

An investigation of the perception of hospitality graduates towards the industry: a gender perspective

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Abstract

The boom in hospitality and tourism industry in India has carved it into most profitable industries in the country that also brings a substantial amount of foreign exchange. As a result many renowned hotel chains are planning to open a large number of hotels throughout the country. To run their hotel business, educated and skilled manpower is required. This has triggered the hospitality education in the country too. There is spur in the hotel management institutes (HMIs) with Industry Integrated HMIs, Central Government IHMs, State Government IHMs, Private IHMs and Government Universities offering the Hotel Management Programs. Despite all this the number of females taking admission to hospitality courses is less. Therefore a study is conducted to understand the difference between the perception of males and females studying hospitality courses towards the hospitality industry. A structured questionnaire was designed in which 21 variables were included on the basis of review of literature. Further T-test was applied to know the significant difference between the perceptions of males and female. 7 variables were found were no significant difference was found between the perception of male and female students. 14 variables were found where a significant difference was found between the perception of male and female students. The results show that overall no significant difference is found between the perception of males and females and null hypothesis is accepted.

Keywords: perception, Hospitality, male, female

INTRODUCTION

The swift growth in hospitality industry has resulted into the generation of employment worldwide. UNWTO has also confirmed that Hospitality Catering and Tourism (HCT) is among the world's top creators of jobs. It is also estimated in UNWTO report that 296 million jobs are

going to be open by 2019. The Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India has also opined that there is huge manpower requirement in hospitality and tourism sector in India. But a huge gap is perceived between the demand and supply of manpower for Hospitality & Tourism industry. This huge gap is due to the negative perception conceived by the people about the

industry like long working hours, low salary package, low profile jobs etc. This gap can be absolved by improving their perception positively. The hospitality and tourism industry is only industry that requires the men and women workforce in equal ratio. Certain departments in the hotels can not be imagined to run without females like housekeeping, front office etc and vice versa. But the reality states contradictory facts.

The ratio of men and women workforce is not equal. A study conducted in China by Yafang and Gongyong (2008) indicated that the females are more inclined towards opting hospitality as career than of males owing to their positive perception towards the industry. Paradoxically, in India it is observed that less number of females opt hospitality courses as their career. The visits to certain hospitality institutes have confirmed the low ratio of female students admitted in the hospitality programmes than male students. This imbalance has adversely affected the industry too. So it has become imperative to find out the reasons behind this imbalance. It has instigated to undertake the present study that investigates the perception of the male and female towards the industry in India as well as to see the significant differences between the perceptions of male and female. This present study is significant from the academic and industry point of view. It helps in bringing awareness amongst youth male as well as female towards plethora of job opportunities offered by the industry and to encourage them to opt for hospitality as career so as to fulfill the man force requirement of the industry. It analyses the reasons that cause this imbalance between two genders and the same can be rectified. The study is equally important for the administrators and policy makers as the various reasons responsible for forming negative perception can be know and thus amended.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The topic chosen for the study required extensive review of previous work done in

the area of difference in perceptions due to gender differences. However not much detailed work were found, there were hardly any study in Indian context that can show the comparative perception of male and female students . Most of the researchers found in their study that there is no significant difference in the perception of Male and female respondents Aksu and Ko (2005), Akis and Öztin (2007), Josiam et al. (2010), Brown (2011), Selcuk et al (2013).

Airey and Frontistis, (1997), Cothran and Combrink, (1999) also showed in their respective studies that different motivational factors are there to study Hospitality and Tourism depends on the nationality and ethnicity of students. Various researches revealed the gender differences on factors that facilitate and constrain women's career advancement. Brownell (1994) in his survey found that out of ten factors that relate to the importance of career-related activities, only mentoring was found to be significantly different by gender, where it was more important to males than females respondents. Chen, (2000) in their study, formed three different motivational factors Achievement seekers, Income movers and Liberal workers, the gender difference was evident. Male respondents were more inclined to Income movers cluster, while female were more inclined on Achievement seeker. Schmidt (2002) also found in their study that the decision to study Hospitality and tourism can be significantly affected by demographic factors. Hjalager's (2003), in his study found that previous experience in the industry is a factor that motivates man more than female students, whereas opportunities to work with people were more important motivational factor for female than male students. Hjalager also surveyed that male students showed a higher level of motivation for opportunities for international careers, whereas the female students were highly motivated about the factors like good salary than the male group. Aitchison (2003) in her study on gender differences in hospitality and tourism field concluded that as the motivation factors vary due to demographics like gender, social and

cultural aspects hence these factors must be taken into account while designing the curriculum for hospitality and tourism courses. Malgwi, et al. (2005) found that choice of college major was influenced by the major's potential for career advancement, job opportunities and the level of compensation in the field for male students while female students were more influenced by aptitude in the subject.

Lee (2006) indicated that female students reported their motivation to continue and persist to graduation increased more after industry experience than their male student colleagues; this also showed that female students have ability to adapt to change more than male students. While Lee et al (2008) found in their study that there is no significance difference between male and female attitudes, but at the same time it was pointed out that female students showed slightly stronger study motivation than male students.

Mohammad and Alsaleh (2013) in their study of motivational factors illustrated that there were two significant factors for female motivation, which were "Job opportunities", and " Modern major", it means that female students are more motivated to study Hospitality and tourism courses than male students, While the one significant factor toward a male student was "Ease in studying" showed that male students were strongly agreed on ease of studying this major compare with female students.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The current research work was conducted to study the effect of gender on the perception of students towards the hospitality industry.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

On the basis of the above objective the following hypothesis was framed.

H1: Overall there is no significant difference between the perception of male students and perception of female students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample: Total 372 students participated in the survey out of which 324 were male and 48 were female students. The students studying in University Teaching Department, Government owned Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) and private Hotel Management Institutes (HMI) filled the questionnaire. State Institute of Hotel Management Rohtak, Institute of Hotel Management Pusa New Delhi, Ganpati Institute of Hotel Management Yamunanagar, Institute of Hotel and Tourism Management Maharshi Dayanand University Rohtak and Department of Tourism and Hotel Management Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra were the main participating institutes.

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire which consists of two parts was designed in which Part A was developed to collect the demographic profiles of the respondents though the Part B was designed to record the perception of students towards the Hospitality Industry. The perception of students was recorded on a likert five point scale in which 5 was scored as Strongly Agree, 4 as Agree, 3 as Neutral/Not Sure, 2 as Disagree and 1 as Strongly Disagree.

Analysis & Interpretation of Data

As the objective of the study was to find out the significant difference between the perception of male and female students therefore firstly the mean and Standard Deviation was calculated then t-test was applied to find out the significant difference between the perception of male and female students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As stated in the research methodology t-test was applied to check the significant difference between the perception of male students and female students the results reveals that out of total 21 variables, 7 variables were found where **NO**

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE was found between the perception of male students and female students. Table-1 elaborates the same in detail. From the table it is clearly visible that “Job Security” Job Satisfaction due to meeting daily new challenges” “chances to meet celebrities, sportsman, politicians” “Jobs in hospitality are glamorous and charming” “work load in try provides o is reasonable” “hospitality industry provides opportunities to deal with foreigners” and “one can work as an entrepreneur”

Table-1
Variables Where No Significant Difference is Found between the Perception of Male & Female Students
N (Male-324, Female-48) =372

Variables		Mean Score	F-Value	Sig.
Job Security	Male	3.20	0.197	NSD
	Female	3.21		
Job Satisfaction due to meeting daily new challenges	Male	3.79	3.994	NSD
	Female	3.77		
Chances to meet celebrities, sportsmen, politicians	Male	4.19	3.074	NSD
	Female	4.17		
Jobs in Hospitality are glamorous and charming	Male	3.56	0.809	NSD
	Female	3.46		
Work load in Hospitality Industry is reasonable	Male	3.14	6.181	NSD
	Female	3.19		
Hospitality Industry provides opportunities to deal with foreigners	Male	4.35	0.355	NSD
	Female	4.42		
One can work as an entrepreneur	Male	3.92	0.209	NSD
	Female	4.00		

NSD-No Significant

Difference

are the variables on which both male and female students almost thinks the same.

T-test further reveals that a Significant Difference is found between the perception of male students and female students on remaining 14 variables which are described by Table-2. These variables are named as “good salary perspective” “Fast

Table-2
Variables With Significant Difference between the Perception of Male & Female Students
N (Male-324, Female-48) =372

Variables		Mean Score	F-Value	Sig.
Good salary perspective	Male	3.74	1.975	SD
	Female	3.44		
Fast Career Growth	Male	3.70	0.060	SD
	Female	3.52		
Opportunity to travel to different places	Male	4.23	3.604	SD
	Female	4.13		
Opportunity to work abroad	Male	4.24	5.037	SD
	Female	4.19		
You will get suitable life partner	Male	3.45	5.525	SD
	Female	3.19		
Reward for good performance	Male	4.02	4.919	SD
	Female	3.77		
Good working environment	Male	3.62	5.408	SD
	Female	3.88		
Platform to interact with new people	Male	4.47	4.459	SD
	Female	4.63		
Respectable Jobs	Male	3.40	2.327	SD
	Female	3.73		
Parents will feel proud	Male	3.78	3.952	SD
	Female	4.04		
Interesting and Challenging Jobs	Male	4.13	0.786	SD
	Female	4.29		
One will get sense of achievement from the work	Male	3.96	3.009	SD
	Female	4.19		

Opportunity for self development are available	Male	4.17	0.098	SD
	Female	4.31		
Managerial Positions can be achieved	Male	2.98	1.682	SD
	Female	3.25		

SD- Significant Difference

Career Growth” “Opportunity to travel to different places” “Opportunity to work abroad” “You will get suitable life partner” “Reward for good performance” “Good working environment” “Platform to interact with new people” “Respectable jobs” “Parents will feel proud” “interesting and challenging jobs” “One will get sense of achievement from the work” “Opportunity for self development are available” “Managerial Positions can be achieved”.

Further, the study also finds out the positive and the negative perception of male and female towards the hospitality industry. Interestingly there seems to be significant difference between the positive and negative perception of different genders. Out of 14 variables where a significant difference is found between the perception of male and female students, 6 variables are found to have positive perception for male students (table-3) and remaining 8 variables are found to have positive perception amongst the female students (table-4).

Since the mean score of male candidates is more than that of female in the above mentioned variables given in Table 3 and therefore these variables indicate positive perception of male candidates towards the industry. The male candidates are more aware about the better salary offerings and swift growth opportunities in the hospitality industry that help them decide to opt for career in the industry.

Table-3
Variables with Positive Perception amongst Male Students

Variables		Mean Score	F-Value	Sig.
Good salary	Male	3.74	1.975	SD

perspective	Female	3.44		
Fast Career Growth	Male	3.70	0.060	SD
	Female	3.52		
Opportunity to travel to different places	Male	4.23	3.604	SD
	Female	4.13		
Opportunity to work abroad	Male	4.24	5.037	SD
	Female	4.19		
You will get suitable life partner	Male	3.45	5.525	SD
	Female	3.19		
Reward for good performance	Male	4.02	4.919	SD
	Female	3.77		

SD- Significant Difference

The industry seems to be more lucrative to the male than female since they are more interested to avail the opportunities of travelling and working abroad. Suitable life partner and reward for good performance also seem to have positive perception for male.

Further, the challenging nature of the job, sense of self achievement and self development are amongst the important variables that define the decision making of female candidate while opting for career in hospitality. Last but not the least variables like parents will feel proud and managerial positions can be achieved are also important from female point of view.

Table-4
Variables with Positive Perception amongst Female Students

Variables		Mean Score	F-Value	Sig.
Good working environment	Male	3.62	5.408	SD
	Female	3.88		
Platform to interact with new people	Male	4.47	4.459	SD
	Female	4.63		
Respectable Jobs	Male	3.40	2.327	SD
	Female	3.73		
Parents will feel proud	Male	3.78	3.952	SD
	Female	4.04		
Interesting and	Male	4.13	0.786	SD

Challenging Jobs	Female	4.29		
One will get sense of achievement from the work	Male	3.96	3.009	SD
	Female	4.19		
Opportunity for self development are available	Male	4.17	0.098	SD
	Female	4.31		
Managerial Positions can be achieved	Male	2.98	1.682	SD
	Female	3.25		

SD- Significant Difference

POSITION OF HYPOTHESIS

T-Test was applied to check the position of hypothesis and data furnished in table-5 clears the position of hypothesis.

Table-5
Overall Perception

Variables		Mean Score	F- Value	Sig.
Overall Perception	Male	3.81	0.043	NSD
	Female	3.84		

NSD- No Significant Difference

Table 4 clearly indicates that Overall **NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE** is found between the perception of Male and Female Students. Hence it can be concluded that overall both male and female thinks similar as far as Hospitality Industry is concerned. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted.

CONCLUSION

There is efflorescence in hospitality industry globally which is going to ameliorate further in coming years and hence it requires equally the man force too. That makes this study crucial so as to find out what inhibits the people from opting for hospitality career. The significant results of the study hence reveal those areas which are needed to improve so as to attract masses towards this fascinating career. The study concluded that there are 8 variables because of which males form a negative perception towards industry. Male

students do not find a congenial work environment been provided in the industry as well they do not find the job as respectable as others. Even the nature of the hospitality job lack challenges for male students. Moreover they perceive negative towards opportunities offered by the industry for self development. The industry needs to concentrate on these above mentioned variables so as to improve the perception of males that lead to better skilled man force to serve the industry and fulfil the human resource requirement.

There is a general observation that hospitality career is chosen by comparatively less number of females than males. The present study has also highlighted certain variables which are perceived negatively by the females. The female students do not have positive vibes towards the salary perspective and growth opportunities provided by the industry. Even the opportunities to travel and work at foreign land are not found to be interesting amongst females. Also the variables like you will get suitable life partner and reward for good performance conceive negative perception amongst the females. The Industry and academia should focus on these variables so that this negative perception could be converted to the positive perception which will lead to attract more and more females towards this promising career.

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