factor for a new employee. Hotel roles tend to include personal interaction. Perhaps this is why student respondents believed that personality is a very important factor, as a certain personality type may better suit interaction with the public. Furthermore, good communication skills will affect employees' career development. However, qualifications were also not ranked as such an important factor to possess as an employee in the hotel industry.

Responses showed that a large majority of the student respondents (n=38 or 63.3%) believed a different understanding of career expectations exists between educators and managers in the hotel industry. The point is that optimistic answers by last year students explains about the part of training towards the students career in the hospitality industry for their achievement.

This study identified that undergraduate students had high expectations of entry-level positions, which were discordant with the reality of management pathways in the industry. The students' extraordinary hopes may have risky effects on students and the hospitality industry. If work do not happen as per expectations, students may be demotivated and may leave or alter their job. Therefore, the hospitality industry should fill in the gap by having better communication at entry requirements to future students. Respondents expected to be in Middle Management of a hotel within five years of finishing their education. Furthermore, student respondents suggested that they would work as a Manager of a hotel within ten years of completing their course. The results associated with student expectations for long-term careers in this study were slightly lower than student expectations in a previous Anglo-Dutch study by (Jenkins, 2001). However, the findings of this study relating to long-term career expectations and employee career trails are truthful. The low management and mid management level jobs were engaged mostly by respondents who had been employed between five and ten years.

## CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the 55 (40.2%) student respondents believed that knowledge of the industry and experience are the most important factors for a new employee entering the hotel industry. Harkison (2004a) found that the hotel industry, particularly in India, considers work experience more important than a degree in hotel management. This study suggests that a bachelor's qualification is not the most important factor for employment in the hotel industry. A minority of student respondents (n=4 or 6.6%) indicated that qualifications are the most important criterion for a new employee. Furthermore, students also indicated that knowledge of the industry and experience are more important than qualifications in the hotel industry and also highlighted that communication skills were the most important skills for a career development.

This result will help the industry to restructure the recruitment process, new employee analysis in relation to hiring and also consider the degree qualification in terms of job promotions. The industry should consider benchmarking their salaries and career advancement based on their performance, skills and qualification. Since the reading shown that students were extremely helped through internship, the colleges should include multiple internships in the curriculum.

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