

The Perceptions and Preferences of Hospitality Management Students in Himachal Pradesh on Employment in the Hotel Industry

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ABSTRACT:

The hotel, restaurant, travel, theme parks, retail, event planning, transportation industry and various other sectors make up the hospitality better known as Service industry. The Indian state of Himachal Pradesh's economy is significantly influenced by the hospitality sector, notably the hotel business. In order to match educational programs with industry expectations and improve graduates' employability, stakeholders must have a thorough understanding of the attitudes and opinion of hotel management students about employment in this industry. The study looks on the opinions and preferences of Himachal Pradesh students studying hospitality management with regard to job prospects in the hotel sector. The focus of this study report will be on the students from the previous year who intend to work part-time in hotels. The aim of this study was to determine the preferences and opinion of hotel management students toward making their career in the hospitality industry. The study was completed on the basis of opinion, observation and feedback of 200 students, for which a pre-arranged questionnaire was used. It also includes a personal interview with a selected group of students, which included 20 well-framed questions analyzed using statistical tools such as mean and percentage for Likert scales. Based on these data, we concluded that final year hospitality management students prefer to work in the reputable hotel brands industry.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the hospitality sector has experienced substantial growth across numerous countries, driven by factors such as increasing tourism, globalization, and evolving consumer preferences. This expansion has led to significant economic contributions, job creation, and infrastructural developments within the industry.

According to the World Tourism Organization's (WTO, 2005) most recent figures, the hotel industry is one of the major employers in many countries today, and many communities depend on it to give their school graduates "excellent" career prospects. For this reason, academic institutions have started to provide a specific degree known as a hotel management course, which supplies the industry with qualified workers. A range of formats, including degree, diploma, masters, and doctorate degrees, are available for these courses.

Hospitality management programs are offered by a large number of schools and institutions both domestically and internationally. These government-run, non- governmental, and private institution programs yield hotel personnel that go above and beyond what guests who spend time and money in hotels anticipate.

Through different programs like management programs, job trainees, and so on, many hotels offer earning possibilities and career routes for graduates in hospitality management in order to retain staff and develop the necessary abilities in certain areas of hotel operation. These graduates can find employment in retail, transportation, catering, and other industries. Graduates in their last year, however, have problems with perceptions and preferences when it comes to accepting offers from hotels and other businesses like fast food, retail, and cruises. This study helps hotels and schools understand the trends in final-year students' views and preferences while searching for jobs in the hotel sector. It also helps institutions understand the perceptions and preferences of final-year students.

For this study, we limited our sample to students attending Himachal Pradesh hotel management schools. The following are the prominent Himachal Pradesh hotel management institutes and universities that were selected for this research.

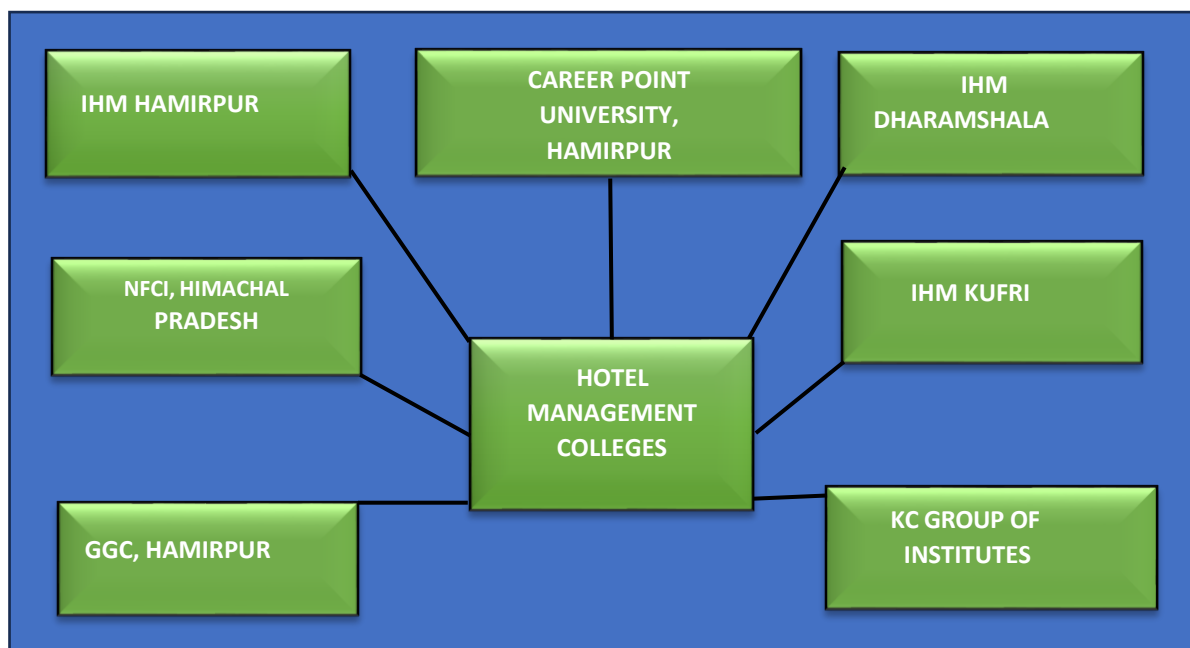


Figure 1: Major Hotel Management Colleges In Himachal Pradesh Are Selected for This Study.

Application and Significance of the Sector:

The nation's economic prosperity has been actively aided by the hotel business. It is anticipated that this movement would progressively gain traction, which will enhance or give context to local tourism. It is obvious that the hotel industry and the domestic economy contribute to an increase in the number of domestic travelers. All the basic needs during the travel and stay and other amenities of tourist are taken care by hospitality sector.

The hospitality industry requires constant strategy creation and successful implementation of those strategies to meet their business goals. In spite of the crucial role to attain the routine goals, the implementation part of strategies has garnered comparatively the less scholarly attention than planning. Thus, it is suitable to offer a methodical examination of the literature on strategy implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

El-Houshy, Sayed S. (2019) A tiny quantity of significant and pertinent literature on the topic is reviewed in this section graduates After two years, the United Nations agency left their initial job and obtained employment outside the company when they entered the commercial business sector following graduation. This leads to a high incidence of staff turnover as well as the loss of informed and competent individuals. Because of this, business professionals and companies have to exercise caution when interacting with recent student hires. The potential expansion of the firm is significantly influenced by United Nations entities.

T.S. Natarajan and G.P. Raman (2018) in their study highlighted the opinions and preferences Chennai's final-year hotel management students now had. Both internal and external hotel management education are necessary, the study concluded after compiling its information. Perception and tastes are influenced by factors, and the hotel industry will have skilled labor. Russell Cox, Anoop Patiar, Emily Ma, and Sandie Kensbock (2017): Degree programs in hotel management (HM) offer a skill set that is highly sought after, combining technical, analytical, and soft skills in a well-balanced manner.

a must for graduates in the hospitality field, while several colleges, especially in Australia, have switched out practical courses with academic ones recently. This substitute choice has produced Due to the fact that students are no longer exposed to real-world settings with structures, they will not be learning social skills or management (hotel food and beverage).

According to the authors (2015), Rajeshree S. Pol and Hemraj Patil, the most crucial hospitality Students studying management view actual job experience in the hotel business differently. when undergoing industrial training, After the course is over, some students can't wait to work with the teachers. While some students think it would be preferable to work in a different industry, others don't share this opinion.

Brown, Eric A. Susan W. Arendt and Robert Bosselman (2014) The study's conclusions indicate that those who are still employed in cordial reception feel that having a job that allows them to utilize their degree of cordial reception—an intrinsic incentive—and fair advancement chances—an inessential incentive—are more important. Given that every respondent held a degree in cordial reception, this finding may suggest that individuals who

departed were content to pursue careers in which their degree in cordial reception is not used, or that those who remain in the trade do so because they saw the value of being involved in trade studies. Being amiable is also essential, according to those who have succeeded in the polite reception sector. has been elevated. This may suggest that, given their degree in cordial reception, they think staying in the cordial reception sector is the best route to success. Conversely, many who departed felt more driven to have a positive impact on society; maybe they didn't know they could do so while employed in the courteous greeting sector.

Pankaj Kumar Singh, Amit Kumar, Anoop Kumar, Shalini, and Pankaj Kumar Singh (2014)- The results show that students do not think their occupations are as respectable as others' and do not find a good working climate in the company. Not even the nature of the hotel industry presents enough challenges for students. They also hold a pessimistic view of the industry's opportunities for personal growth. To improve male attitudes and attract a more skilled workforce to meet industry demands for human resources, the sector needs to concentrate on the aforementioned traits. Lashley, Conrad (2013–2016) claims that because housing associations offer many employment and often joyful labor, students are enticed to work there. Particularly, occupations in bars and cafés enable understudies to work in settings where their public activities are monitored. When they can work whenever they want to or fit in a few more hours during their course, understudies are more interested. Companies should make sure that their prices at least correspond with those offered to understudies working in retail and shop vocations by being informed of the genuine rates charged in the local labor market. Sevgin Akş Roney and Perinztin (2007) According to this study, unfulfilled strong vocation needs might result in discontent, which can lower job fulfilment and significantly increase staff turnover. In this instance, there will probably be less dissatisfaction with understudies' career prospects if they are allowed to pursue a four-year degree in the travel industry despite their significant objections.

Kyprianou George and Zopiatis Anastasios (2006) - The research suggests that the company should be able to hire people with ordinary or lower educational backgrounds who mostly attend secondary public technical institutions, according to the United Nations organization. The authors put out a number of recommendations that relied on the connections and interdependencies among secondary students, the government, and hospitality stakeholders. In this endeavor, education is crucial because

it provides a bridge that individuals can effectively cross to pursue a successful and long-lasting profession. The caliber of this relationship could ultimately determine how successful we are in our endeavors.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the actions taken to enhance the hospitality industry, its standing, the number of people attracted to it.
- To find out which hospitality management students from the previous year like to nourish their career in the hotel industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study's technique is centered on obtaining primary and secondary data. Survey questions are used to gather primary data, while relevant internet resources, respected journals, distinguished books, published publications and articles, and published publications are used to gather secondary data. This study's main objective is to find out what final-year hotel management students think about and prefer in terms of careers in hotels after graduation. Final-year hotel management students from several institutions in the Himachal Pradesh region make up the study's sample. The convenience sampling approach was chosen. The years 2021 and 2023 were used to collect the data. People's opinions and preferences on working in hotels were questioned in the poll. Every statement on the preferences and views of final-year hotel management students was based on the Likert five-point rating system, which went from very excellent to unacceptable.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

With promptitude, the 200 respondents completed the pre-planned questions. Likert scale responses from 200 final-year hotel management students in Himachal Pradesh are discussed as:

Table 1: The availability of career growth opportunities in the hotel industry

Likert Scale	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	10	5%
2: Not Important	20	10%
3: Important	90	45%
4: Very Important	80	40%

Interpretation: Most (85%) of final-year hotel management students in Himachal Pradesh perceive career growth opportunities in the hotel industry as important or very important. This indicates a strong desire among students to advance professionally within their chosen field. A significant percentage of student's value career growth, suggesting that they are keen on opportunities that offer potential advancement, which could influence their career choices and long-term goals within the hospitality sector.

Table 2: The importance of gaining practical experience during academic studies

Likert Scale	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	4	2%
2: Not Important	16	8%
3: Important	100	50%
4: Very Important	80	40%

Interpretation: A notable proportion (90%) of students consider gaining practical experience during their academic studies as important or very important. This high percentage underscores the value that students place on hands-on learning and real-world exposure within the hospitality industry. The emphasis on practical experience suggests that students perceive such opportunities as crucial for developing their skills and readiness for the workforce, aligning academic learning with practical application in hospitality management.

Table 3: The significance of salary and benefits offered by employers

Likert Scale	Number Respondents	of Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	20	10%
2: Not Important	30	15%
3: Important	100	50%
4: Very Important	50	25%

Interpretation: Three-quarters (75%) of students regard salary and benefits offered by employers as important or very important. This finding highlights the financial considerations that influence students' career decisions within the hotel industry. The emphasis on competitive compensation and benefits suggests that students are mindful of financial stability and rewards associated with their future employment, indicating that remuneration packages play a significant role in attracting and retaining talent in the hospitality sector.

Table 4: The relevance of the hotel's reputation and brand in job selection

Likert Scale	Number Respondents	of Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	10	5%
2: Not Important	20	10%
3: Important	80	40%
4: Very Important	90	45%

Interpretation: A substantial majority (85%) of students view the reputation and brand of hotels as important or very important when making job choices. This indicates that students value the prestige and recognition of well-established hotel brands. The emphasis on reputation suggests that students consider brand reputation as a factor influencing their job preferences, potentially seeking opportunities that align with reputable and recognised hospitality establishments to enhance their career prospects and professional standing.

Table 5: The importance of job location and its impact on lifestyle

Likert Scale	Number Respondents	of Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	16	8%
2: Not Important	24	12%
3: Important	90	45%
4: Very Important	70	35%

Interpretation: A significant majority (80%) of students place importance on job location and its impact on lifestyle. This finding suggests that students consider geographical factors when evaluating job opportunities within the hospitality industry. The emphasis on lifestyle impact indicates that students value job locations that offer convenience, accessibility, and conducive living conditions, reflecting their consideration of personal and practical aspects alongside career opportunities.

Table 6: The value of job security and stability in the chosen career path

Likert Scale	Number Respondents	of Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	24	12%
2: Not Important	36	18%
3: Important	80	40%
4: Very Important	60	30%

Interpretation: Most (70%) of students value job security and stability in their chosen career path. This highlights students' preference for roles that offer long-term career prospects and stability within the hospitality industry. The emphasis on job security suggests that students seek assurances in their professional journey, potentially influencing their career decisions towards positions that provide stability and longevity, essential factors for career satisfaction and growth.

Table 7: The significance of professional development and training opportunities

Likert Scale	Number Respondents	of Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	10	5%
2: Not Important	20	10%
3: Important	110	55%
4: Very Important	60	30%

Interpretation: A substantial majority (85%) of students consider professional development and training opportunities as important or very important. This underscores students' importance on continuous learning and skill enhancement within the hospitality sector. The emphasis on professional development suggests that students value opportunities for growth, learning new skills, and improving their professional capabilities, indicating a proactive approach towards career advancement and readiness for evolving roles within the industry.

Table 8: The relevance of work-life balance considerations in job decisions

Likert Scale	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1: Least Important	20	10%
2: Not Important	30	15%
3: Important	90	45%
4: Very Important	60	30%

Interpretation: Three-quarters (75%) of students priorities work-life balance considerations when making job decisions. This finding reflects an upward awareness of the importance of maintaining a good balance between professional and personal life among hospitality management students in Himachal Pradesh. The emphasis on work-life balance suggests that students value roles that offer flexibility, manageable workloads, and opportunities for personal fulfillment alongside professional growth, indicating a holistic approach to career satisfaction and well-being.

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