

Employee Retention in Hotel Industry - Making Hospitality Industry First Choice of Career

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Abstract - *The hospitality industry is a multibillion-dollar industry that depends on the availability of leisure time and income of the market giving fast scale of opportunity to students opting for Hotel Industry over others. When compared Indian Hotel Industry with International standards our Industry is on a sad note creating a negative image of both Hotel and Tourism Industry. The study comprised interviews with hospitality students to examine the different influences on students when choosing their particular career path and find out the reason for not opting hospitality as a first choice of career or not joining Industry after graduating and even if joined quitting in an year due to long working hours, poor pay and lack of proper counseling. Retention of new bees and making Hotel Management as their first choice of career would improve the standard and business of our Indian Hotel Industry giving better career to students graduating every year.*

Key Words- *first choice of career, poor pay, long working hours, Retention, better career, working culture of other sectors over hospitality.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Demand of Hospitality Industry has increased in the past few years seeing colleges/Institutes/Universities opening both Bachelor and Master Program in Hotel Management to fulfill the demand of Hotel Management graduates passing out every year to be a part of the professional and skill oriented service Industry. This paper is concerned with the question of how better to align student course choice with labour market demand for skills and professionals, and making this the reason for students selecting Hospitality courses over others.

A small number of students case study has been presented in the Hotel Management as an example to show why Hotel Management course does not seem to appear so popular or preferred course over Event Management, Retail Industry and other service Industries. This paper is considered as a dynamic research of decision making capacity of students after secondary school in terms of their career choice to handling and understanding the basic requirement of Industry in terms of long working hours, training exposure, work load, quality of work when they join or experience the Hotel Industry during Internship or after graduating. Ultimately, a greater understanding of student career choice, as indicated by course selection, may help training partners/institutes in re-adjusting their

strategic planning and implementation of course structure and curriculum.

The problem of this Industry is high supply level of hospitality jobs and low demand interest from emerging hospitality graduates and professionals which is an ongoing process year by year. As noted by mice.net magazine, 'The majority of candidates (62 per cent) believed that while hunting job the major challenge faced was that there were not enough opportunities available' (2009, p.72). But opposite is the case in hospitality Industry. Is this due to lack of proper quality structural planning for the service Industry, having correct number of workers working for right hours and being payed well according to the skill and 24X7 hours working industry, pay levels and employee dissatisfaction with their career prospects. These issues are fundamental when considering an industry such as hospitality and this sector's current difficulty and challenge is in attracting qualified, trained graduates. Whereas over this we have Retail, banks, airlines being part of service Industry offer better pay scale, descent working hours with other benefits attracting skilled graduates and leaving a negative impact on the hotel industry as a right career choice. Keating (2008, p.16) describes this as a 'mismatch between individual demand and industry skill needs'. Hospitality is one of those problematic industries mentioned as when hiring or attracting skilled workers.

II. LITERATURE AND REVIEW

The Hotel Industry has changed all over the world and in India over the past decade. Making Hotel Management as the first choice of career and retention of professionals joining the industry This has been discussed in this paper under following three heads:-

- 1.1 Not well rewarded in terms of payment and perks.
- 1.2 Empowered well in higher skills required when they undergo Industrial Training during the tenure of their course.
- 1.3 Students career choice as per the right skills and sustainability in the Hotel Industry

1.1 Not well rewarded in terms of payment and perks

Hotel is an establishment which provides food, shelter and other amenities and facilities for comfort and convenience

of the visitors with a view to make profit (Chakravarti, B.K). Hotel is a commercial establishment and intends to provide visitors with lodging, food and related services with a view to please them so as to build goodwill and to let them carry happy memories

FHRAI Annual Report (2009- 2010) revealed the average staff turnover in 5 star deluxe hotels in India is 24.14 per cent. The Indian hospitality Industry has a weak internal labour market. There is a stream of 10,000 hospitality students graduating every year (Ministry of HRD, Government of India) from various public and private institutions. However, the management trainee positions offered are restricted to about 100-150. Most graduates join as operation trainees and then wait for another few years to become management trainee. The reason for shifting jobs are slight increments in salary, the work environment lacks openness and sharing of concerns by employees. The Management must therefore not only lay stress on managing employees in the organization (Gronroos, 2000), but also on all other Human Resource functions like attracting, selecting, training, motivating and rewarding them to keep them engaged.

Mohinder Chand, Anastasia. A.Katou, (2007), studied that hotel performance is positively related to HRM systems of Recruitment and Selection, Manpower planning, Job design, Training and development, Quality Circle and Pay systems.

Wynter-Palmer, (2011), conducted a study on 907 employees of 50 hotels in Jamaica to assess the incentives and motivation factors for employees to provide High - touch service to customers. 78% employees said they would leave the hotel industry for better pay! They were not satisfied with the pay received by them.

In his book, "Professional Management of Housekeeping Operations," Thomas J. A. Jones notes that the nature of the job and low pay attracts a work force with little or no formal education, and cannot speak English.

1.2 Empowered well more in higher skills required when they undergo Industrial Training during the tenure of their course.

Proper training modules should be designed to ensure that each employee is productively involved in the job.

The management must provide a highly inspiring and propitious work environment, develop innovative training and quality circle programs, increase employee involvement in the job, which can act as motivational tools to aid employee growth, leading to increased job commitment and interest.

Dr. Hui-O-Yang, (2010), addresses the most important issues in HRM in the hotel industry- shortage of suitable employees, lack of training and development opportunities,

difficulties with job placements of interns and high levels of employee turnover. Students normally undergo industrial training in the second year or during the tenure of the course. This is when they should be empowered with more, higher skills, rather than making them do basic work which they have already mastered in college. Hotels can do a semi campus recruitment drive in the second year of academics, make a choice of candidates, and further train them towards the end of third year for specific skills empowering them with proper skills and giving them real picture and understanding of the industry.

Alessandra Lazazzara, Maria Cristina Bombelli, (2011), explored the impact of training on an elderly workforce in the Italian Hospitality industry. They found that organizational culture negatively affects the work-related behavior of older employees. Training & development practices need to be used for improving their work performance and language used by the seniors in the presence of trainees or with trainees even under pressure.

1.3 Students career choice as per the right skills and sustainability in the Hotel Industry

The studies and research found in this area is very excessive. The student and the career advisor plays a very important role in terms of making right choice of career after passing secondary school or joining industry after graduating from respective hospitality programs.

Harvey-Beavis and Elsworth (1998) focused on the importance of the 'interests' of the student and how this may conflict with the stated policy strategy imposed to control or direct specific enrolments in student courses. The researchers said this related back to the students' 'intrinsic interest' in wanting to do a particular course rather than what types of jobs or salaries the graduate may end up with.

Herr, Cramer and Niles (2004) examine the concept of 'student career choice' as being fixed between a range of competing pressures on the person seeking a career. These pressures are involved at different strategy levels and at different periods for the student while choosing the right career or program to enroll.

Although some of the research examined for this paper has been the hospitality industry and similar problems faced in Indian hospitality Industry, large numbers of job vacancies; declining student enrolment numbers; a growing dissatisfaction with the hospitality industry as a whole; low pay; unsuitable work conditions; a stressful work environment; long, unsociable work hours; and a lack of a well defined career path for many hospitality employers (Chuang et al. 2007; Jogaratnam & Buchanan 2004; Kuslivan 2003; Lin 2005; Wilkinson 2005).

Research done by Moogan and Baron in the United Kingdom (2003) investigated ‘students’ considerations for choosing a course while still at school’ and examined some of the materials, information and sources of advice that were available. They argued for greater intervention and guidance to assist the student in clarifying exactly what they were ready to choose as the right career and course for their higher education through counseling and well informed professionals.

III. METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

A small number of semi-structured interviews were conducted. In total 50 students, comprising 38 males and twelve females, were interviewed and asked to fill a questionnaire which comprised of 10 questions. Ages ranged from 19 to 25 years. All students were enrolled in the Diploma and Bachelor program of Hotel Management programs in different respective Institutions starting from Amity School of Hospitality.

The questions that were used in the interviews with the students covered areas relating to: reasons for choosing a Hotel Management course; how and where students source information regarding a course; whom did the students refered for decision making and what were the students comment on internship experience, whether they prefer joining the industry or other service industry after graduating. Fig 1 shows the percentage of students choosing Hotel industry as first choice of career over Retail and other service industry along with the factors prioritized while making career choice.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

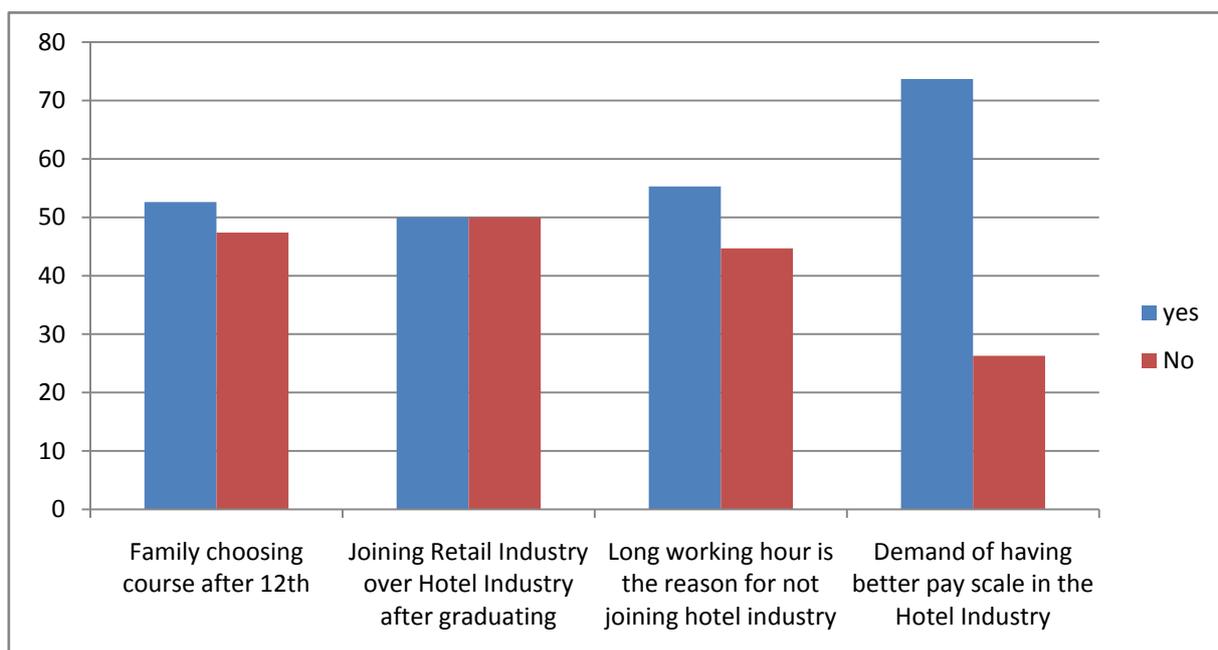
On the basis of the questionnaire filled by students pursuing Hotel Management program it was observed

students are not decided, well counseled while deciding on what course and location the student finally chose. Participants said that they based their decision on information sourced from a number of different locations, places such as career websites, school career counselors, parents, friends, work colleagues and were shown the fancy facts not showing the right picture of the Industry in term of long working hours, less pay scale and environment initially given for trainees to work in under huge pressure to succeed.

They felt that the approach used was ‘generalist’ rather than ‘specific’ for them and this could have been why they sought other sources of information to make the right decision.

The total hours for a normal week ranged from ten to 30 hours in the hotels. Only fourteen of the participants did not live at home with their parents. The participants who were independent of their parents worked the larger number of hours per week. Long hours, low pay and poor work conditions were typical words used to describe their current internship commitments. All of the participants, who have done their internship in hospitality as per the course curriculum to graduate, said that they would not want to seek a career in hospitality once they finished their course. Students mention their employees and seniors were not interested in guiding them to learn more rather than were using them as free labor to get their work done at maximum.

For the students there were real concerns over the long and stressful hours, the poor pay and the unsuitable work conditions. At this stage in their career path, the students had formulated a quite negative opinion of the hospitality industry.



V. CONCLUSION

Juxtaposed with the above issues will be an examination of data collected from a number of student case examples. These examples provide information about student enrolment choices for particular courses and respondents' views of the advantages and disadvantages of choosing a career in hospitality. The paper's main finding is that employers could play a greater role in informing young people about their industries and the career opportunities in them. Providing proper counseling and awareness about the program before students take admission in the college.

Hotels has to introduce better strategies to have more friendlier and learning environment in the Industry so that students after having practical exposure during training do not create a negative image of the Industry but look forward to join and take it pride to be a part of Hospitality Industry. As this will improve a quality of employee and make Indian Hotel Industry picture better both in our market and when compared to International standards.

Working Hours and better pay scale offered to fresher's has to be monitored by a body respectively in all the hotels. This will be a great motivating factor for new bees in the industry and will grow our Hospitality Industry strong.

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