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CAMPUS TO CORPORATE – COMPATIBILITY STUDY

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Background

The Hospitality industry is the third-largest foreign exchange earner, accounting for 6.23% of India's GDP and 8.78% of India's total employment, according to a report by the Planning Commission. Tourism in India is the largest service industry. The travel and tourism sector currently employs 49 million people, or 1 in every 10 jobs, and this is projected to increase to 58 million, or 1 in every 9.6 jobs by 2020.

Travel and tourism is a USD 32.7 billion business in India, according to industry estimates; in addition, the hospitality sector is sized at USD 23 billion and is expected to grow to US\$ 36 billion by 2018. It is expected that the hospitality sector will witness an inflow of USD 12.17 billion in investments over the next two years, according to market research company Technopak Advisors. According to the Planning Commission, the hospitality sector creates more jobs per million rupees of investment than any other sector of the economy. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), which says India's travel and tourism sector is expected to be the second-largest employer in the world, employing 40,37,000 people, directly or indirectly, by 2019. India has been ranked the "best country brand for value-for-money" in the Country Brand Index (CBI) survey conducted by Future Brand, a leading global brand consultancy. India also claimed the second place in CBI's "best country brand for history", as well as appears among the top 5 in the best country brand for authenticity and art & culture, and the fourth best new country for business. India made it to the list of "rising stars" or the countries that are likely to become major tourist destinations in the next five years, led by the United Arab Emirates, China, and Vietnam. [ibef.org/industry/tourismhospitality.aspx]

The Indian Hospitality industry contributes around 2.2 per cent of India's GDP. The industry is expected to reach INR 230 billion (US\$ 5.2 billion*) by 2015, growing at a robust CAGR of 12.2 per cent. India will be investing around INR 448 billion (US\$ 10.1 billion*) in the hospitality industry in the next five years, according to a report 'The Indian Hotel Industry Report - 2011 Edition' by CYGNUS Business Consulting & Research Firm. In the next two years, a total investment of US\$ 12.2 billion (INR 545.2 billion*) is expected that will add over 20 new international brands in the hospitality sector.

In the FHRAI's memorandum presented to the government recently, it is said that at least 1, 50,000 additional rooms are required to meet the target of 5 million foreign tourist arrivals. This

entails an investment to the tune of over Rs.15, 000 crore. Currently there are 1, 05,000 hotel rooms in the three to five-star category in India. The annual growth rate of hotel rooms in India is 6%. Nearly 11 per cent of the hotel demand in the country is from long stay guests. For every room constructed, 3-5 jobs are created. The government plans to set up four Indian Institutes of Hotel Management in Uttaranchal, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and Haryana as well. To provide training in the area of tourism, the tourism ministry will also start 400 training programmes. Estimates indicate a need for about 15,000 more trained persons in the star category hotels, which includes about 2,700 managers, 2,500 supervisors and about 1,000 staff.

Hospitality graduates expect to be appointed to professional managerial pathways (for example, management training programmes) in international hotels because they assume their qualifications will afford them greater opportunities for advancement. However, because positions such as management training programmes are limited and a certain amount of experience is required, as well as tertiary qualifications, students are likely to be disappointed due to the difficulty of attaining enough industrial experience while the students are studying. Therefore, a gap exists between the expectations and assumptions of hospitality graduates and their employers.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to explore the career expectations of the hospitality industry and whether the curriculum taught in hotel management schools is compatible with their expectations from students who graduate to work in the industry.

It also aims to explore whether the educating style, theory, practical syllabus, exam patterns and duration is absolutely necessary for hospitality students and whether it is compatible to what is essential to begin working in the hospitality industry.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the expectations and assumptions of hospitality management students concerning their future working careers?
- What are the working histories of managerial employees and their perceptions of the needs in the hospitality industry?
- What is the value of hospitality degrees to hospitality management students and their employers?

Hospitality Management Education

What kind of education is needed for the hospitality industry?

Employees are quite often required to have specific skills and abilities. There are 'skill development issues' related to changes occurring within the tourism and hospitality industry. Skills should be given priority when recruiting new staff. Specific skills would be very important for developing a career because hospitality is becoming more globalised. The need for multicultural abilities and skills is more critical for employees working in the industry.

Hotel managers should have multiple technical skills. For example, an F&B manager has to make a decision buying stocks, storing, costing, and processing, to serving food to customers. Using multiple technical skills allows an F&B manager to control and manage their department, and this requirement remains the same in all situations, regardless of size or quality, be it a grand hotel or formal restaurant. An F&B Manager needs multiple skills in areas including accounting, human relations, marketing, customer service and communication in order to effectively manage a department. Multi-skilling allows a person to manage a large number of tasks at the same time. Multi-skilling may affect how employees approach a wider arrangement of employment opportunities. Effective communication skills are fundamental for career development in the hospitality industry. Communication skills are argued to be a significant skill by many. It appears that multi-technical skills, good communication skills, leadership skills and financial skills are necessary to operate effectively in the hospitality industry. Knowing the skills required by the hospitality industry is vitally important to hospitality students and education providers. If educators know what the industry wants and requires of a new employee, they can focus on changing their curricula to support the industry's expectations and needs and improve the satisfaction of hospitality students.

Training programmes or Internships

For recruitment into management levels in the hospitality industry, the industry tends to favour applicants that have work experience. Many managers in the hospitality industry believe that practical experience is more valuable than a degree qualification for entering into the management levels in the hospitality industry. However, hospitality graduates argue that they already have enough practical experience because most graduates complete a period of internship within their degree. Graduates believe that they have already carried-out an 'apprenticeship'

through completion of university study, as most hospitality degree programmes are often combined with practical work experience.

Negative aspects of expectations and assumptions of students

Many students recognized the negative characteristics (poorly paid, working unsociable days and times, long hours and multi-skill with shift work) of the industry after starting work in the hospitality industry. Most students believe that the hospitality industry offers great career opportunities, but students in the final year have an overall negative perception of the industry. Students of hospitality management tend to have high ambitions for their future working career when they begin their studies, but their ambitions change after recognizing the actual circumstances of the industry. As a result, some students tend to change their goal, which has serious implications for students, education providers, and the hospitality industry. For example, if many people view the working environment of the hospitality industry negatively, then potential students may choose not to study hospitality and education providers will find it difficult to recruit students and provide high quality courses. Furthermore, the hospitality industry will find it difficult to select employees who have good quality qualifications, which also will affect customers. As a result, customers may be dissatisfied with the hospitality industry, and the industry may suffer financially, which may influence suppliers.

Positive aspects of expectations and assumptions of students

Many graduates start working in the hospitality industry as front line employees. However, students believe that hospitality degrees will make a difference to their careers create greater professionalism in the industry . This belief seems to be held by hospitality management students worldwide. Furthermore, undergraduate students tend to believe that they will find a good job in a big hotel chain after completing their degree course. Students expect that after graduating from their degree course they would find and secure a job in international hotel chains, such as Starwood, Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, Intercontinental, and Accor. Degree graduates of hospitality management in India want to “seek and gain positions in international hotels that provide a professional managerial career path option and associated benefits.

The large corporations tend to want to employ graduates because employers want employees who are bright in personality as well as intelligent. Big corporate hospitality companies have also developed broad management training programmes to foster the best employees. For example, various hotel chains in India provide customized programmes for graduate students such as

OCLD by the Oberoi group of hotels, HOT/MT programmes by the Sayaji group etc. These programmes offer different experiences, which include all the departments of a hotel. Trainees work as full time employees during their training. After finishing the programme, a trainee will progress towards a GM position at a faster pace. Graduates are expected to undertake ongoing professional development related to their careers, which may well include some technical training. However, these opportunities are limited to graduates, although the opportunities benefit both students and organizations, since the demand is low for management trainees. Most undergraduate students might have very high career expectations of their future. Today's student is highly ambitious and very competitive. Most students expect to be employed as a GM or corporate manager 10 years after graduating, students also expect to be a department managers, five years after graduating. Students are realistic in terms of the management goals they could achieve following their graduation. Students tend to have a plan to apply for middle management positions, such as in the supervisory and trainee areas, after graduation. In order to achieve their goals, they have to have a precise career plan, which is very important for success in their career development. I've also observed and found that many students wanted their own business five years after graduating, however 38% of students expected to own a business ten years after graduating, which means many students consider starting their own business after completing their course, which means that entrepreneurship development has been instilled in students these days.

Participants

The participants of this study were students of a Bachelor of Hotel Management & Catering Technology programme offered under the Pune University and managerial employees in large international hotel chains in India. The other questionnaire was filled by employees of branded hotel chains. The survey used quantitative questionnaires.

Before conducting the main data collection, pre-test surveys were completed with five students and five employees to check the structure of the questionnaire. The purpose of pre-test surveys was to test questionnaire wording, sequencing and layout. As such, a pre-test survey is important to establish whether there were any difficulties in understanding the questions posed.

Findings

Management Trainee level was the position students thought most likely to be their job entry level. Working at a hotel as a entry level employee ranked second. Undergraduate students

seemed to believe that when holding a qualification, such as a bachelor of hospitality degree, they did not need to work in the Housekeeping Department and they expected to enter a high-level position.

One third of the student respondents expected their job positions to be at the Mid Management or Senior Management level within five years of graduation. 36% respondents expected that they would work in the hotel industry as Mid Management manager (e.g. department manager) five years after graduation. 50% student respondents expected that they would work as a top manager in the hotel industry whereas 38% student respondents thought that they would be self employed, ten years after graduation. No respondents expected to work as a low management level employee in the hotel industry ten years after graduation. The findings of students' career expectation for the future suggest that most student respondents want to work as a Management Trainee in a Food and Beverage department in the hospitality industry after completing their course. Half of student respondents suggested that they will work as a top manager in the hotel industry, and a large number of student respondents 38% expected they will be self-employed ten years after graduation.

Students' awareness of the working environment in the hospitality industry

Many hospitality management students were aware of the working environment in the hospitality industry. Most student respondents (96%) believed that the hospitality industry is a growing industry with many career opportunities. However, student respondents are also of the opinion that jobs in the industry are poorly paid (80%). A minority of student respondents (4%) disagreed that the industry is poorly paid. Furthermore, all student respondents (100%) recognized that jobs in the hospitality industry in India demand working unsociable hours. Of these student respondents, (80%) students recognized that jobs in the hospitality industry demand working unsociable hours with poor payment. Many hospitality roles require shift work, so employees need to work roster shifts. As a result, employees may need to work weekends, public holidays and late at night or early in the morning. Student respondents may be aware of this working environment through their part-time working experience in the industry. Many student respondents have negative views of the working environments within the hospitality industry; for example the industry demands working unsociable hours with poor remuneration. In other words, those who think the pay is poor also think the hours are unsociable. This result may highlight one of the causes of increasing employee turnover or disillusionment with work in the hospitality industry.

Students' awareness of what the hospitality industry needs and the requirements for employees

The findings of students' awareness of 'what the hospitality industry needs and the requirements for potential employees', suggest that they believed that knowledge and experience of the industry & personality is the most significant skill for a new employee, and attitude is the most significant character trait for an employee. A total of (72%) student respondents believed that Human Resource departments (HR) will consider knowledge of the industry and personality as being the most important factor for a new employee, and specific technical skills are ranked second by (16%) student respondents. Student respondents believed that qualifications would not be considered as the most important factor for a new employee by HR. 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 hospitality industry.

Hospitality management education and existing gaps between educators and the hospitality industry

Most employees believed that educators know the hospitality industry well. All employee respondents believed that an internship will be helpful for their career in the hospitality industry because they might expect to have industry experience through these programmes. Employee respondents believed that a different understanding of career expectations exist between educators and managers in the hospitality industry. Responses showed that all of the employee respondents believed a different understanding of career expectations exists between educators and managers in the hospitality industry. The overall employee responses showed that educators know the hospitality industry well and that an internship would be helpful for their career in the hospitality industry. However, employee respondents suggested that a different understanding of career expectations exists between educators and managers in the hospitality industry.

Value of a hospitality degree to students

A large majority of student respondents (64%) believed that work experience is more important than a degree qualification for a prospective employee. Only (16%) student respondents indicated that a degree qualification is more important than experience for a prospective employee.

Employees' survey

Historical backgrounds of managerial employees

A total of 50% managerial employee respondents had been working in the hotel industry less than five years. This group includes one Top Management level employee, which is a surprising finding. Achieving a Top Management level position generally requires considerable operational and managerial experience in the hospitality industry. However the aforementioned employee had been working as a top management level employee, although he had worked less than five years in the industry. Responses show that employees who have been working from five to ten years account for 50 % of all employee respondents. However, no one in this group had worked as a management employee. Employees who had been working more than 11 years made up 28% employee respondents.. Out of three Top Management employees (GMs), two had worked in the hotel industry for more than 11 years.

The employee responses showed:

- Just under half of the employees of the Department Supervisors had been working in the hospitality industry for less than five years.
- More than half of Low Management level had been working in the hospitality industry for five to ten years or more than 11 years.
- Half employees of Mid Management level had been working in the hospitality industry for over 11 years.
- Two out of three employees of Top Management level had been working in the hospitality industry for more than 16 years

These show that in order to achieve higher positions, employees need long term working careers in the hospitality industry.

Expectations of managerial employees as graduate hospitality management students during their time of employment at the hotel

The employee respondents most expect 'willingness to perform' which has 50% of the respondents consent for hospitality management graduates during their employment at the hotel. Ranked second, 22% of employee respondents expected hospitality management graduates to

‘work effectively in teams’ during their employment at the hotel. 17% employee respondents expected working graduates to achieve high levels of task accomplishment. 6% each was given to good general knowledge and initiative and ownership while employed at the hotel.

Therefore, these findings showed that managerial employees might expect that hospitality management graduates will be more willing to perform, work effectively in teamwork and have a high level of task accomplishment during their employment at the hotel.

The hospitality industry needs and the requirements for employees

Managerial employees tended to think that communication skills are the most important factor for a new employee. On the other hand, experience was not rated at all by managerial employees. Furthermore, managerial employees believed that willingness to learn was the most important characteristic for an employee, with 44% of responses. Commitment was ranked second, with 28% of responses. However, many employees did not consider technical skills as the most important characteristic for an employee. Managerial employees also indicated that personality is the most important factor to possess as an employee in the hospitality industry.

Summary: The findings of students were as follows:

- Most students expected to work in the hospitality industry after completing their course.
- The F&B department was ranked first as students preferred their first work role in the hotel and 46.7 percent students expected that they would start job position as a management trainee level.
- 48 % students expected that they would work in the hotel industry as mid management manager (e.g. department manager) five years after graduation and 52% students expected that they would work as a top manager in the hotel industry. However, 38% students thought that they would be self-employed ten years after graduation.
- Students were aware of the working environment in the hospitality industry well.

For example, the hospitality industry is a growing industry jobs in the industry are poorly paid and the industry demands working unsociable hours (76.6%).

Employee willingness to learn was indicated the most important character trait for an employee and knowledge and communication skills was indicated the most important factor for a new employee.

Personality & knowledge of the industry were indicated the most important factor to possess as an employee and communication skills was pointed to as the most important skills for employees' career development. However, qualifications were considered a less important factor for a new employee and possessing as an employee.

Most students believed that their educators know the hospitality industry well and an internship programme would help students' career. However, few supposed that different career expectations exist between educators and the hospitality industry.

The value of a degree of hospitality management was identified as being of considerable importance. For example, many students believed that industry experience is more important than a hospitality degree for a prospective employee. Many students expected that they would receive higher salaries than employees who do not hold a bachelor degree of hospitality management and almost of students believed that a degree-qualified employee gives benefits to a company. Students expected that a bachelor of hospitality degree affects an employee's promotion.

The findings of managerial employees are following as:

Managerial employees have various qualifications however; Certification or

Diploma qualifications were the predominant qualifications.

Managerial employees hope to see the following characteristics in hospitality management graduates: 'willing to perform', 'good general knowledge of the hotel industry' and 'works effectively in teamwork'.

Employee organizational commitment was identified the most important character trait for an employee by managerial employees.

Personality was identified as the most important factor for a new employee and it was the most important factor to possess as an employee.

Managerial employees believed that an internship programme is valuable to the hospitality industry and hospitality educators know the industry well.

The value of a degree of hospitality management was identified as being very low.

**Needs and requirements of the hospitality industry – view points of students and employees:
Needs and requirement for an employee in the hospitality industry**

The employees' views of the most important characteristic for an employee are very important to undergraduates of hospitality management. Students and employees had the same opinions of the most important characteristic for an employee. Willingness to learn was identified as the most important factor for an employee in the hospitality industry, followed by commitment. Current students and managerial employees believe specific skills will come from training, but commitment should come from employees' hearts. Therefore, hospitality companies should make an effort to enhance employee commitment and find solutions to generate employee commitment. If companies allow some degree of employee empowerment, employees may feel that they are valued company members. This may improve employee motivation and high level of employee organizational commitment. Prospective hospitality employees should consider their personalities and decide whether they are suited to the hospitality industry. If they think their personality is suitable for hospitality work and they have good positive attitudes to work well, hospitality industry knowledge and experience, the hospitality industry will be a suitable work place for them. This study also explored managerial employee expectations of hospitality management graduates during their employment at a hotel (this question was asked only of managerial employees). The data indicated that the responses for three different answers to this question were equal. The three equal responses were:

Graduates of hospitality management work effort related to a willingness to perform

The ability to work effectively in teams during their employment at the hotel

A high level of task accomplishment while employed at the hotel.

These results may be very important information to students and education providers of hospitality management courses due to provide students' future working career in the hospitality industry.

The most important skill for an employee's career development

The results of the most important skill for an employee career development in this study for students and employees are very different. Self Management skills were ranked first by employee respondents while it was ranked fourth by student respondents. On the other hand, student respondents indicated that communication skills were the most important skill for an employee career development. These findings are significant for hospitality students and education providers. Education providers should refer to this result when developing hospitality study in relation to the career development needs of hospitality students.

Hospitality management education and existing gaps between educators and the hospitality industry: Understandings of both parties - students (or educators) and managers in the hospitality industry

Both student and employee respondents in this study indicated that a different understanding of career progression exists between educators and managers in the hospitality industry, despite the finding that the hospitality educators are perceived as knowing the industry well. If hospitality educators and hospitality employers have different expectations, students are disadvantaged by the existing gaps between these two important parties. The educators are very important to students, as educators prepare students for entry into the hospitality industry. Therefore, in order to reduce the gaps, the educators and employers have to find solutions for developing the transition from hospitality education into the hospitality industry.

Conclusion

The study sought to identify any differences in career expectations and thoughts on job requirements between undergraduates of hospitality management and managerial employees in the hospitality industry. In addition, the study was also designed to establish the perceived value of hospitality management degrees amongst hospitality management undergraduate students and managerial employees in the hospitality industry. A number of significant observations appeared from the research. The study identified similarities and differences in perceptions between hospitality management students and managerial employees in the hotel industry. Undergraduates and managerial employees shared some common opinions. For example, they agreed that the most important factor for success as an employee was willingness to learn and the most important factor to possess as an employee in the hospitality industry was communication skills. Employees with a high level of commitment are very important to hospitality organizations, as they will have a direct impact on the companies' performance. This study shows that both students and employers recognize that commitment is the most important determinant of success for work in

the hospitality industry. This shared belief bodes well for hospitality students in the future, as they can have confidence that employers will look for committed employees. Furthermore, personality is identified as a key factor for employees. The nature of the industry is such that employees are frequently involved in personal interactions, be it with customers, fellow staff, or suppliers. Employers seek the confidence to know their employees will be well perceived by customers, and personality has a large role to play in success in customer/employee interactions. Therefore, hospitality employees need to possess a positive personality. The results suggest that both students and employees know what is required for success in the hospitality industry. When employers and employees have similar beliefs and expectations, there are less likely to be disappointments that lead to turnover and dissatisfied customers. A degree in hospitality management was not recognized as an important characteristic for a new employee and an important factor to possess as an employee in the hospitality industry by either students or employee respondents. However, both students and managerial employees recognized that aspects of hospitality education were advantageous; for example the knowledge that lecturer had of the industry was considered important and the practical was also highly regarded. The study found a number of differences in the perception of undergraduates of hospitality management and managerial employees in the hospitality industry as far as a new employee and career development were concerned. Managerial employees argued that personality was an important criterion for a new employee while students felt that knowledge and experience in the industry were the most important. Hospitality work may be stressful for new employees because their expectations of hospitality work may differ from the reality of working life in the industry. This may lead to disappointment, dissatisfaction and ultimately turnover. Employers may witness high levels of turnover, as is common with entry level staff in the industry, and conclude that those individuals who came and went did not have a suitable personality for hospitality. It is understandable that students rated knowledge and experience as the most important criteria for securing a job in the industry, as students are aware that work experience is valued more highly than formal education by employers. One can appreciate the pressure on graduates to gain experience in order to progress in their chosen career, as they rate experience more highly than any other criteria. The result suggests that in order to gain employment and succeed in the industry, prospective employees require work experience, combined with a positive personality. Students believed that a bachelor of hospitality degree would be an important aid for promotion purposes and managerial employees agreed.

The result of this study about students' long term of career expectations is similar to the employees' working history. Students also appeared to have a realistic understanding of the work environment in the hospitality industry. The students' perceptions of the current environment seemed to suggest a more positive situation than that represented in the literature, which is encouraging for the hospitality industry and undergraduates of hospitality management. This study found that even if students and managerial employees share some common opinions, many gaps still exist. Furthermore, many of the results matched the results of previous studies, so the circumstances and environment of the hospitality industry may not have changed much at all. Hence, there remain some differences of perception between hospitality management students and hospitality employers. In order to reduce the existing differences of perception between undergraduates of hospitality management and the hospitality employers, the hospitality education providers and hospitality employers may need to cooperate in addressing these different perceptions.

Recommendations

An internship as preparation for a Management Trainee level position: Organizations could offer long term (between 6 and 12 months) internships to students in order to foster operational and managerial experience and prepare students for low management level employee level positions.

Prospective employees may not apply for front of house roles, as they tend to include working unsociable hours and on public holidays, with more stressful interactions with customers than employees who work back of house. Organizations may be forced to address these issues in order to attract students to front of house roles, which are essential roles in high performing hospitality organizations.

Therefore, the hospitality industry and students would benefit from education that provides a realistic appraisal of the environment of the industry and hospitality work places. Students need the ability to cope with the obstacles associated with starting work in the hospitality industry.

The factors may still cause students to lose their motivation for working in the hospitality industry. Therefore, hospitality organizations should take action with respect to minimum wage levels, the duration of the working week and unsociable working hours.

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