

Factors Influencing Hospitality Management as Career Choice Among Mumbai's Students

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Abstract: *This paper aims to investigate the perceptions of students from Mumbai with regards to Hospitality Management as a career option. It investigates the factors that influenced their decision. A convenience sampling technique was adopted in this study. The study result was derived from a survey of 243 respondents from Mumbai and adjoining Suburbs. The questionnaire comprised items relating to factors influencing students and awareness level when they made their career decision*

Keywords: Hotel Management, Hospitality Management, Tourism, Career choice, Students, opportunities, Mumbai, IHM

I. INTRODUCTION

After completing their 10+2 education, students have a wide range of career options available to them, including Medical, Engineering, Architecture, continuing their graduation in fields like Commerce, Arts, Science, Information Technology, BBA, BMM, and Hospitality Studies, among others. The list is extensive, providing opportunities for students of varying academic abilities, from those who excel in their studies to those who just manage to pass.

As a hotel management graduate and now a teacher, I have observed a significant increase in the number of students choosing hospitality studies as their career path over the past 20 years. In the past, it appeared that individuals from lower-middle-income groups and diverse communities had reservations about pursuing hotel management, often fearing that they would be limited to roles as cooks or waiters. However, over time, the emergence of celebrity chefs and bartenders has elevated the status of these professions, commanding greater respect. Additionally, the growing job opportunities in countries such as Canada, the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Gulf countries have enhanced income prospects in this field. This has provided students with the assurance of a stable and rewarding career, a trend observed globally.

The hospitality industry, known for its warm reception and gracious hosting, has witnessed substantial growth in India, closely linked to the thriving tourism and business sectors. Technological advancements have reshaped the industry, necessitating graduates who can adapt to its dynamic nature.

In Mumbai, there has been a noticeable surge in the number of colleges and universities offering hotel management degree programs in the last two decades. Prior to the early 1990s, the only institute in Mumbai offering a Diploma in Hotel Management and Catering Technology was IHMCTAN Mumbai. Admission to this institute was contingent on national entrance exams, and the available seats were limited. However, with the establishment of institutions like Anjuman-I-Islam, Rizvi, BhartiyaVidyapeeth, and D Y Patil in Mumbai, which offered diplomas accredited by the Maharashtra State Board, students with an interest in hotel management gained a broader array of options. These additional institutions expanded the opportunities for aspiring hotel management students within the city of Mumbai.

Despite the growing number of students pursuing hospitality studies, it has been observed over the years that the attrition rate in this field is high. This phenomenon prompted me to investigate whether students are adequately informed about the field before making their choice, and to understand the reasons that either motivate or demotivate them from opting for hospitality studies as a career.

Research Objectives

The primary goal of this research is to explore the perceptions of junior college students in Mumbai pursuing hotel management as a career option. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

To assess the level of awareness among students in Mumbai regarding hospitality management programs as a viable career choice.

To pinpoint the primary factors that draw students from Mumbai to consider a career in hospitality management.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As not many significant researches were found with this regards in Mumbai, similar researches conducted were reviewed in order to get proper direction for this particular research work.

(Schoffstall, 2013)In this research “*The benefits and challenges hospitality management students experience by working in conjunction with completing their studies*” by Donald G. Schoffstall, the aim was to relate three groups: current (senior-level) hospitality students who gained work experience while in school, those who did not, and hospitality graduates who gained work experience while in school compared to those who did not. The study aimed to inspect early career plans, job achievement expectations, and perceptions of a professional future for these different groups. The study aimed to determine the influence of cooperative experiences on early career retention for hospitality students. The research provided valuable insights into the success of different cooperative models in preparing students for their careers and potentially contributing to their career endurance in the hospitality industry.

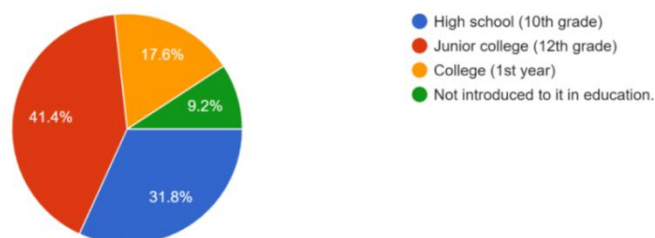
(Kumar, 2014)The article “*Hospitality Education in India-present status, challenges and opportunities*” highlights that the Indian hotel industry's growth, motivated by tourism and the economy, is knotted with technological developments. Graduates need a various skill set for success. This article inspects the progress of hospitality education in India, highlighting the need for industry input in syllabus development and faculty training. Association between institutions and the industry is critical, particularly in private institutions, with a call for government support and "earn while you learn" programs to boost students' employability in the sector.

(Macwan, September 2018)Macwan in his article “*Career in Hotel Management*” expresses that Hotel management is a varied field within the world-wide hospitality industry offering various career openings. It requires individuals to maintain calm in challenging circumstances. The industry encompasses hotel and restaurant management, cruise ship hotel management, and more. Hopeful professionals can pursue degrees or diploma/certificate courses right after 10+2. Strong communication, reasoning, and compliance skills are essential. While it's considered stylish, the industry can be affected by economic instabilities and demands long hours and dealing with challenging situations. Potential professionals should weigh the pros and cons carefully before choosing a career in hotel management.

(Qiu, September 2017)“*What factors influence the career choice of hotel management major students in guangzhou?*” by Shaoping Qiu paper examined the factors influencing career choices of students in the Hospitality section of a polytechnic college in Guangzhou, China. It found that students' career decisions were gradually prejudiced by self-efficacy and aspirations rather than traditional values or family input. While there were no noteworthy gender differences, some differences emerged between first year students and seniors. The study acknowledged five key factors impacting career choices, with "students' self-efficacy and occupational aspiration" being the most significant. Recommendations provided guidance for both mentors and industry professionals to address human resource challenges in the hospitality sector.

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

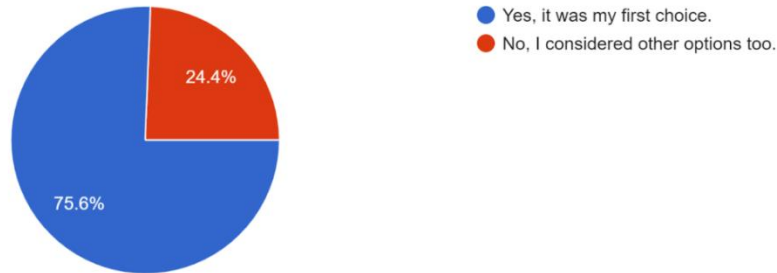
1. Grade or standard you were introduced to the concept of Hospitality Management.
239 responses



The responses indicate that a noteworthy portion of students who opted for Hospitality Management were already acquainted with the program before completing their 10+2 exams.

2. Was Hospitality Management your initial career preference?

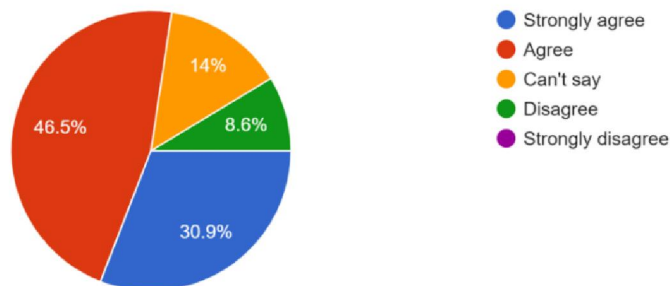
242 responses



More than 75% of the respondents expressed that Hospitality Management was their primary choice.

3. Academic performance (percentage) plays a significant role in pursuing a career in Hospitality Management.

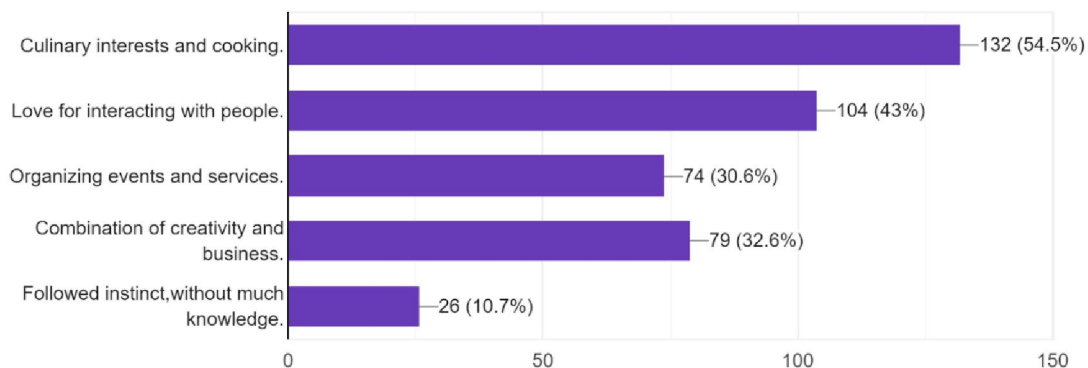
243 responses



A significant majority of the respondents agreed that academic performance does indeed play a vital role in pursuing Hospitality Management.

4. Choose from the below given aspects of Hospitality management that attracted you and influenced your decision to enroll in this field.

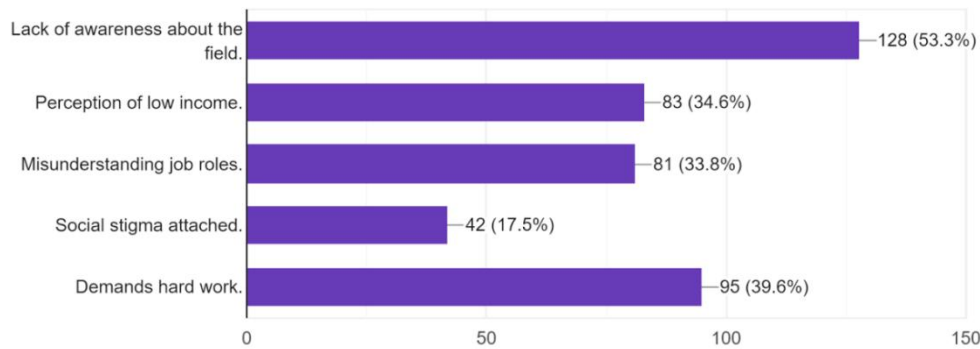
242 responses



The primary reasons that influenced students to choose Hospitality Management were their culinary interests and a passion for interacting with people. Following closely were factors such as a penchant for organizing events and a combination of creativity and business acumen.

5. According to your perspective, which of this factor/s discourages student from considering Hospitality Management as a career option.

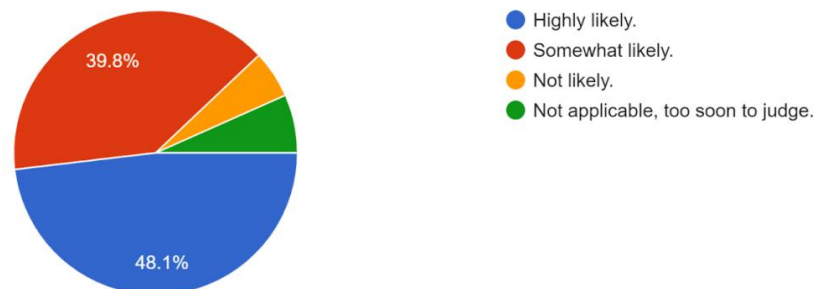
240 responses



The main factors that discouraged students from considering Hospitality Management as a career option were the lack of awareness, the perception of relatively lower income prospects, and the demanding nature of the job.

6. How likely are you to recommend Hospitality Management as a viable career choice to individuals you know?

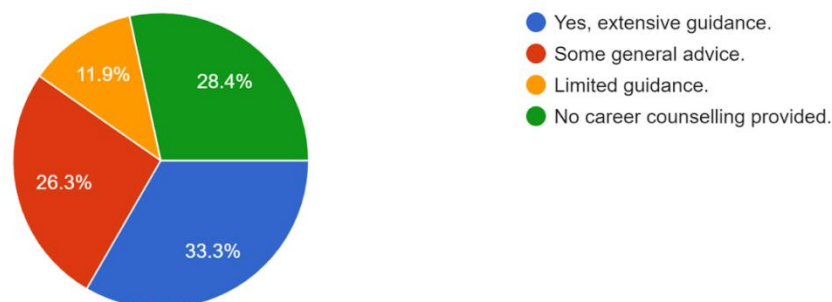
241 responses



A significant number of students were inclined to recommend Hospitality Management to their peers, indicating a high level of personal satisfaction.

7. Did your school or college provide any career counselling or guidance regarding the hospitality industry?

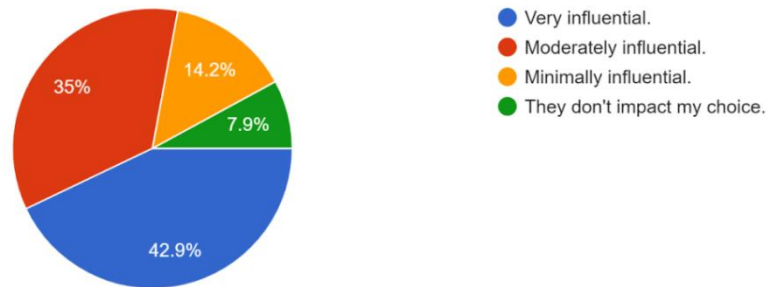
243 responses



Approximately one-third of the respondents received comprehensive guidance, while the remaining individuals had limited or no counselling. This highlights the need for increased awareness at the basic level.

9. How influential are family and peer opinions when it comes to choosing a career path in the hospitality sector?

240 responses



The majority of individuals were significantly influenced by the opinions of their family and peers.

IV. CONCLUSION

The responses revealed that culinary interests and a passion for interacting with people were the most influential factors affecting students' career choices in the hospitality industry. This was followed by an interest in organizing events and a combination of creativity and business acumen. Additionally, since 75% of the respondents expressed Hospitality Management as their primary choice, this indicates strong self-efficacy and occupational aspirations among students from Mumbai considering hospitality management as a career option.

The survey also indicated that only about one-third of the respondents received comprehensive guidance, while the rest had limited or no counseling. This highlights a relatively low level of awareness among students in Mumbai regarding Hospitality Management and suggests the need to introduce career counseling at the secondary school level.

Respondents also felt that factors discouraging students from considering Hospitality Management as a career option were the lack of awareness, the perception of lower income prospects, and the demanding nature of the job. However, they did accept being significantly influenced by the opinions of their family and peers.

Despite these challenges, the majority of respondents expressed a willingness to recommend Hospitality Management as a viable career option to others, indicating their overall satisfaction.

These findings offer valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers to address concerns and enhance the attractiveness of the hospitality industry as a preferred career option.

Limitations of the Research Study:

Data Collection Constraints: The researchers were unable to conduct face-to-face interviews due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, data collection relied on an online Google survey questionnaire. This method may have limited the depth of responses and interaction with participants.

Incomplete Responses: Some respondents did not provide complete answers, leading to missing data and potential gaps in the findings.

Limited Access to Resources: The pandemic restricted access to physical libraries, which might have impacted the breadth of literature and references available for the study.

Sample Size Limitation: The study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in a limited sample size. This could affect the generalizability of the findings to a broader population.

Technological Challenges: Network issues and reliance on mobile devices may have posed difficulties in data collection and participant engagement.

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