

Undergraduate Hospitality Students Perspectives of Pursuing Master Degree in Related Field: A Study in context of Benefits to enrol in Master Degree in Future

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Abstract - Hospitality & Tourism industry attracts potential job prospects with varied education qualification levels and work backgrounds. Undergraduate students decide to pursue further education in related field might be primarily depends on the perspectives of having wider job opportunities in the related industry .Previous industrial training exposure experienced during undergraduate course might also influence the passed out hospitality graduates to pursue master degree courses instead of working in the industry only with undergraduate qualification. Present paper aims to explore final year undergraduate hospitality student's perspectives to pursue master degree in related field. Respondents comprises of students belonging to two streams that is Hotel management (B.Sc HM) and students of Airlines, Tourism and Hospitality Management (ATHM).Hotel management students were further grouped into newly admitted students and students who have just completed their Industrial training(I.T) in various star reputed hotels. Majority of students irrespective of stream wise admit that holding master degree in the related field in future will be beneficial for them to get higher starting salaries in the hospitality industry and also benefit them to get promotional gains .Female students hold more positive views than the male students. Industry professional need to revise their recruit policies and should add weightage to the prospects who holds master degree in the recruitment and selection process .Industry should try to absorb master degree students and undergraduate students at different levels.

Keywords: Job Prospects, Perspectives, Master, Benefical & Recruitment

I. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality & Tourism industry attracts potential job prospects with varied education qualification levels and work backgrounds. Goeldner and Richie (2006)^[1] acknowledged that hospitality and tourism employees coming from varied backgrounds may or may not have relevant skills, knowledge /qualifications before employment. Hjalager and Anderson (2001) ^[2] in their study pointed out that many employees who enter the hospitality sector with no formal education except primary or secondary school qualifications and very less percentage 10% of them have university qualifications. Li et al.'s (2007)^[3] in their study reported that more than half of hospitality managers had related hospitality backgrounds but their highest academic qualification is up to vocational level. Undergraduate students decide to pursue further education in related field might be primarily depends on the perspectives of having wider job

opportunities in the related industry. Previous industrial training exposure experienced during undergraduate course might also influence the passed out hospitality graduates to pursue master degree courses instead of working in the industry only with undergraduate qualification. Sometimes undergraduates enrolled in the PG courses possess high expectations as what the hospitality industry would offer them after completion of their PG courses in terms of higher salary or promotional gains. Present paper aims to explore final year undergraduate hospitality student's perspectives to pursue master degree in related field.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Although there is a growing trend in higher education offering student internship opportunities in order to help them to apply theory to practice (Aggett and Busby, 2012)^[4],Williams et al. (2013)^[5] pointed out that hospitality industry lacked capable managers as majority

of hospitality graduates complete their undergraduate programmes without gaining appropriate management skills. Common concern among stakeholders is that higher education is not producing well prepared graduates as per the expectations which are relevant to the industry’s needs and practices (Nolan et al., 2010^[6]; Hearn, Devine and Baum, 2007)^[7]. **Abel, Jaison R. & Deitz, Richard** (2014)^[8] attempted to explore whether a college education remains a good investment. Researchers concluded that with tuition rising, wages falling, and many college graduates struggling to find good jobs, the value of a college degree may seem to be in doubt. However, these factors alone do not determine whether a college education is a good investment. Indeed, once the full set of costs and benefits is taken into account, investing in a college education still appears to be a wise economic decision for the average person. **Kong, A. P. (2015)** ^[9] performed a study to identify perceptions and expectations among practitioners, educators and students in tourism and hospitality education. Finding of the study revealed that work experience is slightly more important to the students than to employers and highlighted that some employers did not prefer to recruit graduates from universities where the students study only theory and concepts of hospitality. Researcher concluded that students were not willing to work from the bottom up, especially given the poor working conditions in the industry. Employers emphasised that personality and attitude were the most important attributes. Employers also believed that students do not consider that this applies to students

Research Objective:

1. To compare the perception of final year students(Stream wise/Gender wise) about benefit of pursuing Master degree in related field in terms Demographic Profile of the Respondent

of getting higher salary structure and promotional gain.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference exist among students (Gender/Stream wise) in terms of their perception about benefit of pursuing master degree for getting higher salary.
2. There is no significant difference exist among students (Gender/Stream wise) in terms of their perception about benefit of pursuing master degree for getting promotional gain.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire were distributed to a total of 200 students belonging to two streams that is Hotel management (B.Sc HM) and students of Airlines, Tourism and Hospitality Management (ATHM).Hotel management students were further grouped into newly admitted students and students who have just completed their Industrial training(I.T) in various star reputed hotels. Out of total responses (187), **22.5 % (42)** of them were **I.T Students**, **28 % (53)** were **Final H.M**, **18% (34)** were **Final ATHM** and remaining **31% (58)** of them were **New Prospects**. Present study aimed to gather data from each four group’s participants so that findings could help industry professionals and educationist to devise certain strategies for retention of young educated young force of hospitality sector. Same set of respondents were part of a study conducted for exploring starting salary expectations and perception about hotel job offers. In the present paper respondents were assessed for exploring final year undergraduate hospitality student’s perspectives to pursue master degree in related field.

Table 1 Shows Sample Size of the survey

	Opts	Percentage	Frequency
Respondents	I.T(Second Year)	22%	42
	Final HM	28%	53
	Final ATHM	18%	34
	Newly admitted	31%	58
Total		100%	187
Gender	Male	56%	105

Female	44%	82
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Table 2 Shows Respondents Responses on the Statements(Master Degree –Higher Salary)

		Percentage	Frequency
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you to get higher starting salaries in the industry	Strongly Disagree	7%	14
	Disagree	29%	54
	Neutral	26%	49
	Agree	31%	58
	Strongly Agree	6%	12

Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you in future to get higher starting salaries in the industry:

Table 3 Shows Mean values –Stream Wise

Descriptive		N	Mean
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you to get higher starting salaries in the industry	IT	42	2.7
	Final HM	53	2.8
	Final ATHM	34	3.1
	New	58	3.2
	Total	187	3.0

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you to get higher starting salaries in the industry	Between Groups	8.203	3	2.734	2.408	.069
	Within Groups	207.797	183	1.136		
	Total	216.000	186			

Stream wise: Majority of students irrespective of stream wise admit that holding master degree in the related field in future will be beneficial for them to get higher starting salaries in the hospitality industry. Annova was applied and it was found that there is no significant differences exist among students of various streams on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them in getting higher salary structures in the hospitality industry.

Table 4 Shows Mean values –Gender Wise

		N	Mean
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you to get higher starting salaries in the industry	IT Male	24	2.5
	IT Female	18	3.0
	HM Male	35	2.4
	HM Female	18	3.6
	ATHM Male	13	2.7
	ATHM Female	21	3.3
	New Male	33	3.2
	New Female	25	3.2
	Total	187	3.0

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you to get higher starting salaries in the industry	Between Groups	32.669	7	4.667	4.557	.000
	Within Groups	183.331	179	1.024		
	Total	216.000	186			

Gender Wise: Mean values of female students irrespective of various streams found to be higher than male students. Annova was applied and it was found that there is a significant difference exists among male and female students on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them in getting higher salary structures in the hospitality industry. Female students hold more positive views than the male students.

Table 5 Shows Respondents Responses on the Statements(Master Degree-Promotion Gain

		Percentage	Frequency
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you for promotion gain	Strongly Disagree	4%	7
	Disagree	15%	28
	Neutral	23%	43
	Agree	38%	71
	Strongly Agree	20%	38

Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you in future for promotion gain in the hospitality industry:

Table 6 Shows Mean Values-Stream Wise

Descriptive		N	Mean
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you for promotion gain	IT	42	2.7
	Final HM	53	3.2
	Final ATHM	34	4.4
	New	58	3.9
	Total	187	3.5

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you for promotion gain	Between Groups	69.989	3	23.330	28.452	.000
	Within Groups	150.054	183	.820		
	Total	220.043	186			

Stream Wise: Majority of students irrespective of stream wise admit that holding master degree in the related field in future will be beneficial for them to get promotion gain in the hospitality industry. It was observed that mean values of I.T and HM students was low in comparison to ATHM and newly admitted students. Annova was applied and it was found that there is significant differences exist among students of various streams on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them to get promotion gain in the hospitality industry.

Table 6 Shows Mean Values-Gender Wise

		N	Mean
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you for promotion gain	IT Male	24	2.3
	IT Female	18	3.2
	HM Male	35	3.0

	HM Female	18	3.5
	ATHM Male	13	4.4
	ATHM Female	21	4.3
	New Male	33	4.0
	New Female	25	3.8
	Total	187	3.5

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you for promotion gain	Between Groups	80.219	7	11.460	14.671	.000
	Within Groups	139.824	179	.781		
	Total	220.043	186			

Gender wise: Mean values of female students of HM and IT students were observed to be higher than male students. In contrast to that mean values of female student of ATHM and Newly admitted students was observed to lower than male students. Annova was applied and it was found that there is a significant difference exists among male and female students on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them to get promotion gain in the hospitality industry.

IV. FINDINGS

Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you in future to get higher starting salaries in the industry:

It was found that there is no significant differences exist among students of various streams on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them in getting higher salary structures in the hospitality industry. As Majority of students irrespective of stream wise admit that holding master degree in the related field in future will be beneficial for them to get higher starting salaries in the hospitality industry. It was found that there is a significant difference exists among male and female students on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them in getting higher salary structures in the hospitality industry. Female students hold more positive views than the male students.

Acquiring Master Degree in related field will help you in future for promotion gain in the hospitality industry:

It was found that there is significant differences exist among students of various streams on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them to get promotion gain in the hospitality industry. It was observed that mean values of I.T and HM students was low in comparison to ATHM and newly admitted students. Similarly it was found that there is a significant difference exists among male and female students on the view that holding master degree in future will be beneficial for them to get promotion gain in the hospitality industry.

V. CONCLUSION

Majority of students irrespective of stream wise admit that pursuing master degree in the related field in future will be beneficial for them to get higher starting salaries in the hospitality industry and it will also benefit them to get promotional gains .Female students hold more positive views than the male students. Initially achieving higher education may have little significance for the prospective employees in terms of job prospects however students will get long term benefits and tend to progress to higher levels in combination with career longevity. Individuals when progress from lower level positions to middle and senior management, then there is a greater weightage on the requirements for higher education (Green, Hammer and Star, 2009) [10].

VI. SUGGESTIONS

- Industry professional need to revise their recruit policies and should add weightage to the prospects who holds master degree in the recruitment and selection process
- Industry should try to absorb master degree students and undergraduate students at different levels.
- Similarly master degree students during their I.T should be exposed to managerial aspects of hospitality operations.
- There is a need to adjust the master degree curriculum as per the core expectations of the industry professionals as expected from the prospective employees.

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