

THE CHALLENGES AND ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF THE HOTEL MANAGEMENT STUDENTS DURING THE INDUSTRIAL TRAINING EXPOSURE

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ABSTRACT

Background: Industrial training exposure allows the students to apply the theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world situations. This practical application enhances their understanding of concepts and fosters a deeper learning experience. Working in a real-world setting exposes students to various challenges and scenarios, helping them develop a wide range of practical skills. **Objectives:** (1) To identify the various challenges encountered by hotel management students during their industrial exposure training period. (2) To study about the impact of industrial exposure on the acquisition of practical skills, professional demeanor, and industry-specific knowledge among hotel management students. (3) To identify the facilities and support mechanisms offered by hotels to trainees during their industrial exposure is crucial for understanding the learning environment and ensuring a positive and enriching experience for the trainees. **Methodology:** The study is descriptive in nature. The sample for the study consists of 124 from Wayanad district, Kerala. The primary data required for the research was collected using a structured questionnaire which was distributed off-line. Stratified Random sampling technique was used for the study. Data was analyzed based on the category of the hotel where the training was done and the statistical analysis was based on percentage, chi square test, correlation analysis, ANOVA Test with the help of IBM SPSS Version 23. **Results:** 58.1% respondents agreed with the statement that they get benefited by doing the industrial exposure training; whereas, 17.7% strongly agreed, 13.7% of the respondents neither disagreed nor agreed, 8% disagreed and only a minority of 4% of the respondent said that they are not benefited by doing the industrial exposure training. The relationship between the category of the hotels and the stipend provided, weekly off and communication problems faced by the trainees had a statistically significant linear relationship ($p < .001$). **Conclusion:** The study suggests several measures for improvement, including providing accommodation, transportation support, stipends, uniforms, and compensation for extra work during peak hours. It also underscores the importance of addressing harassment issues and ensuring appropriate punishment for any misconduct. The research indicates challenges during industrial exposure training might lead to student discontinuation or a preference for higher studies after completing the course. This highlights the critical need for addressing these issues to retain and support students in their career journeys.

Key Words: Practical Skills, Professional Demeanor, Industry-specific Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

Industrial exposure training is mandatory for all hotel management students enrolled in the university, underlining its significance in the overall education and preparation for a career in the hospitality industry. The hotel management

institutes provide specific teaching areas/facilities such as training restaurants, lobby, housekeeping demo labs, and nutrition laboratories which indicates a commitment to provide students with a diverse and immersive learning

environment. The training aims to provide students with fundamental knowledge and hands-on experience in various operational divisions of the hotel industry, including food production, food and beverage service, housekeeping, and front office. The recommended duration of the industrial exposure training, ranging from 5 to 6 months, aligns with industry standards and allows for a comprehensive understanding of the workings of the hospitality sector.

The primary goal of the training program is to offer students valuable industrial experience, aiding in their overall development. The emphasis on enhancing employability skills and helping students make informed decisions about their future careers is a notable aspect. The direct exposure to actual hotel environments provides students with a firsthand experience of the service sector, allowing them to understand the intricacies of providing high-quality service to customers. The industrial exposure training program is well-structured, aligns with industry standards, and is designed to prepare hotel management students for successful careers in the hospitality sector by combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience. The inclusion of a dedicated training and placement cell further emphasizes the institute's commitment to supporting students in their future growth and career needs. The goal of the industrial exposure training is to mold students into good hotel professionals. This implies not only learning specific skills but also understanding the broader aspects of professionalism, such as work ethics and a customer-centric approach. The training is not only about acquiring technical skills but also about developing positive attitudes towards the hotel industry. Additionally, it plays a role in building self-confidence, particularly in handling guest complaints—a crucial aspect of the hospitality industry where customer satisfaction is of paramount.

Many employers are hesitant to acquire fresh graduates wherein hospitality management graduates are more marketable if they have the necessary skills and knowledge the industry demands in today's workforce. The curriculum aims to produce world-class hospitality professionals by providing students with the necessary skills and knowledge required for supervisory roles within the industry. Recognizing the importance of interpersonal skills in the hospitality sector, the curriculum is designed to actively develop students' abilities to communicate and interact effectively with guests and colleagues. The inclusion of industrial exposure training is highlighted as a critical component. This practical training

provides students with hands-on experience, allowing them to analyze and understand how various tasks are performed in different situations within the hospitality industry. The industrial exposure training focuses on studying the standard operating procedures of various departments. This practical knowledge is essential for students to become apt at the day-to-day operations of different areas within a hotel. The hotel management curriculum appears to be comprehensive, aiming to provide students with a holistic preparation for their future roles in the hospitality sector. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical industrial exposure, the program strives to instill both the skills and the mindset required for success in the field.

The hotel management program is designed with a clear objective of developing students into professionals by providing them with essential industrial exposure. The focus on practical training within the real hotel atmosphere is crucial for students to understand the nuances of the industry and prepare for the challenges they may face in their careers. The study analyzing the problems faced by hotel management students during industrial training exposure is a valuable initiative. The exposure to 5-star classified properties adds significant value to the students' training, allowing them to witness high standards and best practices in the industry. Working in both core and ancillary departments provides a holistic understanding of hotel operations, enabling students to make informed decisions about their future career paths within the hotel industry. Analyzing the problems faced by hotel management students during industrial training exposure indicates a proactive approach to identifying and addressing challenges. This initiative is crucial for continuously improving the program and ensuring a positive learning experience for students.

(Kukreti & Dani, 2020) focused on identifying the significance of industrial training programs for hotel management students. The researchers aimed to shed light on the importance of such training initiatives and investigate the impact on students who have successfully completed the programs. Additionally, the study delved into the reasons behind the existing gap between the academic curriculum and the actual requirements of the hotel industry. The study probably investigated and discussed the reasons behind the identified gap. These reasons may include rapid changes in industry trends, evolving customer expectations, or limitations in the curriculum design and delivery.

(Venkatram et al., 2019) conducted a study on analyzing the satisfaction levels of students after completing their internship in a hotel setting. Additionally, the study aimed to identify different sectors within the hospitality industry that students express an interest in joining after completing their graduation. The research study likely contributes to the field of hospitality education by providing insights into the effectiveness of internships in preparing students for their future careers.

(Bhinder, 2019) aimed to find out the industrial training experiences of hotel management students, specifically assessing whether the exposure was beneficial or not. The study also highlighted the role of professionals in providing cooperative support and assigning relevant tasks during the industrial training period. The research evaluated the overall experience of hotel management students during their industrial training, aimed to determine the extent to which the exposure is considered beneficial or otherwise.

(Immaneni & Sailaja 2017) research titled “Industrial Exposure Training in Hotel and Its Impact on Undergraduate Students: Challenges and Remedies,” focused on analyzing the challenges encountered by hotel management students during their Industrial Exposure Training (IET) period. Additionally, the paper aimed to propose solutions for both hotels and institutes to address any negative perceptions or impressions that students may develop during their training, ultimately contributing to the future growth of the industry. The paper also suggested remedies for educational institutes to strengthen their industrial exposure training programs. This could include adjustments to the curriculum, increased collaboration with industry partners, or additional support mechanisms for students during their training.

The significance of the study lies in its potential to bring about positive changes and improvements in the field of hotel management education. The study focuses on practical challenges faced by hotel management students during industrial exposure training. This practical relevance ensures that the findings directly address real-world issues encountered by students in the hospitality industry. To identified challenges helps bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills. This is crucial in preparing students for the dynamic and competitive nature of the hospitality industry, ensuring a smoother transition from education to employment. The study lies in its potential to

bring about positive changes in hotel management education, improving the learning experience for students and ensuring their readiness for successful careers in the dynamic hospitality industry. The objectives were:

- To identify the various challenges encountered by hotel management students during their industrial exposure training period.
- To study about the impact of industrial exposure on the acquisition of practical skills, professional demeanor, and industry-specific knowledge among hotel management students.
- To identify the facilities and support mechanisms offered by hotels to trainees during their industrial exposure

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study is descriptive in nature. This implies that the research aims to describe and interpret the characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena under investigation without manipulating variables. In this case, the focus is likely on describing the facilities and support mechanisms provided to students during their training in star-classified hotels.

Locale: The population selected for the study was the hotel management students from Wayanad District, Kerala

Sampling Design: The sample selected for the study were 124 students from Wayanad District, Kerala, who did their training in the star classified hotel.

Tools and Techniques : Stratified Random sampling technique was used for the study. Primary data was collected with the help of the structured questionnaire which was distributed physically to the students.

Data Analysis and Statistical Analysis: The analysis was done based on category of the hotel. Statistical methods such as percentage analysis, correlation analysis, ANOVA Test with the help of IBM SPSS Version 23 was done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic detail: The subjects majorly in study were male (96.8%) and rest were female. Majority (83.9%) of the respondents arranged their training through the training and placement cell and only a minority of the respondents arranged through their own source which includes the

students who have done their training aboard. It is depicted in table 1 that majority of the respondent did their training in 5 star hotels i.e., 54.8%; whereas 45 % of the respondents have done in 4 star classified hotels and only a minority of 8.9% respondents have done in other hotels.

Table 1: Subject details

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Female	4	3.2	3.2
Male	120	96.8	100.0
Arrangement for the industrial exposure training			
Through Training and Placement	104	83.9	83.9
Own Source	20	16.1	100.0
Category of the hotel for industrial exposure training			
4 star hotels	45	36.3	36.3
5 Star Hotel	68	54.8	91.1
Others	11	8.9	100.0
Opinion for benefits of doing industrial training	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	5	4.0	4.0
Disagree	8	6.5	10.5
Neither disagree nor agree	17	13.7	24.2
Agree	72	58.1	82.3
Strongly agree	22	17.7	100.0

Most of the respondent (58.1%) agreed with the statement that they got benefitted by doing the industrial exposure training, whereas for the same question, 17.7% strongly agreed, 13.7% of neither disagree nor agreed, 8% disagreed and only a minority of 4% of the respondent said that they were not benefitted by doing the industrial exposure training.

Facilities provided by the hotel: Majority of the respondents i.e. 73.4% said that the hotels are not providing accommodation to the IET trainees and only 26.6% agreed that some hotels are provides accommodation facilitates especially, if the hotels are located in rural areas. For cab facilities 85.5% of the respondents said that they don't have cab facilities for the trainees and 14.5% of the respondents had an opinion that hotels provided cab to the trainees. For provision of uniform by hotel majority (72.6%) of the respondent disagreed, 33.1% strongly disagreed, 12% of the respondent strongly agreed with the statement. 86.3% of the respondents said that the hotel provided medical assistance and only a minority of 13.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that the trainees are not provide with the medical assistance.

Table 2: Facilities provided by the hotel

Accommodation provided by the hotel	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	91	73.4	73.4
Yes	33	26.6	100.0
Cab facilitates provided by the hotel			
No	106	85.5	85.5
Yes	18	14.5	100.0
Hotel provide uniform for the trainees			
Strongly disagree	41	33.1	33.1
Disagree	49	39.5	72.6
Neither disagree nor agree	13	10.5	83.1
Agree	9	7.3	90.3
Strongly agree	12	9.7	100.0
Medical Assistance provided by the hotel if you are sick			
No	17	13.7	13.7
Yes	107	86.3	100.0

Confidence of students: For the statement that the trainees are confident to handle the guest complaints, the responses were 59.7%, agree, 22.6% strongly agree, 9.7% neither agree nor disagree 8.1% disagree and only 3.2% strongly disagree with the statement. Level of confidence after the industrial exposure training program, most of the respondent agreed with the statement 71.8%. The study of (Venkatram et al.

2019) similarly highlighted the effectiveness of internships in preparing students for their future careers.

Table 3: Confidence of subjects

Confident enough that you are able to handle the guest complaints	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	4	3.2	3.2
Disagree	6	4.8	8.1
Neither disagree nor agree	12	9.7	17.7
Agree	74	59.7	77.4
Strongly agree	28	22.6	100.0
Confidence level has increased after the industrial exposure training			
Strongly disagree	3	2.4	2.4
Disagree	7	5.6	8.1
Neither disagree nor agree	5	4.0	12.1
Agree	89	71.8	83.9
Strongly agree	20	16.1	100.0

Table 4: Satisfaction with the attitude of operating department heads: Cross tabulation

Opinion	Highly dissatisfied	Satisfied with the attitude of operating department heads					Total
		Dissatisfied	Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	Satisfied	Highly satisfied		
Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	4 star hotels	11	25	9	0	0	45
	5 Star Hotel	0	0	16	41	11	68
	Others	0	0	0	0	11	11
Total		11	25	25	41	22	124

Table 5: Correlation between Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training with the stipend provided by the hotel to the trainees

Variables		Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	Are you satisfied with the stipend provided by the hotel to the trainees
Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	Pearson Correlation	1	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	124	124
Are you satisfied with the stipend provided by the hotel to the trainees	Pearson Correlation	.762**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	124	124

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A positive correlation ($r=1$) between the classified properties where students underwent industrial exposure training with the stipend provided by the hotel to the trainees ($p<.001$).

The direction of the relationship is positive (i.e classified hotel and stipend provided by the hotel to the trainees are positively correlated) meaning that these variables tend to increase together.

Table 6: Correlations: Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training and weekly off

		Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	Do you get weekly off when you were doing the training
Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	Pearson Correlation	1	.702**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	124	124
Do you get weekly off when you were doing the training	Pearson Correlation	.702**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	124	124

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that there is a positive correlation between the Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training with the weekly off provided by the hotel to the trainees

With itself ($r=1$), and the number of the observation ($n=124$). Based on the category of the hotels and the weekly off provided by the hotel to the trainees have a statistically significant linear relationship ($p<.001$), meaning that these variables tend to increase together.

Table 7: Correlations: Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training and communication problem faced by the trainees

		Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	Are you agree that the communication is the main problem faced by the trainees
Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	Pearson Correlation	1	.752**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	124	124
Are you agree that the communication is the main problem faced by the trainees	Pearson Correlation	.752**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	124	124
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The above table shows that there is a positive correlation between the Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training with the communication problem faced by the trainees

With itself ($r=1$), and the number of the observation ($n=124$). Based on the category of the hotels and the communication problem faced by the trainees have a statistically significant linear relationship ($p<.001$), meaning that these variables tend to increase together.

Table 8: Trainees are mentally and physically harassed by the senior or contract staff

Opinion	Strongly disagree	The trainees are mentally and physically faced harassed by the senior or contract staff.					Total
		Disagree	Neither disagree nor agree	Agree	Strongly agree		
Classified properties undergone industrial exposure training	4 star hotels	5	11	28	1	0	45
	5 Star Hotel	0	0	0	23	45	68
	Others	0	0	0	0	11	11
Total		5	11	28	24	56	124

The above data shows a cross tabulation between classified properties undergone for industrial exposure training and the trainees are mentally and physically faced harassed by the senior or contract staff. Majority of the respondents had opinion that they are physically or mentally harassed by the senior or contract employees in the 5 star hotel. Some of the respondent who did the training in the 4 star hotel said that some respondents were physically harassed by the seniors or the contract employees but the respondents who have done the training in other category hotel are less as compared to the 4 and 5 star hotels.

For this competitive world, it is very difficult to survive in the industry, because the industry requires smart workers. Nowadays, it is very essential to have an industrial exposure training programme in their university curriculum. Training plays vital role for the career growth development. For the students industrial exposure, training or internship has emerged as a crucial component of the educational experience across different institutions and universities. The students who had chosen the hotel management course must compulsorily attend the five to six months industrial exposure training, so they can get an aware about the reality in the hotel industry. Hotel Management graduates who are going to work in the hospitality sector and having chosen a career in the same field, the various elements influencing the hospitality industry has always amazed. The most important elements that always hit the researchers mind are the “importance of training in the hospitality industry”. The

hotel management students have to work in both the core and ancillary departments. This training provide the knowledge and also their capability skills. The impact of industrial training on the obtained administration capabilities applied in industry can be concentrated on exhaustively as another exploration region. The industrial exposure training program is implemented to provide the students with an opportunity to gain practical skills and gets experience in their respective area of interest.

The research also aims to shed light on the importance of such training initiatives and also investigate the role or impact on the students who have successfully completed the programs. Additionally, the study delves into the reasons behind the existing the gap between the academic curriculum and the actual requirements of the hotel industry. The related studies probably investigates and discusses the reasons behind the identified gap and fill those gaps in the future. These reasons may include rapid changes in industry trends, evolving customer expectations, or limitations in the curriculum design and delivery. The research study also focused on analyzing the satisfaction levels of the hotel management students after successfully completed their internship in a hotel atmosphere.

CONCLUSION

The research study underscores the dual nature of industrial exposure training—its importance in shaping competent professionals and the need for addressing challenges faced by trainees. Implementing the recommended improvements could contribute to a more positive and supportive training environment for hotel management students. The hotel and hospitality industry is service-oriented, the study emphasizes the significance of practical training to prepare students for the dynamic and customer-focused nature of the business. The research suggests that industrial exposure training in classified hotels serves as a source of motivation for students. It not only imparts practical skills but also acts as a stepping stone in building their careers and establishing connections within the hotel industry. The study notes that industrial exposure training typically lasts for four to five months and involves training by industry experts. This duration allows for comprehensive learning and hands-on experience. The challenges faced by IET trainees, such as accommodation issues, low stipends, transportation difficulties, and additional work hours during peak times, are highlighted. These challenges could impact the overall experience and well-

being of the trainees. the study suggests several measures for improvement, including providing accommodation, transportation support, stipends, uniforms, and compensation for extra work during peak hours. It also underscores the importance of addressing harassment issues and ensuring appropriate punishment for any misconduct. The research indicates that challenges during industrial exposure training might lead to student discontinuation or a preference for higher studies after completing the course. This highlights the critical need for addressing these issues to retain and support students in their career journeys.

It suggests that the Training and Placement Department should maintain regular communication with students. This can include updates on training opportunities, guidance on industry trends, and addressing any concerns or queries. The associate level staff have to maintain the good relationship with the trainees. The hotel should actively identify challenges faced by industrial trainees, such as accommodation, stipend issues, or any difficulties during training. This proactive approach can lead to timely solutions and a better learning environment.

The research was dependent on the information collected through the responses of the respondents and also the secondary data in this are limited. The research study is purely based on the views of the respondents only. Primary data collected from respondents are subjected to normal errors interest to such social survey due to the bias of the data responses given by the respondent.

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