

A Study on Food Production Department as a Career Choice by Female Students

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Abstract-

Post completion of hotel management course, students have wide choices of career to choose from. When most of the female students join college various hospitality institutes they come with dream of becoming chef or being part of food production department and only a few have ideas to join other departments of hospitality industry.

This is happening mostly due to the impression created by the glamorous world they are exposed through media. This study aims to find the various factors which influence the female students to join hospitality related course. This study further explores factors that influence female students to join food production department as a choice of their career, it has been observed that their passion and dream are the most influencing factors to choose Food Production as their career choice. The students are aware of various hardship that is there which they will go through during the phase of attaining their goal.

Key words- Hospitality, Female chef, Hotel Management, Career, Food Production

1. Introduction

Hospitality management, as the name suggests, is the study of the hospitality industry. Owing to its presence in diverse sectors, a degree in hospitality management presents a wide range of choices for students, in terms of the sector they want to work in. The key part of hospitality industry, hotel management, has wide employment opportunities. Now, with the new developing globalized world we live in, hotel management industry is truly becoming ubiquitous. As industrialists are opening hotels in various big and small cities, the requirement for trained hotel management professionals is massive. It is crucial to understand however that this career does not only stop at hotels, it has several avenues for growth including sales and marketing, hospital administration and catering tourism association, airline catering and cabin services, club management, facility management, and public relation management etc.

Hotel/ Hospitality Management as a field requires aspirants to possess good communication skills as well as an impressive personality. Due to globalization the hotel management industry is growing with leaps and bounds. Each year, a lot of hospitality related jobs are injected in the economy. These jobs are offered not only by Indian firms but also by international hotel chains. Thus, Hospitality Management is a fruitful field to make a career in. During this there are many career choice opportunities that come across and there are many factors that influence female students like family influences, friends if they are taking any particular branch, online media, television shows, glamorous presentation, celebrities, passion to follow something they like, role models / idols, money, college teachers, internship etc. While doing internship these female students come across the real introduction of industry and get a taste of what the hospitality industry is all about. They realize the nature of work being done, hours to be spent on work, hard work and other factors which start to create a mark on making career choice which changes with reality check.

So when it comes to making their choice there are so many challenges that puts female students into a tizzy. They start to think of the demanding time commitments, stress, students exposed to such experiences that sometimes change their perceptions of the industry. The hotel management institutes also need to play an important role here to assist the female students in these crunch times by providing the right guidance and support, these institutes also need to find what these female students are seeking for rather than pushing a common agenda.

2. Definition

Hospitality:

- friendly and generous behavior toward guests
- food, drinks, or services that are provided by an organization for guests, customers, etc. (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/american_english/hospitality)

Chef:

- a person whose job is to cook, especially the most senior person in a restaurant, hotel, etc. (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/chef?q=chef>)

Hotel:

- a building where people stay, usually for a short time, paying for their rooms and meals (<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/hotel?q=hotel>)

3. Review of Literature

Charles Orido (2017), in his research 'Attracting and retaining female chefs' mentions that for females to do the role of a chef is a challenging career and also being one of the most affected one. He further adds that it is very rare to find a female chef to be at top of the ladder especially in his country of origin. It is observed that universally there are common problems that female chefs face such as sexual harassment, gender discrimination, unsupportive staff, attitude of fellow working staff and unhealthy working environment. He also stated that the male chefs try to discourage the female ones to make sure their career is long enough. It is suggested that the organization must take measures to attract and retain these female chefs, provide facility of career up-gradation and development.

Haddaji, Majd Albors, Jose & García-Segovia, P (2017) in their research 'Women Professional Progress to Chef's Position: Results of an International Survey' point out that in the field of cooking the evaluation and recognition has happened in two different spaces viz. professional and domestic. Their research indicates that the female chefs are under-represented due to the male dominance of kitchens in the culinary industry. Although the evolution of female chefs is on the rise the authors feel that they still need to push themselves professionally to achieve higher posts.

Lane, S. R. and Fisher, S. M. (2015), in their research article 'The influence of Celebrity chefs on a student population' mention that the impact of celebrity chef on the student population is not very significant and a very few students who actually follow them as their role models to fulfill their passion. It was also observed that most of the students felt a lot of positivity in such kind of shows and they watch these celebrity chef shows as a means of entertainment and enjoyment.

Ineson, E. M., Yap, M. H. and Whiting, G. (2013), in their research 'Sexual discrimination and harassment in the hospitality industry' conducted amongst hospitality management students indicated critical incidents of homophobic harassment during their internships. They also mention anonymous mention of sexual discrimination that was recorded. This not only involved female students but male students were also affected which included homosexual harassment also. Such negative feelings are generated at this early age itself for the hospitality industry as no actions were taken. The authors also appeal to such managers not to avoid and neglect such incidents and to take serious note and report such incidences.

Martin, P., and A. Bernard. (2013) in their research ‘The experience of women in male-dominated occupations: A constructivist grounded theory inquiry’ state that organizational practices were not adequate enough to accommodate the female’s unique physical ability and work life balance. Such organizations need to develop and implement multiple policies, strategies and initiatives which will deal with multiple facets like attracting, motivating, retaining, supporting and integrating for female employees.

Ibarra, H., Carter, N.M., Silva, C., 2010, in their research article ‘Why men still get more promotions than women’ indicate that many organizations are hiring female staff and also investing in them but all this attention does not convert well into promotions. They also mention that even though the female staff are well educated it does not reflect on the kind of salary that they obtain. The female staff need sponsors or recommendations to grow up the ladder in their organization.

Bloisi, W. and Hoel, H. (2008), in their research ‘Abusive work practices and bullying among chefs: A review of the literature’, mention the unethical practices that could happen in a commercial kitchen. Bullying and abusing are a couple of most realized abusive practices that happen in such commercial kitchens. The authors also argue the point that even though everyone is aware of such practices there is no understanding of why it is still tolerated. The authors also feel that being abusive could be a part of so called kitchen culture.

Swinbank, Vicki A. (2002), in their research ‘The Sexual Politics of Cooking: A Feminist Analysis of Culinary Hierarchy in Western Culture’, stresses that the professional cooking was dominated by the male chefs until the publication of recipes and books came into being which were typically directed towards the housewives. This effect of culinary influence has always been believed to have a top to bottom effect that is from the culinary houses it has trickled down to domestic households. The author believes that there has been a serious neglect in understanding the vice-versa role of female cooking in the professional cooking.

Bartholomew, P. S., & Garey, J. G. (1996), in their research article ‘An analysis of determinants of career success for elite female executive chefs’ mention the struggle of female chefs who have reached to being executive chefs or celebrity chefs. Their determinants were passion, determination, strong work ethics imbibed in them during their culinary school days. They also note that these female chefs need to create a celebrity aura for themselves to ensure they are competitive in the market.

4. Objectives

To know the choice of department students want to join after completing their course.

To find the factors that influence student's choice to join a particular department after completing their course.

To understand students expectation from institute while making a career choice.

To study the factors that influence students to join Food Production Department after completing their course.

5. Research Methodology

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

Personal interviews: The researcher conducted personal interview with female students of various hotel management college about how their career choice get influenced by.

Questionnaire: A questionnaire with straight forward and relevant questions was drafted and female students of hotel management colleges were asked to respond to the same.

Sample technique: This study was conducted with responses of more than 80 female respondents between the age group of above 17 to 21 years.

All the samples were selected randomly from the various hotel management colleges in Pune city.

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

6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected from the questionnaires was tabulated and converted into charts for better understanding. The respondents include female students from different colleges and different age group.

Choice of joining department after completing course

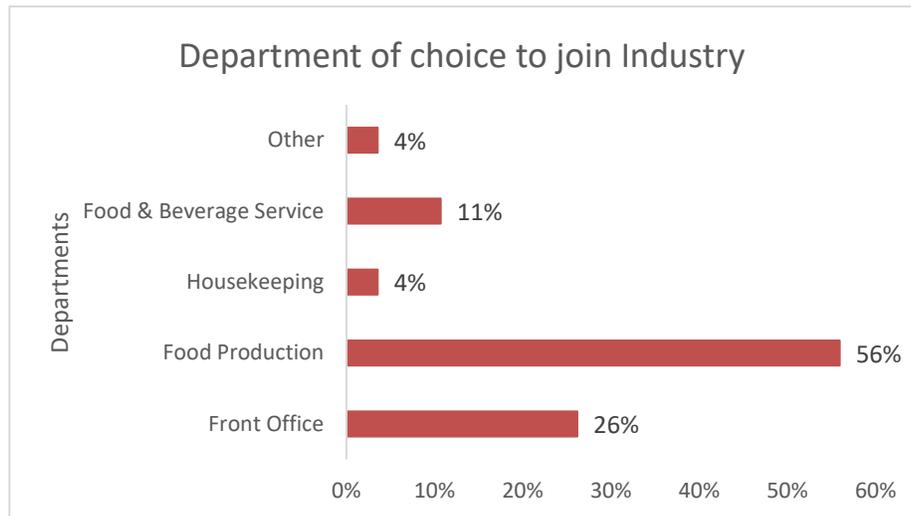


Figure -1

Figure 1: Clearly indicates that Food Production department is high on choice whereas Housekeeping & Other departments is very low on choice by the female students to join the hospitality industry.

When a student joins a course in any hotel management institute, they have already preconceived ideas in mind of what they want to be or what they are going to pursue as their career. Although it might not remain the same as they come towards completion of their course. It has been seen that most of the students who join these institutes want to be chefs or let's say want to join the food production department. This trend is clearly evident with the female students as well.

These female students join hotel management course with a lot of factors that have been in their mind or been influencing them which could be from passion, glamour and even family business pressure. But during their course they go through different subjects, experiences, industrial training, mentors etc., which surely affects their choice of joining a particular department as their career choice.

Generally after completing any hotel management course a student would like to look at joining one of the four core departments viz. Food Production, House Keeping, Front Office or Food & Beverage Service departments, Food Production Department being the most opted for to join post completion of course. Other ancillary areas are also sought for like Marketing, Sales, Human Resources and Accounts departments.

Factors that influence female student's choice to join a particular department after completing their course

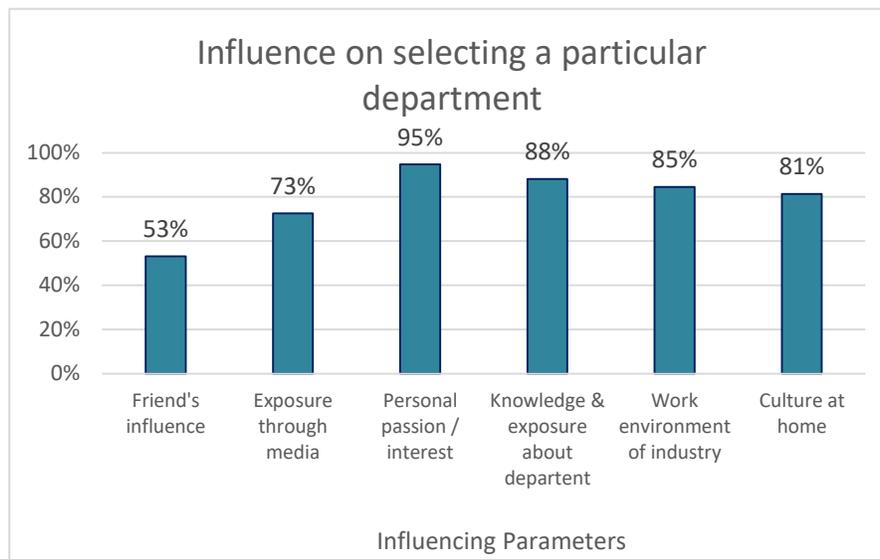


Figure -2

Figure 2 –states that among all the listed influencing parameters 95% of respondents feel that personal passion / interest has the major impact on selection of department for their career choice

The factors that influence female student's choice to join a particular department after completing their course are varied. It was observed that when they join hotel management course their career choice was influenced merely by their passion and media.

As they progress through the different levels in the hospitality / hotel management course they are exposed to the industry in various ways and methods. They get opportunity to visit the hotels as a part of their syllabus, they also have to undergo industrial training ranging from 16 weeks to 20 weeks which gives them the best opportunity to have a first-hand look at various departments. They also do something called as Outdoor Catering known as *ODC* wherein they do 6 to 10 hours of work in hotels when the hotels have huge events and functions. All these factors also gives them an insight into what various departments in the industry go about and how they operate.

As these female students get more information or exposure they understand the reality and accordingly choose the career. Similarly the work environment of industry, male dominance, the nature of work, work life balance are among other factors of industry which affect their decisions. Media also gives lot of glamorous insight of industry through various programmes, events and competitions. The female students do get influenced by these instances to some extent.

Expectation from institute while making career choice

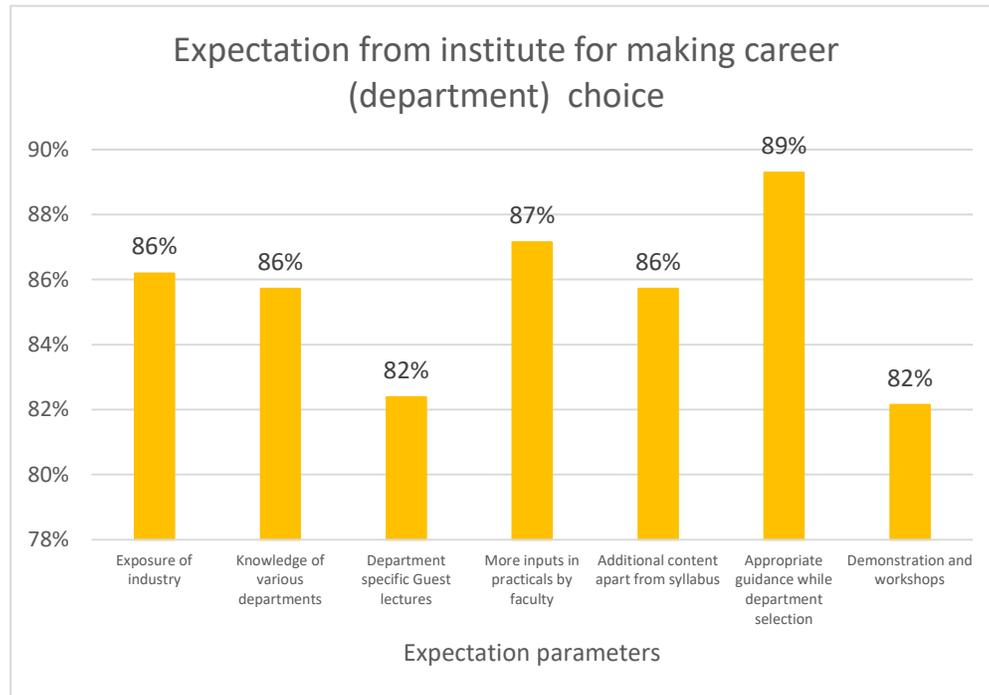


Figure 3

Figure 3 very clearly indicates that the respondents expect appropriate guidance from faculty / institute whereas department specific guest lectures and demonstrations/ guest lectures are on the lower side of expectation.

There are a lot of questions, doubts and confusion in the female student's mind when it comes to choosing a particular department a career choice. There is always a fear in their mind that will it be the right choice that they are going to make and will they be able to cope up with it. These students generally look up to faculties who teach them in different levels / year / semester for guidance in their choice making decision. Here the institute needs to look into the matter and streamline this process under each section / department wherein the head of departments can device plans and methods that can be useful for students who are looking for guidance. The institute has to bring about a collective effort from all the faculties in each department to contribute to the guidance system.

Budding female learners enjoy classes when faculty speaks of their experience in the industry of how they performed at various sections / departments. They also seek of how faculties have tackled their career situations and decisions. This is brought about in the theoretical and practical sessions of the respective department faculty. It also help by bringing in people of the industry as guest speakers and to give demonstrations does help thesefemale learners in obtaining the current

scenario and queries are addressed by such people. As mentioned earlier the exposure of female students to industry in different ways also plays an important role in decision making process of joining a particular department by the student.

Factors that influence students to join Food Production Department after completing their course.

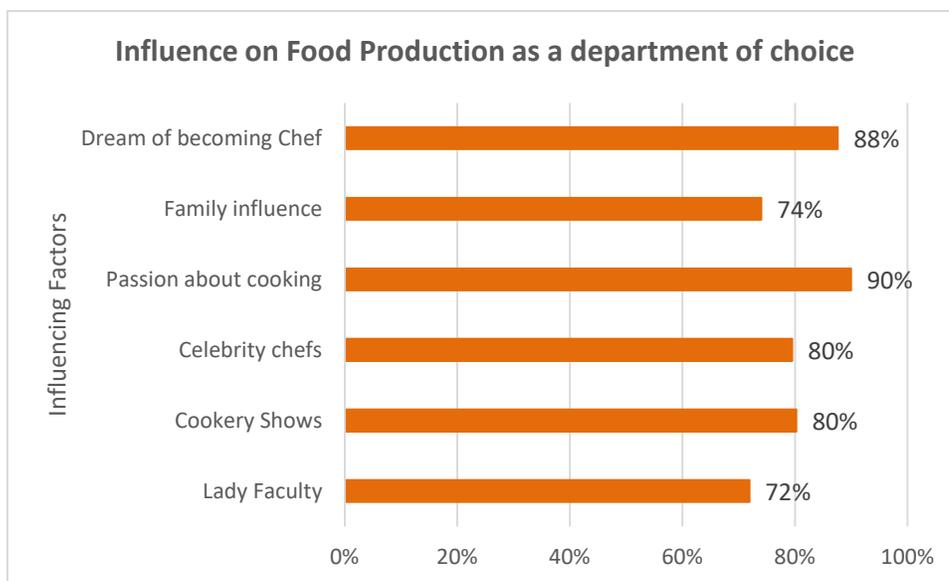


Figure-4

Figure 4 indicated that the passion about cooking was the highest influential factor with almost equal respond to their dream of becoming chef, whereas celebrity chefs influence and cookery shows presented similar response, the least influencing factor was the female faculties influencing at institute level.

Passion for cooking and dream of becoming a chef motivates these female students and directs them towards their goal. Here passion becomes the drive factor which takes these students to achieve their dream however hard be the nature of work. There are many other factors which add on to achieve their desired career. Kitchen is the place which needs lot of dedication and involvement. These female students have seen various Indian cookery shows / competitions like *Turban Tadka*, *Masterchef India*, *Chak le India*, *Highway on my Plate* and international cookery shows like *Hell's Kitchen*, *Masterchef Australia*, *Cutthroat Kitchen*, *The Final Table*. These students grasp how chefs do lot of hard work to prepare and present various foods, which includes so much of R&D, many repeated trials, plating and presentations, etc. these shows / chefs do play an important role in influencing their career choice.

There is a fair amount of influence from family especially when the female student comes from a family who already have a set business in some form or the other in the field of hospitality. These students are looked upon to gain vital knowledge and experience and come around to be a part of the family business.

7. Conclusion:

Becoming a chef is a skillful work where one has to go with lot of hard work and sweat into it, long hours working, irregular work timings, etc. With such kind of work nature only the passion and dream can sail one through. The role of the institute is also important in a way such that proper guidance exposure to has to be given to these students within academic schedule so that they understand each department. There should be specialized departmental mentors who will provide with deeper inputs regarding the student's choice of department which will help students to make right career choice. Food production is career where long hours working, irregular work timings, work life balance etc. are the factors which make female to think twice before choosing food production as a career. Many female students today already consider the above mentioned points and it is their passion and dream that takes females towards their goal.

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