

# DO TERRORISM AND WARS HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON HOTEL INDUSTRY PERCEPTIONS BY HOTEL MANAGEMENT STUDENTS?

**R.K. Gupta**

Dean (Academics), Institute of Hotel Management Catering and Nutrition, PUSA, New Delhi  
drkkgupta.ihmpusa@nic.in

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** This paper discusses the effect of terrorism and wars on the hotel industry perceptions of hotel management students. **Methods:** The impacts of these negative situations were tested from the data collected from 265 students of various courses at the institute using a questionnaire. **Results:** It was found that majority (49.8%) of the students do not regret in joining the industry after terror attacks like that of 26/11. Also majority (62.9%) agrees to recommend hotel management profession to their friends and they are not regretful of joining the profession.

**Key Words:** Terrorism, War, Hotel Management, Perception.

## INTRODUCTION

The word terrorism is very frightening itself for the people. Many people have tried to define the term terrorism using different perspective and causes. "Terror" comes from a Latin word meaning "to frighten" (Etymology Dictionary). The terror cimbricus was a panic and state of emergency in Rome in response to the approach of warriors of the Cimbri tribe in 105BC. The Jacobins cited this precedent when imposing a Reign of terror during the French Revolution. After the Jacobins lost power, the word "terrorist" became a term of abuse. Although the Reign of Terror was imposed by a government, in modern times "terrorism" usually refers to the killing of innocent people by a private group in such a way as to create a media spectacle (Campbell, 2001).

According to FBI, the terrorism is defined as the unlawful use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a Government, the civilian population, or any segment thereof, in furtherance of political or social objectives (Zalman).

The overwhelming impression is that causing harm (physical or psychological) to the innocent civilian population is the central characteristic of terrorist action. The available literature articulates that harming civilians is the most effective manner from the terrorist mindset to effectuate their goals (Guiora, 2007).

In November 2004, a United Nations Security Council report described terrorism as any act "intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants with the purpose of intimidating a population or compelling a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act."

Terrorism is a heinous act of some people or groups and no country is spared of the evil. There have been so many terrorist attacks on Indian soil also. 26/11 (attack in Mumbai on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2008) is a very prominent example. The world is affected by so many wars or war like situations between countries. India too has faced a number of wars with its neighbours. One was the tension built on its borders after 26/11.

Terrorism and wars have affected Tourism and Hotel industry the most. Terrorism and wars affect directly these industries. The visitors cancel their trips to those areas that are affected by terrorism and wars for obvious reasons of their safety and security.

These situations also affect India. According to industry estimates the tourism arrivals in India were dropped by 25% after 26/11. This has a multiplier effect. The occupancies in the hotels dropped significantly. The hotels started taking cost cutting measures. One of the ways the hotels started doing that is to retrench the employees. The hotels almost stopped recruiting staff or reduced to a bare minimum. Does this situation have a negative effect on hotel industry perceptions by hotel management students? There are so many studies world over about the effect of terrorism on tourism. The results of a study conducted on the impact of acts of terrorism on tourism demand in Israel during the period of May 1991 to May 2001 confirmed the hypothesis that the frequency of acts of terrorism had caused a larger decline in international tourist arrivals than the severity of these acts (Pizam, 2002). While tourists are free to avoid destinations associated with risk, the consequences of disastrous events on tourist destinations are inescapable and can be profound. Terrorism that targets tourism can be viewed as a disaster for a destination and ensuing events can create a serious tourism crisis (Sonmez et al, 1999).

Aksu and Koksal (2007) in Turkey carried out a similar type of study on the negative effects of terrorism and wars on tourism industry perceptions by tourism students. The present study is based on lines of that study and was carried out in New Delhi after the Mumbai terrorist attack.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was done in New Delhi. The study was based on sample survey as the students studying hotel management institute were identified as sample. The research instrument used was a questionnaire.

The questionnaire was designed comprising of 7 questions. The questionnaire was adapted from the study done by Aksu and Koksal (2007) and which was reframed for the present work. The students studying in Institute of Hotel Management were taken as sample. The questions related to their willingness, informed choice, hotel management as a career priority, relatives in the industry, intention to work in the industry and their perception of the negative effect of terrorism and wars were asked.

The 314 students studying at Institute of Hotel Management, Pusa, New Delhi in M. Sc. (Hospitality Administration), M. Sc. (Dietetics and Food Service Management), B. Sc. (Hospitality and Hotel Administration), Post Graduate Diploma in Accommodation Operation & Management, and Diploma courses in F&B Service and Bakery & Confectionary were approached to fill the questionnaire. The sample was selected randomly. The questionnaires were administered by the scholar himself.

Total 265 respondents returned the filled questionnaire making 84.4% success rate. 88.7% were male students out of total respondents. The responses given by the sample were analyzed using in frequency and percentages.

*Table No. 1: Frequency and percentage of respondents*

Category	Frequency	Percentage
M.Sc. (HA)	4	1.50
M. Sc. (DFSM)	4	1.50
B. Sc. (HHA)		
First year	126	47.50
Second Year	33	12.50
Third Year	47	17.70
PGDAOM 15	5.70	
One Year Students	36	13.60
Gender of Students		
Male	235	88.70
Female	30	11.30

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

On the basis of data collected in questionnaire from 265 students, data was compiled and analyzed to find out various results.

In the reply of the question whether they have chosen hotel management willingly 225 students (84.9%) replied in “Yes” and only 20 students (7.5%) replied in “No” for the said question. Hotel Management was an informed choice to join, in reply of this question 211 students (79.6%) responded “Yes” while only 39 (14.7%) said “No”.

Hotel Management course was No. 1 priority for 112 students (42.3%), No. 2 priority for 98(37.0%), No. 3 priority for 29 students (10.9%) and 26 students (9.8%) were undecided. The number of students who intend to join hotel industry after finishing the course was 191 (72.1%). The students who will not join the industry were 35 (13.2%) and 39 students (14.7%) were undecided as per this study. 165 students (62.3%) do not have any relatives in the hotel industry.

When asked about the perception of the students whether they are regretful or not to join hotel management as a course 111 students (41.9%) said that were regretful while 132 students (49.8%) were not regretful and 22 students (8.3%) were undecided. The students are very hopeful about the profession as 62.6% students in the survey said that they will certainly advise their friends to join the industry.

The responses in the study and the findings are depicted in table 2.

*Table 2: The preferences of respondents*

Questions		Frequency	Percentage
Did you choose hotel management willingly	Yes	225	84.9
	No	20	7.5
	Undecided	20	7.5
Was it an Informed choice of joining hotel management Institute.	Yes	211	79.6
	No	39	14.7
	Undecided	15	5.7
Hotel management career as a Priority	1	112	42.3
	2	98	37
	3	29	10.9
	Undecided	26	9.8
Intention to work in hotel industry after completing the course	Yes	191	72.1
	No	35	13.2
	Undecided	39	14.7
Relatives in the industry	Yes	100	37.7
	No	165	62.3
When thought about the terrorist attacks (e.g.26/11) and war like situation, from being studying hotel management, you are.	Regretful	111	41.9
	Not Regretful	132	49.8
	Undecided	22	8.3
Despite it is a most affected industry from the results of incidences such as Terrorism and war, you will advise hotel management profession to your friends	Agree	166	62.6
	Not Agree	42	15.8
	Undecided	57	21.5

A comparison of decisions on terrorism/ war by preference was done and results are shown in table no. 3.

In response to the question when thought about terrorist attacks and war like situations, from being studying hotel management, the perception of the students who replied in “Yes” or “Agree” are not regretful of joining this profession. This only exception was in the case of students who had hotel management as career priority no. 1 were more regretful (52%) than unregretful (41%).

**Table No.3 - Comparing the Decisions on Terrorism/war by Preferences**

		When thought about the terrorist attacks (e.g. 26/11) and war like situation from being studying Hotel Management, You are							
		Regretful		Unregretful		Undecided		Total	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Chose Hotel Management willingly?	Yes	100	44	107	48	18	8	225	100
	No	6	30	9	45	5	25	20	100
	Undecided	5	25	12	60	3	15	20	100
	Total	111	42	128	48	26	10	265	100
Informed choice of Hotel Management Institute?	Yes	96	46	97	47	15	7	208	100
	No	8	22	23	64	5	14	36	100
	Undecided	4	19	13	62	4	19	21	100
	Total	108	41	133	50	24	9	265	100
Hotel Management career as a Priority	1	58	52	45	41	8	7	111	100
	2	35	35	56	55	10	10	101	100
	3	7	26	15	56	5	19	27	100
	Undecided	8	31	15	58	3	12	26	100
	Total	108	41	131	49	26	10	265	100
Intention to work in hotel industry after completing the course?	Yes	84	44	91	47	17	9	192	100
	No	11	32	19	56	4	12	34	100
	Undecided	13	33	23	59	3	8	39	100
	Total	108	41	133	50	24	9	265	100
Relatives in the industry	Yes	43	42	53	52	6	6	102	100
	No	68	42	80	49	15	9	163	100
	Total	111	42	133	50	21	8	265	100
Despite it is a most affected industry from the results of incidences such as terrorism and war. You will advise Hotel Management profession to your friends	Agree	76	46	79	47	12	7	167	100
	Not Agree	13	31	23	55	6	14	42	100
	Undecided	21	38	29	52	6	11	56	100
	Total	110	42	131	49	24	9	265	100

There are very few studies focusing on the effects of negative situations on hotel management student's perceptions and future expectations of the industry. A detailed study taking samples from different institutes spread over the country can be done for more detailed results. In order to understand the perceptions of the hotel management students for the hotel industry, it is important to analyze the formation and development of their expectations and to understand the effects to after school choice of the career.

## REFERENCES

1. Aksu A.A. and Koksals C.D. Hosteur; 2007; 16(2):21-25.
2. Guiora NA. Framing Homeland Security. 2007. U of Legal Studies Paper 07-11.
3. Kim Campbell (2001). When is terrorist a subjective term? Christian Science Monitor. In Wikipedia.com. Accessed on 21.01.2008.
4. Lommel J. Turning around turnover, Corrections Today; 2004; 66(5):54.
5. Online Etymology Dictionary. Terrorism Available from: <http://www.wikipedia.com>. Accessed on 21.01.2008.
6. Pizam P and Fleischer A. Severity versus frequency of acts of terrorism; which has a larger impact on tourism demand? ; Journal of Travel Research; 2002:337-339.
7. Sonmez SF, Apostolopoulos Y and Tarlow P. Tourism in crisis; Managing the effects of terrorism, Journal of Travel Research; 1999: 13-18.
8. Zalman A. FBI definition of terrorism. Available from: <http://www.about.com>. Accessed on 21.01.2008.