

FACTORS AFFECTING THE CAREER CHOICES OF UNDERGRADUATES IN CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Hotel Management Institutes have seen a tremendous growth in the recent years. More and more students are inclining to pursue the course at the national level in various institutes. Selecting a career path is very significant step in person's life as it helps to decide how they would live rest of their life. Many factors affect the career choices of an individual. Understanding applicant's preferences and values become an important aspect for recruiters to develop and update recruitment strategies.* **Objective:** *The purpose of the study was to find out the factors influencing the choices of undergraduates during the campus recruitment at IHM, Pusa.* **Methods:** *The subjects comprised of students (n=50) from Institute of Hotel Management, Pusa, New Delhi. Questionnaire was used as a tool to gather data on the various factors influencing the career choices.* **Results:** *The findings showed that the factors such as job stability & security prospects provided by the company, brand reputation, level of entry in the company highly affects the choices of undergraduates while making a career choice or applying for the recruitment process. Personal factors such as financial condition of home, parental consent, and job location also affects the choices of students to a great extent.* **Conclusion:** *Hence it becomes very important for the recruiter to understand the needs of the students to decrease the attrition rate & reduce the recruitment costs.*

Key Words: *Undergraduates, Hotel Management, influencing factors, career choices, recruitment.*

INTRODUCTION

Indian hospitality industry is growing by leaps and bounds. This is definitely because of the increasing demand of hospitality in domestic and global market. According to Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Association of India (FHRAI), India currently has over 200,000 hotel rooms spread across hotel categories and guest-houses and is still facing a shortfall of over 100,000 rooms. Hospitality is a booming industry in India. Tourism and Hospitality are the third largest net earners of foreign exchange

in India and they are expected to grow in numbers very soon. The Ninth Five Year Plan has predicted a shortage of 30,000 trained professionals every year. The stakeholder's realization is that in a country there is need of professionals who can provide an excellent standard of products and services in hospitality. Thus, the growth opportunity for this sector is immense and fast. The growing hospitality sector has given rise to mushrooming of the number of hotel management schools in the country with the aim of providing trained professionals. With increasing globalization, career opportunities in this field are not only unlimited within the country but there are chains of hotels, which operate internationally providing scope of a career abroad (Srinivasan,& Karmarkar,2014).

The term career refers to the “general course a person chooses to pursue throughout the working life” (Mondy et al, 1996). Career path, on the other hand, is the way in which an individual's career develops leading to the realization of career goals. Several factors have been cited as determinants of employees' career decisions and subsequent career paths. They include demographics (Dessler,1997, Mondy et al, 1996), career anchors (Danziger & Valency, 2006, Mondy et al, 1996), job satisfaction levels (O'leary & Deegan, 2005), chance, labour market conditions (Agarwala, 2008), the general economy (Arnold & Davey, 1994), choice and unpredictable events.

During the course study of three years of Hospitality and Hotel Management that students undergo industrial exposure of six months. They are exposed to various branches of hotel operations like Food & Beverage, Food Production, Housekeeping, Sales & Marketing, etc. During this period, they develop their own obsessions & aversions besides perception & ideas. They come back to the institute and interact with each other to get a fair idea of other hotels which they did not get to acquaint during their training. Thus they build up their aptitude and attitude for a specific company, area of interest. They also start dreaming about their goal. This follows an ambition at the end of third year to make a catch of their dream department and company.

Andrew Kevin Jenkins, 2001 mentions that students have a distinct preference for certain hotel departments, hotel chains and sectors of the industry. Most expect to be general manager/corporate manager ten years after graduating. As the degree progresses, the students' perception of the industry deteriorates.

The most widely used classification in career choice studies is the three-dimensional framework by Carpenter and Foster (1977) and Beyon et al. (1998). The three factors are: Intrinsic (interest in job, personally satisfying work, Extrinsic (availability of jobs, well paying occupations); and Interpersonal (influence of parents and significant others)

A few of the students drift away for a career associated with hospitality but are not keen to join hotels. They prefer Airlines, Human Resource, Sales & Marketing, Travel & Tour, Retails, Event Management and so on. However those with a strong inclination towards entrepreneurship decide to

go for start their own startups. The alarming finding to come out of Scott Richardson, (2009) study is that more than 50% of the respondents are already contemplating careers outside the industry. Of those with the work experience in the industry, 43.6% claim that they will not work in the tourism and hospitality industry after graduation, with 96.3% of these respondents' citing working experience in the industry as the main reason for this decision.

According to Kerka (2000), career choice is influenced by multiple factors including personality, interests, self concept, cultural identity, globalization, socialization, role model, social support and available resources such as information and financial. Bandura et al., (2001) state that each individual undertaking the process is influenced by several factors including the context in which they live in, their personal aptitudes, social contacts and educational attainment.

The tourism and hospitality industry has experienced a dramatic growth in size and compatibility during the latter half of the 20th century. The growth has in turn fueled tremendous options readily available on platter for hospitality students. One can foresee in near future the challenge to attract talented, competent graduates to join hospitality industry as such particularly hotels because in today's scenario there are multi-ferrous career options available for the students. The purpose of the study is to relatively assess importance of factors affecting the student's employment choices. Recruiters could benefit from an understanding of factors that students consider important when choosing among various employment offers. Greater understanding of influential decision factors would help to plan efficient recruitment strategy, employee satisfaction and low employee turnover. Thus the objective of the study is to find out the factors influencing the career choices of undergraduates during the campus recruitment at IHM,Pusa.

METHODOLOGY

For the present work survey design was followed. The study was conducted at IHM, Pusa, New Delhi. The subjects were students (n= 50) of 3rd year of B.Sc. Hospitality & Hotel Administration (HHA). The participants were in the age group of 20-24 years. The research instrument used was a questionnaire. The study was conducted in the month of April 2016 once the placement process was almost over for the session. The questions pertained to factors affecting the career choices during recruitment like passion, job stability & security, work environment, brand, financial paybacks, level of entry, salary, location and Bond etc. The questionnaires were filled by the students on the basis of presentation done by recruiter before the recruitment process, position of the company in the market and feedback about the company from the seniors & faculty. Only completely filled questionnaires were accepted for data analysis. Statistical analysis included frequency and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 50 subjects for the study were the Final year students of B.Sc HHA who participated in campus recruitment process in 2015-16. The subjects were in the age range of 20-24 years. On the basis of data collected the results for the factors affecting career choices of the undergraduates in campus recruitment is presented as following:

Table 1: Factors Affecting the Career Choices of Undergraduates in Campus Recruitment

Questions		Frequency(n=50)	Percentage
Influence of Job Stability and security	Highly	39	78
	Moderately	8	16
	Slightly	3	6
Influence of Brand Reputation	Highly	36	72
	Moderately	12	24
	Slightly	2	4
Influence of Level of entry	Highly	35	70
	Moderately	12	24
	Slightly	3	6
Passion for a particular department	Highly	35	70
	Moderately	13	26
	Slightly	2	4
Influence of Parental financial condition	Highly	27	54
	Moderately	21	42
	Slightly	2	4
Influence of Parental Consent	Highly	16	32
	Moderately	27	54
	Slightly	7	14
Influence of bond/ agreement	Highly	21	42
	Moderately	22	44
	Slightly	7	14

Questions		Frequency(n=50)	Percentage
Influence of Salary Offered	Highly	28	56
	Moderately	22	44
	Slightly	0	0
Influence of Location	Highly	20	40
	Moderately	18	36
	Slightly	12	24
Higher studies/ Advanced Training	Highly	8	16
	Moderately	27	54
	Slightly	15	30
Influence of working hours	Highly	20	40
	Moderately	24	48
	Slightly	6	12

Out of the 50 participants, 78% were highly affected by the Job stability and security prospects being provided by the recruiter during presentation and recruitment process. While 16% were moderately affected and only 6% of the subjects were affected slightly. Brand reputation of the company in the market was highly significant to 72% of the respondents whereas it was found to be moderately significant for 24% of the subjects and slightly significant for the remaining 4%. The potential employees weighing job options gave 70% weightage to the level of entry offered by the companies which were Management trainee, Hotel Operational Trainee, Operational trainee and staff associate in descending order.

Simultaneously it was found 70% laid emphasis on their passion for a particular department (i.e. Front office, Food & Beverage Service, Food Production, Housekeeping, Human Resource, Sales & Marketing, Revenue management etc) while 26% were moderately affected by this factor.

It was observed that career choices of majority (54%) of the students were influenced by the financial condition of Parents/Guardian, while 42% were moderately influenced by this factor. Regarding decision making for job options and higher studies only 32% were highly dependent on parental consent whereas majority (54%) were moderately dependent. Employee career decisions can also be influenced by family, peers, spouse, friends, relatives, coworkers and managers (Agarwala,2008; Garavan & Coolahan,1996). These relations can pressure an employee against pursuing certain careers in favour of others.

Further it was found that 42% of the subjects were highly influenced by the bond agreement provided by the companies, 44% were moderately affected and 14% were slightly affected thus it can be seen that the subjects are not in favour of bond agreement. Majority (56%) of the subjects considered salary package provided by the company as highly important factor for job selection while 44% felt that it moderately affects their career choice. Scott Richardson, (2009) explained areas that students have concerns over include respondent's relationship with their managers, promotion opportunities, career paths, and the pay and conditions offered within the industry. Majority (76%) of the students were found to be location specific in terms of making the career choices.

It was found only 16% were highly inclined towards higher studies or advanced training and majority (54%) were moderately inclined towards higher studies.

Majority (88%) of the students considered working hours as one of the highly affecting factor in terms of job selection whereas only 12% finds this factor affecting slightly for their career choice.

CONCLUSION

The most important factors that were found to be influencing career choices of undergraduates in campus recruitment were brand reputation, job stability & security prospects and the level of entry offered by the various companies. It was also seen that the factors like salary, working hours/working environment and passion for a particular operational area also matters to a great degree. It was found that not only the above mentioned professional factors affects the career choices but personal factors like financial conditions, parental consent, bond paper & advanced studies also played a role in decision making.

It is suggested that recruiters should identify, record and access to prioritize the students elements of career choices in order to avoid attrition and to reduce recruitment cost. It is also proposed that the companies must seriously analyze the needs of the students in terms of career choices while laying down recruitment policies.

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