

Impact of Covid-19 on Employment Opportunities for Fresh Graduates in Hospitality & Tourism Industry

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Abstract

The research paper measures the impacts of COVID-19 on hospitality graduates who were pursuing industrial training in the last semester. This industrial training was the main part of the program. This industrial training gives students hands-on experience along with job opportunity to work in the industry. This pandemic affected the hospitality industry worst as this was the first industry to close down and last to open. Students were asked a structured questionnaire in the multiple-choice format using Google forms as a tool. Findings suggest that student said the pandemic affected the training experience but still they want to continue to choose the hotel industry as a career option and it's their perception that industry will provide them job opportunities.

Key words: covid-19, training, hotel management final year students, employment opportunities

Introduction

Hospitality management and tourism industry is changing its shape phenomenally in India Indian hospitality sector or service sector making a huge impact on Indian economy by The Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during July to November 2019 were 4.40 million (Provisional) as compared to 4.22 million during the same period in 2018, showing a growth of 4.4%. The Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) through tourism for July to November 2019 ₹ 89,683 Crores (Provisional) as compared to ₹ 79,903 Crores in the corresponding period in 2018, registering a growth of 12.2 % India has contributed a 6% share, in Global Travel and Tourism GDP. India ranked 8th position in the world's largest and fastest-growing economics in 2018. Corona virus has shaken the world in many ways. This pandemic will have long term impacts on most of the industries. Travel and tourism industry got affected more than any other industry as social distancing was the most effective precaution to stop the spread of this pandemic. As vaccines are yet to come, this pandemic and lockdown all over the world brought many challenges. **Vikas Kapai, General Manager, Sofitel (2020) Mumbai BKC**, states, "In this current outbreak situation after-effects will hurt Indian hotel industry more, due to lockdown occupancy rate has taken its all-time low resulting many hotels has to shut its operation or run with very limited facilities. **Subhadeep Datta General Manager of Goldfinch Hotel Mumbai, (2020)** said the De-growth has been more than 80% and they don't see that this sector rising anywhere before October 20. (Forum Gandhi, 2020) The cascading effect of the corona virus (COVID 19) pandemic will cost the Indian hospitality industry losses to the tune of ₹ 620 crores. The hotel chain and standalone hotel segment are staring at losses over ₹ 130-155 crore, whereas the alternate accommodation segment is likely to make losses of over ₹ 420-470 crore. Layoffs of 'casual staff' or 'contracted staff' are likely, research suggested. Hotelivate, (a hospitality consultancy firm) has in a report said that the Indian hospitality industry is likely to be hit hard. The report suggested that domestic hotel companies that follow the fiscal year regime, this amounts to a weak Q4 FY20 and a weaker Q1 FY21.

History

Training programs were started in the hotel management and catering nutrition by the government of India in the year 1962 under the Department of Food Ministry of Agriculture. To start with they had only 4 institutes of hotel management and catering technology and applied Nutrition were established at New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai along with this they started 12 Food Craft Institutes at a different location in India, as demand started rising to expand the knowledge and to create the skilled labour Ministry of Tourism in October 1982 formed the National Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NHMCT) the main aim of this council is

1. To advice the Ministry of Tourism on coordinated development of hotel management and catering technology education.

2. To implement international standards in the area of Human Resource Development for the hotel sector.
3. To standardize the courses and infrastructure requirements for the institute imparting education and training in hospitality management
4. To organize faculty development program for staff who is part of this institute.

Due to modernization and technological advancement in the country, this course gain lot of popularity amongst the students this percentage has increased every year as a student has seen a lot of opportunity in this industry all over the country and therefore to cope up with increasing demand Government gave permission to open more institute so at present there is 41 Hotel Management institute comprising of 21 Central IHM'S , 8 state IHM'S 12 Private IHM'S and food craft institute following national council curriculum. National Accounts (prepared every year by Ministry of Statistics & PI) measure the growth and contribution of various sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, services such as banking, transport, insurance, etc., while computing the GDP of the country. However, the System of National Accounts is not able to measure the growth and contribution of tourism in GDP. This is because tourism is not an industry in the way industry is defined in the System of National Accounts. *"Tourism is a demand-based concept defined by its consumption and not by its output"*.(ministry of tourism annual report 2018) Industries defined in National Accounts, such as Air transport, Hotel & Restaurants, etc. produce the same output irrespective of whether it is consumed by tourist or non- tourist. It is the consumption of tourists that defines the tourism economy, which is not available in the National Accounts. Therefore, there is a need for preparing Tourism Satellite Account for assessing the contribution of tourism in GDP. Hotel Management is part of the tourism industry. When Indian tourism ministry started selling India as tourism product to an international market and its people, there were many facets on which Government gave focus such as building good infrastructure, to make tourism product most sellable into the market. To sell any product in to the chosen market it is most important to focus on 7P's of marketing which is Product Price, Place, Promotion, Process, and People. In travel and tourism and hospitality sector people are the main part of the product because this is service industry where people are serving people. In other words costumers are also people and servers are also people, therefore to generate good and skilled manpower is the main agenda, to achieve this agenda, institute of hotel management came into existence to serve people uniformly, to understand and satisfy their needs and wants to generate revenue. Hotel management institutes are all over India runs under NHMCT in all the major state of India and in the private sector it's offered by many deemed state and open university this course have tow option of 3 years degree program and 4 years degree program, which includes semester pattern along with industrial training twice, one is for 45 days and one is for 5months. This industrial training makes a huge impact on students; this industrial training is a main part of the course, this industrial training is a deciding factor for the students whether they want to be a part of the hotel industry or diversify them or choose a different career. This industrial training is dived into 2 stages both stages are equally important and makes a different impact on students as first training happens for 45 days where students are comparatively new in the industry they have a very vague idea about the hotel management when they enroll for the hotel management course and when they reach to the last part of the program where they go for the 5 months industrial training it becomes deciding factor for their career.

Importance of industrial training: Industrial Training is a short - term training in the hotel industry. Generally, these training are carried out by the hotels for summer and winter batches. Students from Hotel Management College work in the hotel for a specific period. Industrial training helps the student to work with the industry and learn new skills that are not possible to develop in the industry. The hotel industry has the highest manpower requirement. The attrition rate is very high in the industry. that is the process of removing employee's form the job is highest in the hospitality industry than any other industry, therefore, it's very important for the hospitality students to go for a hotel industry training to know the reality of working in the industry while deciding their career opportunities. Colleges that provide tourism & hospitality courses emphasize the importance of practical training & make efforts to develop internship programs for students. Industrial training is well-thought-out because it is one of the positive strategies for the colleges to complete for a large intake of students by promoting an all-inclusive syllabus with an attractive training program. Students always demand well- organized internship programs so they can get benefits of professional skills while at the same time. Industry always plans new ways to train student trainees in their organization. There are many positive effects for all parties by forming a triangular partnership between, students, school & industry. Quality of a successful internship program that will attract student choices of future careers in the tourism & hospitality industry. It is stated that a bad internship experience can just turn a young person away from the industry to attract as many graduate students as possible to start their careers in the tourism & hospitality industry. A quality program only can be developed when the two parties have the answers for the following question: What do students expect before commencing the internship? What do students perceive after the internship? Institutes provide intense academic & practical knowledge to students. Thus, theoretical education & practical knowledge of students help them to cope with the industrial work

culture. Due to the industrial training students might change their attitude towards hotel jobs. The hotel expects from the graduate students that they should have intense theory & good practical knowledge. When hotels are recruiting students, they give the values for the good academic background & knowledge & they also give importance towards theoretical & practical understanding & skill development or industry-based experience. This qualification is acquired during hotel industrial training experiences. An industrial internship is a very important part of an academic curriculum in educational activity institutes. An internship is a chance for undergraduate students to include work-related experience & knowledge into their formal education in a university by participating in supervised & planned work in the world by professional environments. (Renganatham, Chang, & Karin 2012) Recently in Malaysia, there has been much concern about the mismatch of the standard of university graduates thereupon of commercial expectations. Many undergraduates churned out by universities lack essential, which successively, contributes to the rise within the number of unemployed graduates within the country of these have promoted the Govt. to position more emphasis on university students, industrial internship program during their studies.

Need of study: researcher would like to take this topic for the research to understand how this pandemic has impacted on hotel management students those who were doing final year industrial training. This training is major factor while doing hospitality course and it gives platform for student to work in industry and it also provides employment opportunities to them.

Objectives

1. To study the perception of industrial training of final year students studying hospitality courses
2. To analyze the impact of industrial training on final year students studying hospitality courses
3. To find out whether hospitality students intend to pursue their career in the hospitality and tourism industry after post-COVID-19
4. What factors students found important when considering industrial training?

Hypothesis

H1 = Perception changed about industrial training final year students studying hospitality courses

H2 = there is an impact of industrial training on final year hospitality students

H3= Hospitality students intend to pursue their career in the hospitality and tourism industry after post-COVID-19

Literature review

Research paper titled "Students' Perceptions of Careers in Ghana's Hospitality and Tourism Industry" (Maame Nyahan & Martin, 2020) Training is the development of the knowledge, attitudes, and skills required by an organization to perform a particular job. Training is carried by an organization to increase the knowledge, skills and to modify behavior Training contributes to the economic growth of a nation and it is considered as an investment. It improves the behavior of the individual and the perspective. The study is on the 'Perception of Training practices & development economy' by using the cross-section survey. Data were collected by surveying the hotel. In this survey questioner were filled by the trainees. This study was done in Ghana questioner was filled by 195 full-time employees from 61 registered hotels, and the responses were registered by the percentage. In this study, it is found that the reaction of the employees on the trainees was inadequate. This all was affecting the service delivery. The hotel manager should inspect all this and invest in the staff training should ensure weather the hotel employees are gaining the knowledge, skills necessary to improve service delivery. This study reflects that how hotel management & employees must pursue proper training practices to improve service delivery. Hotel employee's failure like job satisfaction, lack of motivation, employee behavior and attitude will affect the service delivery. As a result investment in training will contribute by raising the performance of the hotel and provided to employees will help them to achieve organizational goals with high confidence.

Research paper titled "Faculty and Student Perceptions of the Importance of Management Skills in the Hospitality Industry" by (Quinn, Katherine & Nicole 2019) this research highlights an understanding of teacher and student perceptions of the within the hospitality industry. Study forces on the fact that there's inconsistent agreement among faculty and students regarding the importance of SCANS-specific competencies in hospitality graduates. There is no argument that industry skills are critical within the way forward for hospitality graduates. Finally, the hospitality students included during this study who were enrolled during a very skill-based curriculum were confident that their

program is preparing them with the specified skills and competencies that they will need for his or her future career. Hospitality programs should work closely with industry board members, internship partners, and campus recruiters to create sure that the skills, competencies, and ex-perennial learning opportunities students are being exposed Strong, consistent internships and work-study programs, both during the faculty year and out of doors of it, must be developed and used as a way in career development. Local hospitality organizations should be identified and work programs developed for faculty kids to participate in freshman through senior year. Working while at college can help students understand the actual facets of the industry, make coursework more relevant, and help them develop crucial workplace skills outside the classroom. This ultimately prepares students for the transition from instruction to full-time employment.

Research paper titled “Perception of Students towards Hotel Management Courses and Industry-A Study of Central University of Haryana”. By (Dilbag Singh, 2017) the travel and tourism sector is the highest revenue-generating sector at the national and the increase in employment in the sector. This research paper is focused on the perception of students towards the educational carrier in hotel management & travel and tourism courses. A questionnaire was programmed to understand the perception and the attitude oof the student towards the carrier and education in the industry. The responses acceptance of students in the sector by the employees because of the educational factor almost majority of the employees in this sector are uneducated, unskilled, illiterate because of all this employee behavior towards the student of Travel and Tourism, Hospitality management is not well. Due to this, the student is dissatisfied with this sector. The future of the industry depends on the quality and the motivation of its potential employees. Employees should be motivated and should get a proper appraisal and the internship programs due to this employee will be positive towards the organization and will have job satisfaction values of job. Because of all this, the employees promote the hospitality courses and prefer this to their friends and relatives.

Research paper titled “Perception of Final Year Hotel Management Students towards Working in Hotel Industry” by (Pol1 & Patil 2015) The research paper is been focused on the final year students who had been completed their industrial training & are ready to job in the hotel. The finding also shows that the student has to do a job in the industry or to study further in the hospitality industry. Sometimes students get negative experiences or de-motivating experiences during the internship period it may influence their image about the industry. The research study investigated with final year students of hotel management collages perception towards work in the industry. The study is based on the perception of final year hotel management students who had gone through industrial training in the hotel. This research is focused on the impact of job culture in the hotel on the hotel management students. After the research, the responses received from students about the hotel industry. The majority of hotel management students have been in a change in their minds after the actual work experience in the hotel industry during the industrial training. Many students are unsure about the decision of working in the hotel industry work. As per the student observation during the training, there are average promotion opportunities in the hotel jobs. The students feel that there is average respect for hotel jobs as compared to their jobs. The students responded that there is relatively good money earned in hotel jobs so the investment on hotel management school is generally the right decision, but the respondent feels the money offered is less compared to long hour shift, it is suggested that there is no overtime for the staff & if it is they should be paid for their extra hours. Many times, the low salary packages offered by hotels are the reason for the negative attitude of students. Students strongly disagree that working in the hotel provides job security. This is the major sample which disagree that hotel jobs are an advantage.

Research paper titled “Students perception of industrial internship programme. Education and Training” by, (Renganatham, Chang, & Karin 2012) this paper describes & explores the industrial internship program conducted in university has made it compulsory for its undergraduate students to undergo an eight-month internship program before the completion of their studies. This study attempted to work out students learning experiences, the pre-placement activities & assistance during the industrial internship. Findings show that the scholars do stand to achieve from the eight-month industrial internship program. An experience like address & writing skills & learning to figure in terms will enhance the student’s employability in the future after graduation. The scholars also perceive favorable pre-placement activities & assistance. The findings stress the requirement to possess a well-structured industrial internship program. It’s well acknowledged that the most aim of any industrial internship is to supply students with engagement & participation in a real work environment. After all, internship programs do have limited time for the interns to realize practical experience. Therefore, a well-structured program will ensure greater opportunities for the interns to achieve the much-needed working experience within the limited time given to them.

Research Methodology

Sample: Total 50 students participated in the survey out of which 7students were studying in BHMCT course which is 4 years degree and, 43 were studying in BBAHT course which is 3 years degree of their graduation. The questionnaire

was filled by the students studying in Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth institute of hotel management and catering technology.

Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire which consists of MCQ 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

.Secondary Data: was gathered from the literature previously written through research papers, government reports, news articles etc.

Results and Discussions: Demographic profile of respondents is elaborated by pie diagram. Data given in pie diagram indicate that 77.5% of respondents were male, and 22.5% female. Maximum number of respondents 16 were in the age of 22 years followed by 7 in the age of 20 years, 6 were in the age of 24, 5 were in the age of 23, 4 in the age of 21, 1 in the age 32, 25 1 in the age of 25. 85% of the students were from BBAHT course which is 3 years degree and 15% from BHMCT which is 4 years degree course both courses have industrial training at the last semester. Students trained indifferent cities out of which Pune 67%, Delhi 2.5%, and Bengaluru 2.5%, Mumbai 5%, France 13% and Germany 10%. Data indicate that 77.5% of respondents were male, and 22.5% female. 16 respondents are of 22 years old, 7 are of 20 years old, 6 are of 24 years old, 5 are of 23 years old, 4 are of 21 years old, 1 is 32 years old and 1 is 25 years old. So the range is from 32 to 20. 85% are from BBAHT course which is 3 years degree and 15% are from BHMCT which is 4 years degree.

57.5% and 30% respondents were excited to go for the training, their response was between strongly agree and agree respectively where 12.5% were neutral. Data show that 47.5% students said they were expecting that they will gain practical knowledge. 17.5% said all of the above where 15% said dream will come true, 7.5% said confused, and 7.5% said proud to work with brands. 5% said it will be Glamorous. 70% said they learned both skills operational skills and managerial during the training, 27.5% said they learn only operational skills and 2.5% said only managerial skills. The questionnaire included the ranking question of learning of the soft skills while the students were on training. The responses show that 'communication' was ranked as the most acquired soft skill in the due time of the training. 13 respondents out of 40 ranked it on number 1 followed by time management (6 respondents), motivation and active listening (4 respondents each). Other soft skills like team work, work ethics, empathy etc. got negligible response. This shows that in spite of the importance of ethics and teamwork it is not what the students actually learn on training.

52.5% said they agree and 15% said strongly agree to the question that it will give them opportunity after completing the training they will get the job in the industry 30% they are neutral, 2.5% said strongly disagree. 95% students said that industrial training is a major contributing factor for career development and 5% disagree to it. Looking at the result 45% student strongly agree and 47% agree, 7.5% they are neutral, so combining agree and strongly agree which is 92% of respondent of total sample size that they have seen good improvement after the final day of the training said so there is a good impact of the training on the students. Respondents worked in good five star hotel in metro cities of India where hotels paid stipend to the trainee, results show that 42.5% agree followed by 20% strongly agree, 12.5% were neutral said that they are satisfied with the amount of stipend, where 17.5% were disagree to the stipend given and 7.5% were strongly disagree. 60% of the Respondents agree that hotel staff were very helpful and supportive during the training period, where 27.5% are strongly agree to the same, followed by 12.5% are neutral. 90% students said Covid -19 pandemic did affect the training experience, 7.5% were neutral and 2.5% were disagreeing to it. 80% respondent said transition was positive from being student to trainee which is a very positive side. 20% said they are neutral about it. 75% students said they would like to work in the hotel industry after Covid -19, where 20% were not sure and 5% said they will go for further studies. 47.5% respondents said that their area of interest did change after the completion of the training the 12.5% said main reason was timing and stress full job and growth opportunities shared equal 5%. 30% said their area of interest did not change at all.

Hypothesis Testing

H₀ = Perception about industrial training do not change for final year students studying hospitality courses

H₁ = Perception about industrial training of final year students studying hospitality courses do change

To find out the perception about training of final year students, following question was asked Do you feel industrial training is a major contributing factor in career development? Data says total of 95% students positively replied feeling that industrial training is a major contributing factor in career development of hospitality courses this spread was between agree and strongly agree. The result is significant there for the null (H₀) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H₁) has been accepted.

H₀ = there is no impact of industrial training on final year hospitality students

H₂ = there is an impact of industrial training on final year hospitality students

To find out the significant difference between the impacts of training of final year students independent sample t-test was applied the results of the same are expressed below question for the same was Were student excited or enthusiastic to join training? And second question was Have you observed an improvement in yourself after the final day of the training?

Mean: -0.19

$\mu = 0$

$S^2 = SS/df = 10.48/(42-1) = 0.26$

$S^2M = S^2/N = 0.26/42 = 0.01$

$SM = \sqrt{S^2M} = \sqrt{0.01} = 0.08$

T-value Calculation: $t = (M - \mu)/SM = (-0.19 - 0)/0.08 = -2.44$

The value of t is -2.442056. The value of p is .0095. The result is significant at $p < .05$. the result is significant there for the null (H_0) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_2) has been accepted.

H_0 = Hospitality students do not intend to pursue their career in the hospitality and tourism industry after post COVID-19

H_3 =Hospitality students intend to pursue their career in the hospitality and tourism industry after post COVID-19

To find out the whether the hospitality students intend to pursue their career in the hospitality and tourism industry after post COVID-19, following question was asked Would you like to continue to Work in Hotel Industry or Choose Hotel Industry as Career option after Covid-19? Did covid-19 pandemic affect your training experience?

Data says total of 90% students said that covid-19 did affect the training experience this spread was between agree and strongly. And 75% students said that they will continue to work in the hotel industry, 20% may be the result is significant there for the null (H_0) is rejected and alternative hypothesis (H_3) has been accepted

Findings: following findings of the data suggest following things

Hospitality student who were studying degree program 4 years and 3 years due to covid-19 their training experience got affected they had to finish the industrial training before the end date , but still 95% of the student would like to work in the hotel industry after Covid -19 as this industrial training was at the end of the program which was the major deciding point whether to continue in hotel industry or choose another industry as further career option and be part of the industry when it got most affected.

Data findings suggests that student overall had a good training experience during the industrial training, student were trained in India, as well as outside of India in five star hotels, they learned managerial and operational skills, during the training, managers, supervisor were also very helpful .57% student were sure that after completing training they will get job in the industry.

Before joining the training 87% students were excited,47.5%students said they were expecting that they will gain practical knowledge during the training and 92% Students observed good improvement in themselves on the last date of the training and 80% student had positive transition from being student to trainee. The most learned soft skill was communication followed by active listening and time management.

42.5% Student said that they are satisfied with the amount of stipend , they are getting followed by 20% strongly agree,12.5% were neutral where 17.5%were disagree to the stipend given and 7.5% were stongly disagree. 47.5% respondenat said that their area of interse did change after the completion of the trainng the 12.55 said main resaon was timing and stress full job nd growth opprtuntities shared equal 5%. 30% said their area of interst did not changed at all.

Limitations: this research is done using sample size of 40 students who were pursuing hotel management degree in Pune at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. This university is Deem to be university, they have designed the course in unique way where student pursue the industrial training at the last semester, and therefore the sample size is small. This industrial training at the last semester helps them to get absorb in the industry immediately as they do not have to come back to the university again to complete the semester, where as the state university winch is Pune university offers this industrial training in 4th semester so student have to come back and complete the 5th and 6th semester in the university.

Conclusion: covid-19 pandemic has hit the hotel industry worst. Students who were doing the industrial training they got affected most, as hotel terminated the training before the end date as lockdown norms were implemented very strictly. Data finding suggest that students had over all good training experience though pandemic was there, their

perception about changing the industry or choosing this industry as career option immediately after the graduation did not change 95% student want to continue to be part of the industry.

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