STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF CAREER IN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Sandeep Lohani[1] Dr. Hemant Sharma[2]

[1]Research Scholar, FOH, GNA University, Phagwara
[2]Pro-Vice Chancellor, GNA University, Phagwara

ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to find out the factors which the students consider as important while choosing a career in hospitality industry. The data has been analyzed to evaluate the relationship between students' perception and their intention to initiate their career in hospitality industry. To achieve the research objectives primary data was collected from a sample of 140 hospitality students of selected hospitality institutions of Punjab region of India. Students believe work well with colleagues, finding job respectable, hygienic work environment, a sense of surety to find job and guaranteed career growth, and perceive job security as a highest rated factors. The results of the relationship between the students perception of careers in the industry and their intention to follow a career path in the industry indicated a positive association between the two variables   ($r=.72$, $p=.000$) and also indicated favorable perceptions correlated with the intention.

Key words: Career, hospitality institution, hospitality industry, intention,

Introduction

The hospitality and tourism industry is one of the largest and most dynamic industries in the world and flourishing rapidly worldwide since the beginning of the 21st century. According to WTTC (2019), this sector is contributing well in revenue generation and employment worldwide and articulated in their report that approximately 7% of the overall number of jobs are generated by the hospitality industry. The globalization and growth demanded the opening of new national and international hotels properties across the globe and henceforth, such increasing demands definitely requires trained hospitality professionals to meet out the needs of the industry. Such growth of the hospitality industry may also be witnessed in India too. The amount sanctioned for the growth and development of the hospitality industry depicts the propensity of Indian government towards this sector. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneur, annual report, 2017-18,103.4 million skilled manpower will be needed by the year 2022 in India. Apart from such a promising a raising industry, having a huge potential of job opportunities and career growth, it has been witnessed that the number of graduates either never joined the industry or left and never rejoined (Bloome, Van Rheed and Tromp, 2009; Hedley, 2013).

        Also, the hospitality industry worldwide is confronting with the challenge of attracting and retaining employees afterward and that created the shortage of skilled personnel to deal the ever growing demands of tourism and hospitality businesses (Beesley & Davidson 2013); Marchante, Ortega & Pagán (2006). This has put pressure on the hospitality institutions to provide to prepare the workforce by providing them proper training and inculcate necessary skills and competencies to ensure their growth and success in the industry. Hence, this research paper is a generous effort to understand students' perceptions regarding the factors influence their career choice and up to the extent to which they perceive hospitality industry as a career offering these factors.

Literature Review

Career may be defined as an occupation undertaken for a period of a person's life having oppurtunities for growth. Purecell and Quinin,(1996) stated that students have been criticized for their impractical approach and expectations of responsibilities & skills they are expected to possess in order to initiate their career in hospitality. Bathla, Rana & Singh (2019) in their study evaluated the important skills required by the hospitality graduates from educators' point of view. They suggested mandatory monitoring and mentoring of students for their better career prospects. Manhas(2011) highlighted the overall satisfaction and expectation level of students towards hospitality and tourism courses above the neutral level. The study suggested the need to update the curriculum to enhance the overall personality of students. Studies have found that there are many factors students consider while choosing a career in the industry. Tan et al (2016) in their study revealed pay and social status as crucial factors when considering careers in the industry. Another study by Domingo, Goh, Richardsson and Hui, (2016) found pay, promotional opportunities, career prospects, security of job and work environment as factors that students consider must when selecting a career. Wijesundara (2015) in his study revealed that 66% of the respondents have positive perceptions for hospitality and tourism industry because of the 4 main factors; position received, package, relevant knowledge & skills and availability of career development opportunities while 34% of the respondents were having negative perceptions because of working hours, job environment and personal attitudes. Students in India possess a negative image of hospitality industry especially towards hotels (Nair et al, 2017). These negative attitudes and perceptions could have negative consequences for students, the industry, the policy planners and off course, hospitality educators. Sarkodie(2015) in his research highlighted communication skills, operational skills, multilingual skills and computer proficiency as the most noticeable skills the students must possess to initiate their career in hospitality industry.

Research Objectives

The research aimed to highlight certain issues related to the students perception of career in hospitality industry. The purpose of this study is:

- To find out the important factors students consider when choosing a career.
- To evaluate the relationship between students' perception and their intention to initiate their career in hospitality industry.

Research Methodology

The universe of the research study entitled "Students' Perception of Career in Hospitality Industry is aggregate of hospitality students of selected hospitality institutions. The hospitality institutions of the three district of Doaba Region of Punjab (India) i.e. Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar and Kapurthala were taken in this study. Primary data is collected from a sample of 140 hospitality students of selected hospitality institutions. The data were collected by the researcher with the help of questionnaire developed by Amissah; Opoku; Mensah & Gamor, (2019) with the modification in the statement as suggested by academic experts in the Indian context. The respondents were assured that the information given by them would be kept confidential and would be used for academic purpose only. The Quota and Judgmental Sampling method was used in the research study. The primary data was collected from the hospitality students of selected institutions from Doaba region of the Punjab state and the secondary data was collected from various Governments' Reports, journals, magazines, newspapers, websites, etc. The received data were analyzed with the help of 'Jamovi Software' which is an free and open source software. One sample t-test was

used to know the perception the student and Correlation to measure the relationship between the perception and the intentions of the students. Since, the Study covered only the Doaba region of Punjab, generalization of the results may not be proliferate.

Findings & Discussion

Table 1 Socio Demography Profile of Respondents

Profile of Respondents	Items	Frequency N=140	Valid Percentage
Gender	Male	108	77.14
	Female	32	22.85
Age (In Years)	17- 19	26	18.57
	20-22	104	77.14
	23-25	10	7.14
Marital Status	Married	08	5.71
	Single	132	94.28
Hospitality Institution	St. Soldier	50	35.71
	CT	22	15.71
	GNA	40	28.57
	DAV	28	20
Industry Work Experience (Training)	Yes	95	67.85
	No	45	32.14
Career Intention In Industry	Yes	102	72.85
	No	38	27.14

Respondents' Demographic Details

Table 1 indicates the profile of the respondents. Results indicated that majority of the students (77.14 %) were male, most of them (77.14%) were in the age group of between 20-22 years. Most of them were single (94.28%), most of the respondents (35.71%) were from St. Soldier institute of Hotel Management, followed by GNA University (28.57%). Most of the respondents (67.85) had industrial training experience but no work experience in the hospitality industry and majority of the hospitality students (72.85 %) were having intention to make their career in industry after completion of course.

Table 2 Career Factor

Sr. No	Factor	Important Career Factor (I)	Perception of the Industry (P)	Mean Difference (I-P)	t-value
1.	Considering job enjoyable	4.32(.800)	4.16(.902)	0.1587 (.787)	1.601
2	Work well with colleagues	4.22(.812)	4.25 (.933)	-0.0317 (1.015)	-0.248
3	Comfortable and safe working environment	4.29 (.851)	4.14 (.877)	0.1429(.840)	1.350
4	Perceive job security	4.33(.861)	4.21 (.864)	0.1270(.959)	1.051
5	A lot of intellectual challenges required in job	4.30(.816)	4.14(.877)	0.1587 (.745)	1.691**
6	Better promotional opportunities	4.41(.909)	4.24 (.856)	0.1746 (1.115)	1.243

7	Giving a feeling of sense of responsibility	4.32(.930)	4.17 (.853)	0.1429 (.998)	1.137
8	Good career growth and salary	4.32(.858)	4.11 (.969)	0.2063(1.034)	1.584
9	A platform where I may better contribute to society	4.21(.845)	4.04 (.941)	0.1587(.766)	1.644
10	A place where I may use my academic knowledge	4.27 (.902)	4.11(.986)	0.1587(.807)	1.561
11	Where we can apply the transferable skills which I have already learnt from the institution.	4.32(.800)	4.08 (.848)	0.2381(.689)	2.743*
12	Find job respectable	4.41(.796)	4.25 (.967)	0.1587 (.846)	1.489
13	Moderate workload	4.17(.853)	4.06 (.878)	0.1111(.953)	1.069**
14	In a job work with high quality equipments	4.27(.865)	4.11 (.918)	0.1587 (.948)	1.456
15	Opportunity to visit abroad often	4.25(.897)	4.24 (.777)	0.0159(.924)	0.136
16	More job opportunity in this sector	4.35 (.845)	4.11 (.900)	0.2381(.797)	2.370***
17	Job easily fulfill the need and livelihood	4.05(.923)	3.95 (.851)	0.0952(.689)	1.097
18	Expecting very high salary since the beginning	4.32(.930)	4.13 (1.070)	0.1905(.895)	1.688*
19	A job where I may fulfill the needs of others	4.14 (.877)	4.05 (.923)	0.0952(.893)	0.847
20	Find industry to be supportive in the further training and career growth	4.44 (.736)	4.24 (.797)	0.2063(.826)	1.982**
21	A job will fulfill my societal needs	4.38 (.728)	4.17 (.853)	0.2063(.626)	2.615***
22	There will be no conflict between job and my personal values	4.05 (1.084)	4.03(.950)	0.0159(1.157)	0.109
23	Giving opportunity to excel my career in other sector	3.94 (1.014)	3.87 (1.008)	0.0635(.801)	0.629
24	Excellent platform for networking	4.25 (.842)	4.06 (.948)	0.1905(.931)	1.624
25	Find industry glamour's and keen to work there	4.19 (.859)	4.10 (.946)	0.0952(.712)	1.062
26	Hygienic work environment	4.43 (.689)	4.25 (.803)	0.1746 (.773)	1.792*
27	Plenty of Jobs available	4.19 (.877)	4.08 (.903)	0.1111(.764)	1.154
28	A sense of surety to find job and guaranteed career growth	4.30 (.873)	4.25 (.817)	0.0635(.914)	0.552
29	The job will settle me in my job	4.19 (.877)	4.11(.918)	0.0794(.938)	0.671

30	Job is most suited with my natural behave.	4.24 (.946)	4.03(.782)	0.2063(.953)	1.718**
31	It will be a dream come true to work in the industry	4.41 (.909)	4.13(.959)	0.2857(.792)	2.865*
32	Overall	4.43 (.734)	4.30 (.816)	0.1270(.729)	1.382**

*(Significant) t-test two tailed probability *≤ 0.05; **< .005; ***<0.000; standard deviations are in parenthesis; a positive gap shows students perceive that the industry would not offer them those important career factors (unfavorable), while a negative gap shows that students perceived that the industry can offer them those factors (favorable).*

Table 2 depicted the mean score of each of the career factors based on importance, perception and the differences. Five highest important career factors which students considered were Find industry to be supportive in the further training and career growth (M= 4.44, SD =.736), Hygienic work environment (M =4.43, SD= .689), Finding job respectable (M=4.41, SD=.796), Better promotional opportunities (M=4.41, SD=.909) and it will be a dream come true to work in the industry (M=4.41,SD=.909). Results indicated that students were focused towards their future in industry for further training/education, work environment, respect towards job, good promotion prospects and dream comes true to work in the industry. This supports the findings of Richardson (2009). Richardson(2010) and Brown and Arendt (2011).

Students considered some of the important factors by lowering the rate. They were as follows: Giving opportunity to excel my career in other sector (M=3.94, SD=1.014). Job easily fulfill the need and livelihood (M=4.05, SD=.923), There will be no conflict between job and my personal values (M=4.05, SD=1.084), A job where I may fulfill the needs of others (M=4.14, SD=.877), Moderate workload (M=4.17, SD=.853). While comparing the results of this study with other related studies, it was interestingly found that some of the least rated factors in this study were rated high in similar study and vice versa, but the reasons for this differences due to working culture, conditions of service, growth and development of the industry etc.

Perception of Careers in Hospitality Industry

With the help of instrument, students were asked to indicate the extent they perceive about the factors they consider as important in their career choice. Table 2 shows the highest rated factors that the students believe were work well with colleagues (M=4.25, SD= .933), Finding job respectable (M=4.25, SD=.967), Hygienic work environment (M=4.25, SD=.803), A sense of surety to find job and   guaranteed career growth (M=4.22), Perceive job security (M=4.25, SD=.817).

The lowest rated factors were Giving opportunity to excel my career in other sector (M=3.87, SD=1.008), Job easily fulfill the need and livelihood (M=3.95, SD=.851), There will be no conflict between job and my personal values (M=4.03, SD= .950), Job is most suited with my natural behave (M=4.03, SD=.782), A platform where I may better contribute to society (M=4.04, SD= .941), A job where I may fulfill the needs of others (M=4.05, SD=.923).

Differences in Important Career Factors and the Perceptions of the Industry

To examine the difference between the factors students considered as important while choosing as a career and the perception about the factors which the industry will offer them, paired –sample t- test was used. Results of this difference were shown in table 2. Out of 31 career factors 30 had positive gaps and only one had negative gaps. It indicated that students perceived the hospitality industry would offer the important factors which had positive gaps but only one negative gaps factor, Work well with colleagues (M= -0.0317, SD= 1.015). To

know the statistical significant differences between important career factors and students' perception of the industry, paired sample t- test was used. Ten factors have been identified as being statistical different. It is well clear from the results that students believe that hospitality industry will not offer them the factors which they think important, although their intention is well clear that they will intends to join the industry for good promotion prospect or getting respect in society or their dreams comes true.

Differences in career perceptions across students' socio demographic background

It was revealed from the data that there is significant difference (t= 0.860 , p= 0.393) between male (M=4.33 , SD=0.825) and female (M=4.00 , SD=0.707) students career perceptions.

Students' perception and their intention to join the industry as career

Pearson product moment correlation coefficient method was used to analyze the relationship between the student's perception of careers in the industry and their intention to follow a career path in the industry. A strong, positive association between the two variables (r=.72,p=.000) was found. It shows favorable perceptions correlated with the intention to join the hospitality industry as career.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that students' perceive that hospitality industry provides them a respected job, good work environment and other important factors with the help of all those they may get guarantee career progression. It was also revealed from the study that Indian hospitality industry does not offer the factors which are perceived by the students as most important in their views. These are the reasons which create disappointment, discouragements among the career aspirants and negatively affect the job satisfaction. Due to non fulfillment of expectations of skilled and qualified workforce, turnover intentions may be increased. The prime responsibility of the industry to understand the requirements of their potential employees and try as much as possible to meets their expectations, so that they may positively associated with the industry and improve their various skills and experience for betterment of industry.

It is also very important for industry to create a positive attitude among the students towards industry so that the intention to enter and stay for long term will be decided by the students. It is well proven that intention will be more clear with the attitude formation. Theory of planned behavior (TPB) by Ajzen (1991) helps to predict the social behavior of human beings with the help of tracing the links from belief, through formation of attitudes and intentions than conversion into actual behavior. Academician and industry practitioners have to put joint to develop the positive and favorable attitude among the hospitality students towards the industry. They must formulate strategies for attitude-action link through theories like congruity theory, cognitive dissonance theory, social judgment theory, functional theories and behavioral theories etc. This is need of the hour to develop clear and positive image among the students for betterment for industrial growth.

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