

A Study to Ascertain the Reasons Behind Fewer Hotel Management Students Opting for Housekeeping as Career Choice

ANKIT KUMAR¹, SHIVANSU SACHAN², AISHWARYA ARYA³
^{1, 2, 3} CSJM University

Abstract— A widespread problem that hotels are currently facing pertains to staffing shortages. Lending our focus to the housekeeping department where turnover is often at resource-exhaustive rates, a common trend this research highlighted is that this line of work is not seen as desirable, only attracting those students who desperately need a job and who are not motivated to stay beyond the base need for a weekly stipend. Some staff members end up staying from lengthy breadths of time and become cherished members of a property's team, while others view the job as merely temporary until something better comes along with an exit soon after being put on the job. Due to lackluster and no clear path of upward trajectory, it proves very difficult to entice those youthful candidates looking for employment that promises fruitful returns over the long run. Seemingly Housekeeping strikes to candidates as a job and not a career. This paper is an attempt to dig deeper on what are the reasons for a student's not opting for housekeeping and what could transform their perception of housekeeping from job to a fulfilling career and attract younger and more service-focused associates to thereby increase employee retention and simultaneously reduce the sunk costs of training.

Index Terms- Hospitality, Hotel, Management, Perception

I. INTRODUCTION

This research aims to highlight and explore students' viewpoint for working in the tourism and hospitality industry and whether they consider it to be just a job or a long-term career and understand the reasoning behind it. Using a mixed-method approach this thesis seeks to distinguish what, if any, differences there are in student's perceptions of the housekeeping department based on several focal areas like their work experiences, curriculum, salaries, reviews, and clarity on a professional growth trajectory. This research offers some suggestions how what steps to take to in regards to education establishments on training methods and the need for improving communication

channels between multiple stakeholder parties. A study suggests that there are opportunities in the hospitality sector that can be used to design and offer new perspectives and making housekeeping attractive and encourage students to opt for that as a career choice proactively and collectively shape their future in the hotel industry. In essence, this paper is an attempt to enlighten students of the importance of housekeeping departments and housekeeping professionals in the hospitality industry and motivate more and more students to opt for housekeeping as a long-term career option.

- Need for the Study
 1. To find out how students feel about housekeeping as a job or as a career.
 2. To explore their perception of housekeeping as a career and the challenges it can present.
 3. To ascertain the reasons that steer students away from housekeeping as their first career choice.
 4. To find out their opinion if they have clarity on a professional trajectory.
 5. To establish what factors and innovation in housekeeping can change their perception.
 6. To find how it's impacting the hospitality industry and what challenges it poses for the housekeeping department in particular.

Definitions

- 1) Hospitality relating to or denoting the business of housing or entertaining visitors.
- 2) Opportunities a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something.
- 3) Hotel An establishment that provides accommodation and other services for paying guests, normally larger than a guesthouse, and often one of the chains.

- 4) Management Combination of managerial activities like execution, forecasting, planning, leadership, and achieve established goals.
- 5) Perceptions organization, identification, and interpretation of sensory information. Conscious understanding of something

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The hospitality sector primarily provides housing to travelers but over the years it has evolved in luxurious service, centers of social interactions, and attend to personal, leisure, and business needs of the travelers too. This study (Dr. Dilbag Singh, 2017) suggests for Hospitality Industry to succeed has to function like a well-oiled machine and multiple departments come together to address these needs of the guest. Out of all these departments, housekeeping plays a very important role. Hotels ranging from small to large and basic to high-end all require being pristine all the time and that's why housekeeping plays the most important role. Due to the demanding nature of the job it makes it challenging for students pursuing a career in hospitality to understand and seek motivating factors to drive them in this direction. This study envisaged that increase in awareness about the employees of the hotel industry and specifically the housekeeping department, and understanding their opinion about the motives of joining the housekeeping department could be conducive to driving more and more students in pursuing this career. This study (Dr. Dilbag Singh, 2017) also suggests that students are educated about the variety of career development paths available to them. If students get to explore possibilities of working in more than just a hotel like luxurious resorts, eateries, cruises, etc. it will expand the horizon for the opportunities and convert the monotony of the job into interest and motivation. This department is not limited to just cleaning and maintaining cleanliness but candidates can acquire skills related to linen and laundry or choose a different track towards executive housekeeper and more managerial career progression. If they are more inclined towards social interaction or more face time with a guest they can explore options in guest relations. Students often can't foresee this aspect of the future housekeeping job and if educated as part of the curriculum and given the exposure it will peak their interests.

This study (Ghuangpeng, July 2011) established that there is a co-relationship between learning experiences and self-efficacy. The learning phase plays a crucial role in the career choices students make. The learning capabilities and the impact of different teaching strategies differ from student to student as a result some students gain more confidence as they received consistently positive feedback from their supervisors during the work placement while some still don't perform well and end up choosing a different career choice. Another aspect this study focused on was the interrelationship between gender, learning experiences, and self-efficacy. The research discovered that male student once they were successfully placed revealed that they have a perception of housekeeping to be predominantly a female job and don't intend to seek a career in the housekeeping department as they lacked the confidence to interact and work efficiently with female colleagues. A similar area the study tapped into was exposing students to working experience as a housekeeper in the high-end domestic service industry and showcase that it can be an exciting workplace. Elite housekeepers have a special edge as they have a high level of experience, but most importantly they have a great level of knowledge and understanding of every facet of housekeeping and cleaning. This could be a good career progression for anyone in housekeeping. Exposure as part of the curriculum in private houses and estates, high-end and boutique hotels, chalets, and yachts can impart great learning experiences and beneficial for the self-efficacy of students.

Housekeeping is a great industry where no day is the same, and it's one where if students work hard and keep bettering themselves, great career progressions are possible however we keep seeing fewer and fewer students opting for housekeeping as a career. This thesis (Bamford, March 2012) highlights student's viewpoints and how they perceive housekeeping to be their career in the hospitality industry. The study highlighted this viewpoint was ranging from lower pay, improving working atmosphere, work duration being relatively longer, minimum qualification restrictions, and social relationship and interaction with peers. Exposure in real-life professional settings and internships seemed to have maximum impact in

steering viewpoint and improving perception amongst students.

This study (Nyamwange, Nov 2016) establishes the fact that having prior knowledge about a career has a cascading effect and helps students to develop and nurture the interest required to excel in any career. Prior knowledge prepares an individual on the conditions obtaining for a career and one will decide to enter a career from a point of knowledge. Knowledge on a career can be acquired through doing research and consultations; training, exposure as well as the industrial attachment. Other avenues through which individuals receive prior knowledge for their careers include mentorship, commitment, motivation, and socializing with people in the career of interest. Making informed and considered career decisions accrue various benefits to the employer and the individual. Another important factor that influences Career choice decisions is the possibility of progression in the work hierarchy. There are a vast variety and range of jobs requiring multiple skills in hospitality and especially housekeeping. Housekeeping requires the rooms and guests to be in pristine conditions throughout the day so there is ample flexibility of working hours and multiple shifts that there are options to work full time or part-time and choose different timings throughout the day which is very unique to housekeeping.

This study (Schoffstall, July 2013) focused on the advantages of the work experience gained during the academic year has a significant impact on hospitality students' current and prospective career and perception of same. Like other studies, this study also highlights the fact that hospitality presents multiple professional and personal growth opportunities. There is continuous training and skills enhancement and students are presented with real-life challenges which ensure that work experience is never monotonous. The study lays out the importance of the work experience and exposure of students in real-world professional experience. In addition equal importance to the time and stress management in excelling in their future careers and keeping abreast with job requirements which are vital in hospitality. Workday in hospitality is never the same because it deals primarily with guests and related services and as everyone has different personalities and requirements

the staff is always presented with different challenges and opportunities. You come across so many new people and new challenges every day, no matter what your role - so you can be sure that you'll never get bored of working in a hospitality job so preparing for versatile challenges as part of the curriculum will help them prepare and equip for better performance in a job. Working in housekeeping means that you are surrounded by various personalities in your peers who all are making an effort to be more polite, friendly, smiling, and presentable all the time. With this conscious positivity comes a very positive work atmosphere that makes hospitality presents a very fun and perky work environment that attracts students. This study (Themduangkhae, Oct 2002) established that the most important motivation for students to choose housekeeping as a profession. In the order it was found first being interest in the profession second being career progression to management, third-social aspect, followed by monetary and the prestige or brand to provide job satisfaction.

Hospitality presents a unique opportunity to be able to juggle work and further studies due to flexible work hours, to be able to work part-time or full time, to be able to pick additional shifts and earn based on how many hours you can spend in a day. This flexibility promotes work-life balance and makes hospitality and housekeeping within hospitality a very flexible and accommodating industry. Apart from work, flexibility there are additional monetary benefits of this industry like getting employee discounts on hotel rooms and F&B associated with the company which can be used to not only save but improve the quality of life for the employees and their families. All these perks seem to contribute to improving the perception and motivating students to choose this as their first career choice.

This study (Cedefop - Joachim James Calleja, July 2016) deeps dive into the reasoning for low-educated and low-skilled adults and their lack of interest in housekeeping and how to improve the same. Low self-esteem or lack of education further imparts lower interest in higher studies. Another important variable influencing this is family and peers so being surrounded with a better outlook towards higher education will impart similar influence and further promote learning. Another aspect seemed to be the faculty and their teaching style and teachers'

personality having a big impact in pursuing or getting discouraged. The study emphasizes education and training to be a long-term investment.

The study indicated (Dr. Thomas Marshall, July 2015) that diverse departments react differently to the upgrade in facilities. Some hospitality departments (e.g., Housekeeping) seem to display particularly strong sensitivity to changes in the working environment. This concern for personal and professional growth provides a valuable opportunity for educators to establish meaningful training and development programs. This study also supports hospitality research which examines the role that job satisfaction plays in influencing employees to remain in an organization and the importance of designing effective retention strategies. Some Hotel Management colleges use cleaning toilets, cleaning the glass, etc. as punishments for students, so it's obvious that a student is going to refrain from housekeeping. This behavior and this perspective of housekeeping being a non-glamorous subject have always resulted in the lowest number of students taking this subject. Cleaning and maintenance is a big part of housekeeping but there is a need for reinforcement that it requires several other personality traits and brilliance for becoming an Executive Housekeeper! As part of the curriculum highlighting the importance of housekeeping and establishing it is much more than just cleaning toilets and mopping the floor is of utmost importance. Nobody would stay in a hotel or place where housekeeping is not done regularly and hygiene is not maintained so the subject of housekeeping should be given more importance. Growth in housekeeping is performance-based and the chances of a new trainee heading the department in a few years are much higher compared to what is possible in others. We need to change our mindsets and it should start from our colleges and more students should be encouraged to take housekeeping.

The study's (Liu, Jan 2013) findings indicate that clarity on the motivation for working in hospitality will promote long-term job satisfaction and it can be further increased by revamping the policies and work content. Managers play an important role in promoting this positive work culture. It has been established that if managers have less involvement in the selection of entry-level positions or low skill requirements less

qualified employees will be recruited so redesigning and strengthening the hiring process providing clarity on job specifics and motivating factors will inculcate a positive work culture and in turn improve job satisfaction and attracting more students towards hospitality and housekeeping.

This study (Juhászová, Jan 2014) emphasizes that people are the assets and management needs to care and display loyalty for employees as much as they display the same for guests. Being underappreciated, with no clarity on career progression and development, peers with low self-efficacy seem to be the most important de-motivators for students and employees not liking working in housekeeping. Management or faculty needs to infuse enthusiasm in students and employees towards their job duties and this will impact the service quality significantly. Additional focus and encouragement from management and teachers act as a propellant for motivation amongst entry-level employees or students.

Objectives

- To understand reasons why lesser students choose housekeeping as a career.
- To understand the perception of students about housekeeping.
- To explore the areas that will improve student's inclination towards housekeeping as a career choice.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Primary data shall be collected from the universe mentioned above. For interview samples representing the college students of Pune. The data has been collected from the students as per the topic mentioned.
- Secondary data shall be collected from published/unpublished literature on the perceptions of housekeeping as a career choice amongst students in hotel management and the opportunities it presents in the professional career.
- Latest references available from journals, newspapers, research publications and magazines, and other relevant sources like the internet.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Do you perceive housekeeping as a job or as a career?

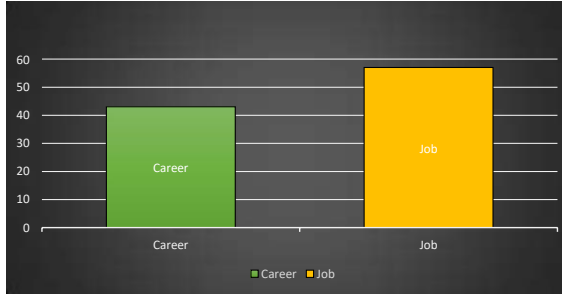


Figure 1.1

Interpretation

It is evident from Figure 1A that a higher percentage (more than 57 %) of participants in the control group think this housekeeping can be a job but not a career for them.

Please rank the following core department of a hotel which you would like to opt for as a career

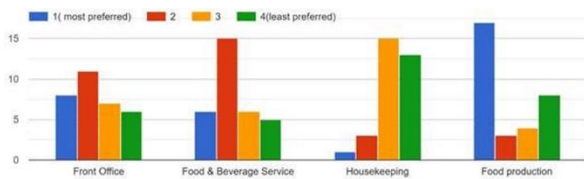


Figure 1.2

Interpretation

Polling from Figure 1.2 depicts the opinion that Food production is the most preferred department of choice. Followed by F&B service and Front Office being third in the list of the most preferred department while Housekeeping remains the least preferred career choice. The reasons for most preferred choices were identified to be Interest, creativity and future scope, passion for F&B & Culinary Department, and social and interaction opportunities making housekeeping the least preferred department as a career choice in the hospitality industry.

Which part of the housekeeping department you find most interesting

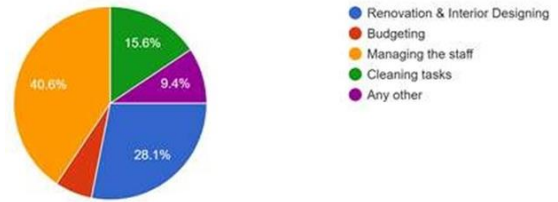


Figure 1.3

Interpretation

The participants were questioned about the various areas in housekeeping and which one peaks the most interest and as shown in Figure 1.3 Managing the staff was sectors reported as highest inclination with 40.6%, followed by 28.1% in Renovation and Interior Designing, 15.6% in cleaning tasks, 6.3% budgeting and 9.4% other areas.

In your opinion has the Pandemic presented more opportunities (focus is more on cleaning and sanitization) for students who wish to opt for Housekeeping as a career choice?

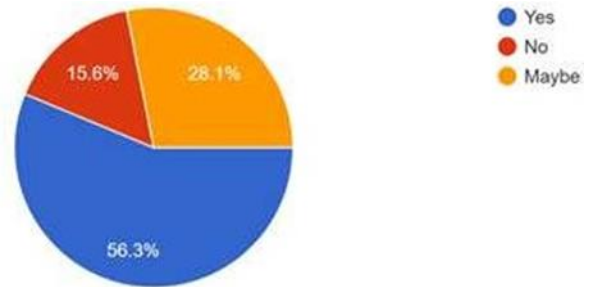


Figure 1.4

Interpretation

Figure 1.4 depicts the poll results that 56.3% of participants seem to agree that pandemic presents more opportunities in housekeeping with a focus on cleaning and sanitization while 15.6% participants don't agree with this and 28.1% seemed to be unsure.

Students who do not choose Housekeeping as a career, what according to you is the most common reason for that?

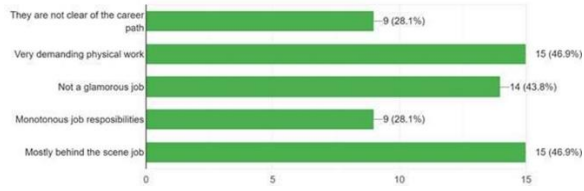


Figure 1.5

Interpretation

This research in Figure 1.5 shows that the most common reason why students don't choose housekeeping as a career seems to be very demanding physical work and mostly being behind scenes job with no exposure both at 46.9% immediately followed by lack of glamor with 43.8%. Lastly not having a clear career path and monotonous job responsibilities both at 28.1%.

Would you seek a job in the Housekeeping department during Campus Placement?

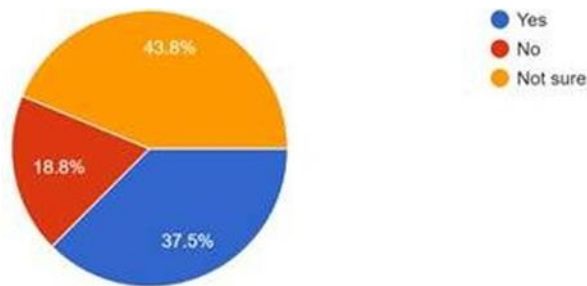


Figure 1.6

Interpretation

As shown in Figure 1.4 the Only 37.5% of students are sure about choosing the Housekeeping department during career placement while 18.8% said no and the majority 43.8% remain unsure.

CONCLUSION

Hotel Housekeeping is physically hard work and mentally hard work and the 24x7 nature of the job makes entire shift where housekeepers are under physical duress and anxiety and requires physical strength and being in perfect health and shape, having immense stamina and agility which prove to be the tools you need to excel in this job. As this is the crucial aspect if students lack this quality they are deterred.

Hotel Housekeeping personnel must always maintain a good public image and are judged by appearance as well conduct. People form an opinion on what the housekeeping personnel does through the appearance long before they see the quality of work if students lack this aspect they tend to not gain confidence and steer away from a career in housekeeping and hospitality in general.

In other fields and professions, we don't normally witness the friendliness, harmony, politeness, and pleasantness among peers being a part of your job description so these personal attributes prove to be keys for being successful in hospitality. If one lacks these attributes they won't be able to excel or progress much in their career.

If a housekeeper is efficient and successful surely there will be multiple personnel from multiple departments relying on them. For this reason as part of the curriculum and training of a housekeeper working with a team and coordinating with those team members and being able to operate in that team setting is given utmost importance. Hotel Housekeepers need to possess this quality amongst other multitudes of skills and talents. If students are not able to keep up and lack the ability to carry out their daily grinding shift work to the highest standard they lack interest and don't progress and lose an opportunity to build a career in hospitality.

LIMITATIONS

- 1) The study is limited to the findings from the students of hotel management and specific data group. Future possibilities and future impact yet to be determined. There is a need of more studies to be conducted by researchers.
- 2) The responses have been collected only from participants of the colleges and the institutes.

REFERENCES

[1] Dr. Dilbag Singh , Mr. Amandeep (July 2017) , *Motives for selecting housekeeping department as a career- A study of selected Hotels of North India* , Department of Tourism Studies, Department of Tourism and Hotel Management, Central University of Haryana, India 1(1) ,16-21.

- [2] Siriwan Ghuangpeng (July 2011), *Factors Influencing Career Decision-Making: Business and Law* Victoria University, Melbourne, 1(1), 26-44.
- [3] Kirsten Lee Bamford (March 2012) , *Undergraduate student perceptions of a career in the tourism and hospitality industry in New Zealand* , Department of Tourism Studies, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. 1(1), 13-54.
- [4] Josephine Nyamwange (Nov 2016) , *Influence of Student's Interest on Career Choice among First Year University Students in Public and Private Universities in Kisii County, Kenya* , Masai Mara University1(1) ,26-44.
- [5] Donald G. Schoffstall (July 2013), *the benefits and challenges hospitality management students experience by working in conjunction with completing their studies.* 1(1), 30-64.
- [6] Wunporn Themduangkhae (Oct 2002) , *WHAT MOTIVATES SENIOR STUDENTS TO WORK IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF SENIOR STUDENTS IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM PROGRAM AT UW-STOUT, The Graduate School University of Wisconsin-Stout* 1(1),16-23.
- [7] Cedefop - Joachim James Calleja, Micheline Scheys (July 2016), *Improving career prospects for the low-educated*, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) 1(1), 11-33.
- [8] Dr. Thomas Marshall, Dr. Ewa M. Mottier, Dr. Robert A. Lewis (July 2015) , *Motivational Factors And The Hospitality Industry: A Case Study Examining The Effects Of Changes In The Working Environment, Les Roches Gruyère University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland* 1(1) ,15-34.
- [9] Yu-Shan Liu (Jan 2013), *The correlation between work motives and organizational behaviors for hospitality employees*, Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations 1(1), 26-44..
- [10] Emília Juhásová (Jan 2014), *Employee motivations in Starwood Hotels&Resorts*, Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague 1(1), 9-51.