

A STUDY ON STUDENTS EXPECTATIONS FROM HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY POST COVID

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ABSTRACT

Tourism and Hospitality Industry is one of the fastest growing industry in India with the contribution of 178 billion dollars in the year 2021 to the country's GDP. It has emerged as one of the key industries driving growth of the service sector in India with higher employment rate. This sector was worst affected due to the covid -19 pandemic resulting in pay cuts, layoffs and shutting down the business. The hotel industry is criticized for less paid jobs and low skilled workforce. The employee turnover rates are higher in hospitality sector due to long working hours, lack of recognition and minimal growth opportunities. Many of the hotel management graduates leave the industry after their internship and they join retail sector which provides them with the better salary packages. The study aims to understand the hotel management student's expectations from the hospitality industry post covid -19. A descriptive and exploratory design is used for this study. Primary data is collected by surveying 85 hotel management students from Pune. Secondary data is collected from various articles, e-newspaper and journals. This study revealed that Hospitality graduates are expecting following facilities from the industry which are provision of healthcare facilities at the workplace, recruitment in 5 star international and national hotel chains with higher salary as per the industry norms, job security, safe work environment, fix working hours, stress free environment, and on job training with high stipend.

Keywords – Hospitality, Covid -19, Lockdown, Employee motivation, student's expectations

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic which hit China in end of 2019 & India in March 2020 brought hospitality and tourism industry to a near-standstill, these sectors have almost collapsed due to this unprecedented disaster. The damage is more than the previous global crises such as 9/11 attack or SARS/MERS/Ebola. The coronavirus shattered economies around the world and disrupted life in many ways. According to WTTC, Tourism in India added Rs 149 billion to GDP and provided 87.5 million jobs. Due to the ongoing pandemic WTTC estimated loss of up to USD 2.7 trillion globally with 100 million jobs at risk. Due to this calamity hospitality chains across the globe have closed their operations or have opted cost saving measures such as pay cuts, layoffs and temporary leaves. Welcome ambassadors were appointed by hotels to perform duties of valets, door man and bell boy. This enabled the hotels to cut down on labor cost. As per the data of international labor organization, in the year 2020, around 59 countries adopted work from home culture to control the spread of Covid-19 virus. This was one of the best

strategy to slow down the unemployment rates. This was applicable to the hotel managerial staff (to work remotely) and front line staff had to work for on line personal services.

Accor group of hotels launched ALL Heartist programe for supporting group's employees for their hospital bills and insurance. Conrad Bengaluru did few controlled salary adjustments for the managerial staff to cope up with the situation. The group provided ration bags to the employees who migrated from other states and free accommodation and meals to on duty staff.

Mandarin hotel Bangkok was a pioneer in creating a modern space dedicated entirely to the hotel staff which was described as hotel within a hotel. O zone area has a relaxaion and enterainment area, a bilingual lending library, hi-tech meeting venues, a "Café 48" restaurant, with a retail "Kiosk 48", state-of-the-art locker rooms and resting facilities for employees. Jan Goessing, General Manager stated that this concept was introduced as to provide an environment for relaxation and learning as hotel staff is an asset to the company who delivers delightful services to the guest, hence taking care of the employees is utmost priority for the hotel.

To exceed guest expectations industry must provide new training and re-skilling of the employees as there are major changes in the service style after the pandemic. It has created innovation in guest service by adopting social distancing norms with contactless delivery and payment methods. Hotels have implemented new methods of hygiene by use of robots for sanitizing the guest rooms, use of mobile apps for check in and QR codes have replaced the physical menus.

In order to enlist and hold the alluring work force in today's competitive labor market, it is critical for the managers to understand the needs and demands of the workforce. Career objectives and desires of students will give industry a clear picture of the inclinations and requests that future representatives will hold. Finding interests, their abilities, career values and need of the recruitment pool, managers will have competitive advantages and create effective human asset strategies.

According to Honore, as per the study conducted in the year 2009, organizations should invest time in researching the factors which influence the employee motivation. As it will help in gathering the information which will enable the HR to understand performance levels and turnover. If managers can understand the underlying motivators, this can result in employee satisfaction in long run. As per the theory of motivation of Herzberg, two factors namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivators affect the performance of employees. The extrinsic factors come from outside the individual, such as money, rewards and working condition. If these are not favorable, job dissatisfaction will result. But when these variables are favorable, this cannot result in job satisfaction, but as it were decreases the dissatisfaction. . On the other hand, the intrinsic factors are driven by the interest or satisfaction from the assignment itself, such as working in the team to achieve the targeted goal and having a part in decision making. These components will lead to work satisfaction because it is fulfilling the individual's require for self-actualization.

A study was conducted in China in the year 2001, which revealed that majority of the tourism graduates took jobs outside the tourism industry. Upon completion of the course tourism and hospitality students quit their first job in the industry within a span of 02 years and took up a job outside the industry.

Hospitality is one of the fastest growing industry in India with creating direct and indirect jobs in tourism and hotel sectors. The high demand for hotel jobs is observed in all the cities in India. However, the jobs available in Indian hotel industry are low skilled and low paid resulting in job dissatisfaction. After the pandemic of Covid -19 there has been an increase in the turnover rate which is higher than the pre pandemic era. To overcome the skilled shortage of staff, the hotel management institutes provide mandatory industrial training which benefits the students for understating of the industry and helps them

in deciding their core operational department post completion of their degree program.

It is required that the Hotel management institutes provide academic and practical oriented course.

Students' clear and extended theoretical education and practical experience prepare hotel management school graduates to deal with the working culture of the industry. Better experience and more capable students are more successful. Hotel recruiters also demand entry level staff to have good practical understanding of hotel industry, knowledge and skills developed through real-world or industry-related experience. These qualifications are often obtained during training in the hospitality industry. The need for industry experience is well documented, but students exposed to such experience may change their perception of the hospitality industry, thereby making it less likely.

Commercially trained students have changed their perception of jobs in the hotel industry. Work and personal life factors influence student choices and preferences for hotel jobs. Although its implications are not clearly understood, the negative work experience of hospitality school graduates during their internships have negative outlook for jobs in hospitality. Indian scenario for the final year hotel management Jaipur students in the year 2021, revealed that although students are keen towards working in core departments such as Kitchen, Food and Beverage service, Housekeeping and Front office, they have less promotion opportunities, lower respect from the guests and no job security. Attitude of the student's changes after work experience during their industrial training.

There are number of hotel management courses running all over India. This study was specifically done in the Pune hotel management institutes of students who have completed their industry training during or before pandemic. The study has aimed to understand the expectations of students from the hospitality industry post pandemic which will be beneficial for the hotel managers to create a suitable job environment for the graduates and will retain the qualified trained staff.

Literature Review –

Steffen Raub and Catherine Rey (2022), opined that Post- Pandemic, the Hospitality industry is facing staff shortage and high employee turnover. The reputation of the hotel industry as an employer is mixed. Some hotels have excellent practices while some others offer poor pay, working conditions, and limited opportunities for growth and development. Hospitality jobs offer a large number of opportunities for human interaction as well as job mobility, for which a university degree in Hospitality is preferred

A Hospitality Student expects:

- Interesting work rewarded with a good salary, work-life balance and secure future,
- Opportunities for growth and societal work offering social prestige.

The factors leading to negative student perceptions are listed below:

- Poor Work-life balance due to long working hours and stressful working conditions.
- Poor salaries at low levels and low social status.
- Lack of training and growth.
- Low job satisfaction.
- High Employee turnover.

- Seasonal nature of business.
- Managers not qualified.

Hospitality schools should ensure that students are given realistic expectations for their entry-level job and the type of position available in the industry. They should work more closely with the industry for internship onboarding as well as designing the future curriculum for grooming and developing students for the Industry.

Cicitian Siah and Vikas Gupta (2021) The researchers examined the impact of COVID-19 on the Indian tourism sector and impact on hospitality students' perception of career opportunities and future prospects. Student's perception about the industry influences their career decisions. Students feel that the industry will revive in the near future, and thus, in spite of the slowdown due to the pandemic, they still prefer to continue working in the industry. Changes in the nature of work, reduction in pay and benefits, and an increasingly competitive job environment, were noted. Specific to the pandemic, students expect lesser job openings, reduced job security, higher terminations during probation period and fewer chances of promotions. Pursuing higher studies in management (MBA) was regarded as the most viable alternate option by Hospitality students during the pandemic

Dilip Puri(2022) The founder and CEO of the Indian School of Hospitality stated that Even individuals looking for employment in the hospitality sector choose positions in functional areas like revenue management, sales and marketing, and human resources rather than operations. This is largely due to the stereotypical, but accurate, belief that such positions demand long hours and are underpaid compared to other fields.

Vik Krishnan (2020) According to his analysis, a full recovery to pre-COVID-19 levels might not occur until 2023 or later. Similar opinions regarding the prospects of hotel companies are held by investors, as seen by the underperformance of US lodging real estate investment trusts (REITs). The hospitality sector will undergo both minor and significant changes in the post-pandemic era, like so many other industries.

Joshi, V. A (2021) found a need for improved information sharing and two-way contact between business and academia. In fact, industry and academia need to share the lessons learned from the pandemic. This is significant because employers look for graduates who can adapt, show compassion, multitask, understand crisis management concepts, and be tech-savvy. Originality/value, the study examined potential long-term repercussions and labour concerns as the sector tries to deal with the pandemic. The study made recommendations for ways that business and academia could cooperate more effectively and build stronger bonds.

Sophie Lund-Yates (2022) identified that Hospitality students should be quite flexible regarding whatever area of the sector they desire to work in and where in order to obtain employment after the epidemic. Students shouldn't be concerned about the post-pandemic environment because it offers a wide range of career options in industries like hotels & restaurants, FMCG, event management, restaurants and foodservice, cruise ships and airlines, amusement park and casinos, retail and fashion, consulting, tourism, etc.

Ellen Sheng (2020) Following the epidemic, hospitality schools like Cornell turned to their alumni network for advise and to share memories about how they explored various job opportunities or came back to the business after taking a break. Additionally, new graduates in the hospitality industry are considering continuing their education in the hopes that they will have added credentials by the moment the current crisis ends.

Michael Nowlis (2022) stated that Some upmarket London hotels were paying room attendants 40%

more than they did before to Covid, demonstrating the importance of compensation and the need for an increase. But another benefit that employees valued highly was flexibility. Entry-level employees who might just wish to work two days a week will stick around as long as the company offers them the flexibility that suits their lifestyle.

Devendren Sathasivam (2022) expressed that After COVID-19, the hotel business will need to strike a balance between managing uncertain revenues and keeping a reasonable cost structure. The performance of the hotel will depend more and more on how operating expenses are managed, underscoring the value of adaptability, creativity, and innovation. It is imperative that educational institutions, particularly those serving the hospitality industry, boost the participation of industry experts in postgraduate programmes in order to meet these new standards.

Objectives of the study:

- To study the expectations from hospitality students post pandemic.
- To identify the students career interest and scope of placements from the hospitality industry.
- To understand the challenges faced by students post pandemic

Scope of the study:

The scope of the study is limited to hotel management students in Pune.

Research Methodology:

Population and Sample:

The population for the study identified was hospitality students from hotel management institute. There was only one sampling frame designed to carry out this research. Respondents were from different age groups.

Sample Size:

Estimated population size was infinite. The sample chosen was students pursuing hotel management courses. Around 85 samples were surveyed.

Scope of the study:

1. The study analyses expectations from the hospitality students post pandemic of Covid -19.
2. The scope of the study includes hotel management students.

Limitations:

- The researcher has collected data by distributing questionnaire online/by E-mail, thus data collected is more or less quantitative and less qualitative.
- Data is collected from Indian hospitality students only.
- Sample size is not too large to generalize results.
- Limited information is provided by primary and secondary data.

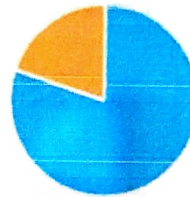
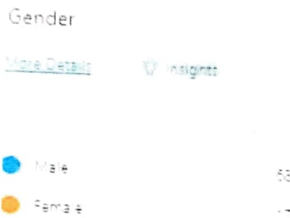
Research Instrument:

A structured questionnaire was used to collect the primary data by distributing it online.

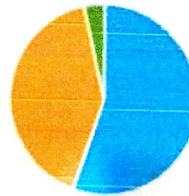
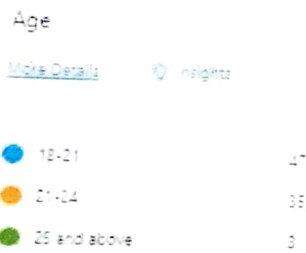
Sources of Data:

- **Primary data:** The study was conducted in distinct phases using a questionnaire: A sample questionnaire survey of 85 hotel management students who were randomly selected on the basis of simple random sampling. Data was then analysed keeping in mind the objectives of the study.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data was collected through extensive review of literature on the topic. Research papers from reputed academic journals (Print and online versions) and databases, published articles, newsletters and internet websites pertaining to Tourism and Hospitality sector were referred.

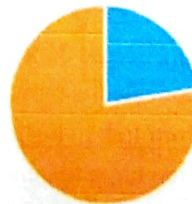
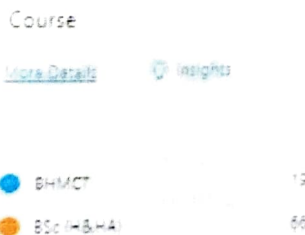
Data Analysis



Interpretation – As per the data 68 % of the respondents were male and 17 % of the respondents were female students.



Interpretation – 47 % respondents are from the age group of 18-21 years, 35% respondents are from the age group of 21 –24 years and 03 % belongs to 25 years and above age.



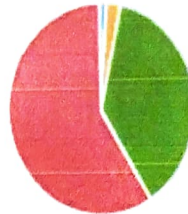
Interpretation – 66 % of the respondents are studying BSc (H&HA) course and 19% of the

Year of graduation

[More Details](#)

10 insights

2020	1
2021	2
2022	32
2023	60



Interpretation – 50% of the respondents will be graduating in the year 2023, 32 % will be graduating in the year 2022 and 2 % and 1% have graduated in the year 2021 and 2020 respectively.

What are your goals post completion of degree program?

This question was asked to understand students aspirations post completion of degree programme. The common responses were to pursue higher education, to work in international hotels and cruise and to be an entrepreneur by starting a restaurant and bakery.

Have you completed your internship during Covid pandemic

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Yes	80
No	5



Interpretation – 80 % of the respondents have completed their internship during the pandemic of Covid –19 whereas 5% could not complete their internship.

What is your area of interest in Hospitality industry

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10 insights

Hotels	41
Travel Agency	6
Cruise	25
Other	13

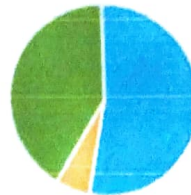


Interpretation – 41% of the respondents wish to join hotels after graduation, 25% are interested in cruise liners, and 06 % wish to work in travel agency.

According to you is there a scope for placements in hospitality industry post covid

[View Detail](#)

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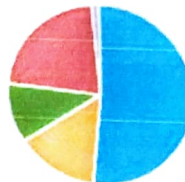
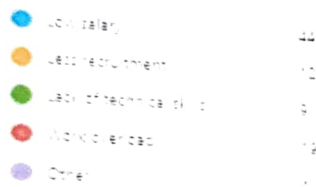


Interpretation – According to the 45 % of the respondents, there will be placement in the hospitality industry post covid, 35% of the respondents are not sure about placements and as per 5% there will not be any placement in hospitality industry post covid.

According to you what challenges will you face in the industry in near future

[View Detail](#)

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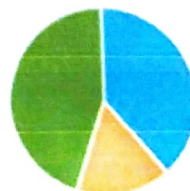
Interpretation – Respondents were asked to select the challenges that they will face in near future. As per 44 % of the respondents low salary will be a challenge, followed by work overload (19%) , less vacancies (12%) lack of technical skills (09%)

What are your expectations while joining the hospitality industry post Covid?

This question was asked to understand the student’s expectations from the hospitality industry post covid. The common responses received were Healthcare facility at the workplace, recruitment in 5 star international and national hotel chains with higher salary as per the industry norms, Job security, safe work environment, fix working hours, stress free environment, medical insurance and on job training with high stipend .

According to you does a career in hospitality industry offer scope for work life balance?

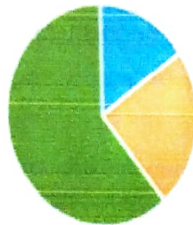
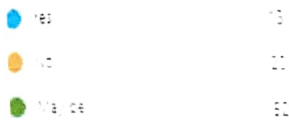
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Interpretation – As per 33% of the respondents hospitality industry offers work life balance. 38% are not sure and according to the 14% of the respondents, industry does not offer work life balance.

Do you foresee a change in HR policies adopted by Hospitality industry?

View Details



Interpretation – 52% of the students are not sure about changes in the HR policies of hospitality industry. 20 % respondents stated that HR policies will not change and 13% feel that there will be changes in the policy.

If you have answered Yes in Question no. 13, please state the changes foreseen by you.

Few of the respondents foresee changes in the HR policy, according to them there will be higher salary package and incentives offered to the hospitality graduates, flexible work timings and work life balance and employee development training program for all departments.

FINDINGS

According to the graphical representation shown in the above pie charts, below mentioned are findings based upon the interpretations that were drawn from the data analysis:

- It can be observed that more than half the respondents were male students.
- 47 % respondents were from the age group of 18-21 years, 35% respondents were from the age group of 21 –24 years and 03 % belongs to 25 years and above age.
- More than half of the respondents (66 %) are BSc (H&HA) course students and 19% of the respondents are BHMCT course students.
- Half of the respondents will be graduating in the year 2023, 32 % will be graduating in the year 2022 and 2 % and 1% have graduated in the year 2021 and 2020 respectively.
- Respondents were asked about their aspirations post completion of degree programme. The common responses were to pursue higher education, to work in international hotels, cruise and to be an entrepreneur by starting a restaurant and bakery.
- A majority of the respondents (80 %) have completed their internship during the pandemic of Covid –19 whereas 5% could not complete their internship.
- Nearly half of the respondents (41%) wish to join hotels after graduation, 25% are interested in cruise liners, and 06 % wish to work in travel agency.
- Nearly half the respondents (45 %) agree that there will be placements in the hospitality industry post covid, 35% of the respondents are not sure about placements and as per 5% there will not be any placement in hospitality industry post covid.
- Almost half of the respondent's (44 %) mentioned that low salary will be a biggest challenge post covid, followed by work overload (19%) less vacancies (12%) and lack of technical skills (09%)

- Students are expecting provision of Healthcare facilities at the workplace, recruitment in 5 star international and national hotel chains with higher salary as per the industry norms, Job security, safe work environment, fix working hours, stress free environment, medical insurance and on job training with high stipend.
- As per 33% of the respondents agree that hospitality industry offers work life balance. 38% are not sure and according to the 14% of the respondents, industry does not offer work life balance.
- More than half (52%) of the students are not sure about changes in the HR policies of hospitality industry. 20 % respondents stated that HR policies will not change and 13% feel that there will be changes in the policy.
- As per 13 % of the respondents post covid, hospitality industry will make changes in employee policies in terms of work life balance, employee development training programs and higher salary package with incentives.

CONCLUSION

In India, cases of Covid -19 have declined but there has been a spike in the other parts of the world with new variants. The hospitality and tourism industry will face a massive beating if there is surge in the cases due to B.F.7 variant. The industry experts should access the opportunities for the fresher's joining the industry.

Post completion of the degree program, students are interested to work with international hotel chains, wish to pursue higher education and want to become an entrepreneur.

- Majority of the respondents were able to complete the internship successfully during the pandemic.
- Jobs in cruise liners and hotels are preferred by the students however they are unsure about the placements offered by the hotel management colleges and vacancies in the industry.
- Students will face challenges of low salary, work overload, no work life balance and staff shortage in upcoming future.
- Due to the pandemic lectures and practical's were conducted online, hence students did not get hands on learning experience. Students might face a problem in securing a job due to lack of technical skills.
- Hospitality graduates are expecting provision of healthcare facilities at the workplace, recruitment in 5 star international and national hotel chains with higher salary as per the industry norms, job security, safe work environment, fix working hours, stress free environment, medical insurance and on job training with high stipend.
- Few of the students foresee changes in the HR policy post pandemic, in work life balance, training programmes and higher salary package.

Students who completed their internship, did not get an opportunity to work in all the departments due to the pandemic. Few students cancelled their admissions during the pandemic due to uncertainty of the situation as they could not afford to pay the fees.

During conduct of this research, it has been observed that hotels are recruiting hospitality graduates as OJT (on the job trainees) in order to reduce the labor cost. Due to work overload and staff shortage core departments of the hotels (Front office, housekeeping, kitchen and service) have high employee turnover rate which is affecting the quality of the food and services offered. Students are unhappy to join the

industry at lower salary package, hence few of them opted for a job in BPO and retail. As international borders have opened for travel, students are applying for jobs in USA, Canada, Germany and Australia as the foreign hospitality industry offers a promising salary to the employees.

RECOMMENDATION

Hotels need to design the HR policies which are employee friendly. Regular interaction with the academicians will benefit the industry experts to create new policies. In order to retain the talented skilled workforce in the country, hospitality industry should provide lucrative salary packages and incentives for extra working hours. Formulating training sessions specifically for HM students during their internship, in line with the recent human resource policies to cope up with the new demands of the guests in the post pandemic period.

SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The scope of the study needs to be expanded across all major cities in India in order to analyze a larger sample of Hotel Management students for their perceptions and expectations from the hospitality industry.

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