

Capital City Cox's Bazar Case Study: Employee View on Tourism and Hospitality Education

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Abstract

The objectives of this study are to find out the career expectations of tourism and hospitality management graduates, identify the current value of their degree for their aim of a career in tourism and hospitality management, as well as for the information of managerial employees. In order to collect information on various aspects of the industry, an extensive review of the literature on education, skill, experience required for Tourism and Hospitality graduates to succeed in the tourism hospitality industry was conducted and a questionnaire survey undertaken with hotel employees in the tourism capital of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar. There is a considerable gap in terms of education, and its impact upon the employee and the industry. The employer and industry in the hospitality sector are lacking a great deal of higher order conceptual knowledge and skills involving maintaining the standard required to keep international-level competency. The study concluded with the following recommendations that both educational institutions and industry need to engage in more open channels of communication in order to gain the positive benefits of recruiting well-educated ambitious university graduates. Through this process educational institutions can come up with a curriculum based on industrial demand and the Tourism and Hospitality Industry can take full positive advantage of the modernization and development of the industry.

Keywords: career, tourism education, hospitality education, graduates, management, industry, institutions, curriculum, modernization

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and Hospitality is one of the world's fastest growing industries at present. The Tourism and Hospitality industry as a whole is presently estimated to earn over US\$ 3.5 trillion worldwide. The industry creates a job every 2.4 seconds with every one of those direct jobs creating another 11 indirect ones. It has an important share in the global income and production, and mobilizes many people around the world. UNWTO's Tourism 2020 Vision forecasts that international arrivals are expected to reach nearly 1.6 billion by the year 2020. Of these worldwide arrivals in 2020, 1.2 billion will be intra regional and 378 million will be long haul travelers. In other words, WTO forecasts that tourism will continue growing, furthermore, new tendencies and trends in tourism have been recently visible.

Tourism and Hospitality graduates look forward to starting a career as management trainee particularly in international hotels, because they assume their qualifications will earn them better opportunities for further advancement. In fact in Bangladesh, management training programs are limited and a relative experience is required along with tertiary level qualifications. It is really very difficult for the students to get enough industrial experience while the

students are studying. Therefore, they are becoming frustrated and a gap has emerged between the expectations of Tourism and Hospitality graduates and their employers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, travel and tourism accounts for 8% of the world's jobs and has the highest potential for growth of any industry. As a huge, vibrant and growing industry, tourism and hospitality sector provides remarkable opportunity for ambitious students in the field. The tourism and hospitality industry operates in a highly sophisticated environment. To become a successful professional, one has to develop a strong business foundation and service providing skills. Graduates of Tourism and Hospitality Management program are well rounded with a combination of business and life skills that are in high demand with employers.

While Tourism and Hospitality industry has always been emphasized hands-on experience, the competitive nature of the business now requires a combination of experience and higher education to build a successful career. But there is a significant gap between the industry and the employees. The Tourism and Hospitality industry and universities and

other educational institutions those offering Tourism and Hospitality programs must identify resolution to meet the needs of the industry and cut down the gaps.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are to find out the career expectations of tourism and hospitality management graduates, identify the current value of their degree for their aim of career in tourism and hospitality management as well as for managerial employees.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study presents the findings from the data analysis regarding career expectations, assumptions and the requirements of undergraduates of hospitality management and managerial employees in the hotel industry

Tourism and Hospitality Management Education: Background

The trend of world markets has changed noticeably from agricultural to service markets (Asian Development Outlook, 2007). All of service businesses are trying their best to improve their service quality in order to make customers satisfied with their services, especially in the hotel industry. As a result, the hospitality industry has changed rapidly due to changing economies, societies and fast developing technologies during the past few decades (Baum, Amoah, & Spivack, 1997). Hotel operators are now focusing more on quality and standards in order to meet the basic needs and expectations of the customers.

The fast changing hospitality industry needs a new variety of manager. These managers need new skills to handle the complexities of a changing corporate environment. Therefore, hospitality education is becoming more important to hospitality students and the hospitality industry. The Hospitality industry is regarded as a more sophisticated trade as it manages the basic needs and expectations of its customers. Tourism and Hospitality management courses encourage students to think more strategically and to understand how multinational hospitality companies can best be managed.

Educational Requirement for the Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Today's hospitality industry is dynamic and competitive therefore organizations are looking for talented and extroverted graduates who display a high degree of adaptability. Hospitality graduates need to have both theoretical and practical knowledge to manage the service quality activity properly. It is clear that multi-technical skills, good communication skills, leadership skills and financial skills are necessary to operate effectively in the hospitality industry and knowing the skills required by the hospitality industry is vitally important to hospitality

students and education providers. If educators know what the industry wants and requires of a new employee, they can focus on changing their curricula to support the industry's expectations and needs and improve the satisfaction of hospitality students.

The Tourism and Hospitality industry has certain characteristics that influence the qualities needed by managers at all levels and thus the curriculum for hospitality graduates. Some of these features are as follows:

- ❖ Production and delivery are inseparable, which implies high pressure (Dienhart, Geregorie and Downey, 1990) (Susskind, Borchgrevink, Brymer and Kacmar, 1990; Larsen and Bastiansen 1992; Susskind, Borchgrevink, Brymer and Kacmar, 2000);
- ❖ Customers are seen as guests, which involves a particular relationship (White and Rudall 1999; Yuan 1999; Susskind, Borchgrevink et al. 2000);
- ❖ It is a 24/7 business, which makes personal relationships difficult for employees (Brymer 1982; Krone, Tabacchi and Faber, 1989; Ross 1995);
- ❖ It involves ethnic, cultural and religious diversity of both guests and staff, which require high communication and interpersonal skills (Fritz 1988; Mallinson and Weiler 2000; Testa 2004; Baum 2006);
- ❖ Occupational and public health and safety issues exist which require specific skills (Johns 1993; Tranter 2002);
- ❖ It involves discretionary expenditure, which implies fluctuations in demand (Bull and Alcock 1993; Shi 1997; Hwang and Wilkins 2002);
- ❖ The industry has high fixed capital costs and highly volatile variable operating costs requiring diligence and prudence in their management (Abouzid 1988; Kim 1995; Nilsson, Harris et al. 2001; Mitchell 2002);
- ❖ The industry has low barriers to entry for capital and labour (Sciarini 1993; Shaban 1993; Kim 1995; Powell and Wood 1999; Nilsson, Harris et al. 2001; Christensen Hughes 2002; Mitchell 2002).

Training and Development Programs

Several studies have been undertaken to determine the importance of hotel management competencies. Ineson and Kempa (1996) identified four main skills, namely: oral and written communication skills, supervising skills (staff motivation and training), ability to engender customer satisfaction and service skills. In addition to these skills, other studies have identified skills such as problem solving, maintaining professional and ethical standards, professionalism and leadership qualities to achieve operational objectives (Tas 1988; Baum 1990; Kay and Russette 2000; Christou and Sigala 2001). Public and staff

safety obligations such as the management of hygiene and safety conditions and legal responsibilities (Baum 1990); identifying operational problems (Christou and Sigala 2001) and effectively managing life-threatening situations such as fire, bomb threat and serious illness (Kay and Russette 2000) have also been identified. Another interesting point is the absence of some of the 'strategic management skills' for the benefit of 'hotel specific operational skills'. For Kay and Russette (2000) 'leadership' and communication skills are still seen as of major importance at the expense of the Administration and Technical and Conceptual/Creative domains.

For recruitment into management levels in the hospitality industry, the industry tends to favour applicants that have work experience. Many managers in the hospitality industry believe that practical experience is more valuable than a degree qualification for entering into the management levels in the hospitality industry (Harkison, 2004a). However, hospitality graduates argue that they already have enough practical experience because most graduates complete a period of internship within their degree. Raybould and Wilkins (2005) also stated that graduates believed that they have already carried-out an 'apprenticeship' through completion of university study, as most hospitality degree programs are often combined with practical work experience.

The traditional technical, operating and craft skills will always be of prime importance, but both the industry and the educators agree on the fact that more emphasis should be given to critical thinking, problem solving, strategic planning and visionary leadership skills as part of the program (Casado-1991). But awareness does not mean action and it sometimes failed to be addressed (Danvers and Keeling 1995; Johns and McKechnie 1995; Li and Kivela 1998). It is however commonly accepted that food and beverage (F&B) management and rooms management are basic skills required for hospitality; education should then focus on providing students the competencies and skills that will give them added value. A survey of general managers suggests that four important subjects to be taught in Hospitality Management should be marketing, management, HR, finance and accounting (Su 1996).

Industrial Attachment or Internship

According to course curricula an undergraduate student of Tourism and Hospitality management requires industrial attachment or internship through which they will gain work experience and successful application of theoretical knowledge. These practical work experiences bring out many benefits not only to students but also for education providers and Tourism and Hospitality related organizations. Many authors have stated the benefits of internship programs (Harkison, 2004a; Jauhari, 2006; Posey, Carlisle, &

Smellie, 1988; Ricci, 2005). CEP and internship program experience is seen as a cornerstone for students when they are employed in their first job in the hospitality industry (Harkison, 2004a).

Advantages of Industrial Attachment or Internship:

Students of Tourism and Hospitality management, particularly at undergraduate level have to gain industrial work experience through an internship or industrial attachment program which is a part of the normal academic curriculum (Harkison, 2004a). These are academic programs that encourage students to apply theory in work settings and gain greater work competencies (Harkison, 2004a). In addition, students might be able to evaluate their professional growth based on the results of their work experience (Harkison, 2004a; Jauhari, 2006; Posey, Carlisle, & Smellie, 1988; Ricci, 2005).

Challenges of Industrial Attachment or Internship

According to Purcell and Quinn (1995 as cited in Waryszak, 1999), graduates had difficulty in finding opportunities to develop managerial skills during their internship program. Many students develop a negative impression that they work just like front line employees during the whole period of their industrial attachment or internship as well as they feel like they are treated as a source of cheap labour. As students want to learn more management skills, they might be dissatisfied with their industrial attachment or internship experience. But in fact the industrial attachment or internship experience has a significant impact on students in making decisions about their career in the Tourism and hospitality industry. If experience does not meet student expectations, students might regret entering the Tourism and Hospitality industry after graduation and use their industrial attachment or internship experience to find positions in alternative sectors (Waryszak, 1999).

Career Development

There is a significant evolution apparent concerning the interest in career development. Indeed, in the late 1980s only 8% of hotel managers and employees respondents rated it as a key priority, by 1997 this rate had risen to 45% (Storey, Mabey and Thomson cited in Burgess, 2000). Although it is still not a clear majority, there is recognition in the industry for professional development. This professional development should be supported by improving the 'life skills employment' as defined by the Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management Association (HCIMA):

- ❖ Communication—which includes written and spoken English
- ❖ Use of numbers
- ❖ Information technology;
- ❖ Analysing and solving problems
- ❖ Personal skills

❖ Team skills.

Career progression depends on personal characteristics and orientation, personal needs, a planned career path and diversity of experience.

METHODOLOGY

For collecting information on various aspects of the industry an extensive review of the literature on education, skill and experience required for Tourism and Hospitality graduates to succeed in the tourism hospitality industry was undertaken and questionnaire survey conducted with hotel employees in the tourism capital of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H1. The Tourism and Hospitality industry is very interesting.

H2. Working hours in the Tourism and Hospitality sector are very flexible.

H3. The Salary structure of Tourism and Hospitality sector is satisfactory.

H4. Employees of Tourism and Hospitality sector should be required to complete Tourism and Hospitality based education courses.

H5. Conference, seminars and workshops are very useful for the development of the Tourism and Hospitality industry

The corresponding questionnaire followed for our associated Likert test is as follows:

- a) Strongly Disagree b) Disagree c) Neither Agree nor disagree

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

Table 1: Highest percentage of respondents under individual hypothesis

Hypothesis No	Result
1.	46% respondents strongly agree that Tourism and Hospitality industry is very interesting.
2.	38% sample size agrees that working hours at Tourism and Hospitality sector are very flexible.
3.	32% respondents agree that salary structure of Tourism and Hospitality sector is satisfactory.
4.	55% respondents agree that employee of Tourism and Hospitality sector should be required to complete Tourism and Hospitality based education courses.
5.	55% respondents agree that conference, seminars and workshops are very useful for the development of Tourism and Hospitality industry

Table 2: Summary of results

Hypothesis	H1	H2	H3	H4	H5
A)Strongly Disagree(1)	1	5	3	0	1
B) Disagree(2)	0	6	11	3	2
C)Neither Agree nor Disagree(3)	4	7	14	0	1
D)Agree(4)	27	23	19	33	23
E)Strongly agree(5)	28	19	13	24	33
Total	60	60	60	60	60
Average	4.35	3.75	3.46	4.3	4.41
Variance	0.56	91.25	1.34	0.51	0.67
Standard Deviation	0.74	1.52	1.16	0.71	0.82
Z-test	19.13	6.36	6.44	19.52	18.05
Decision	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted	Accepted

FINDINGS

There is a significant demand for Tourism and Hospitality related jobs amongst employees of the hospitality field as it is interesting and challenging work for them. Results suggest that even employees are satisfied with the working environment and the salary structure. But there is a considerable gap in terms of the impact of education and employee attainment within the industry. Employers in Bangladesh do not have sufficient knowledge about international service standards of tourism and hospitality and when tourism graduates enter into the

sector with more recent and relevant knowledge gained through their education, many are frustrated in-terms of the working environment, salary, service standards and particularly the state of the industry serving the career they have chosen. Many end up wanting to switch to other industries. Service users also frustrated as they find the service they experienced in Bangladesh compares unfavourably with the international standard they used to.

The Tourism and Hospitality Industry has its own culture and pattern of providing excellent services to

tourists, travellers, guests and other service users whether from home or abroad. But this paper suggests that both employers and industry are lacking a great deal of higher order conceptual knowledge and skills involved in maintaining the standard required to keep international level competency.

The industry may find itself challenged to provide significant career appeal to well-educated ambitious university graduates in future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research suggests that educational institutions and the Tourism and Hospitality Industry should both endeavour to engage in more channel of communication to gain a positive reception for the benefits of recruiting well-educated and ambitious Tourism and Hospitality university graduates. Through this process educational institutions can come up with a curriculum based on industrial demand and the Tourism and Hospitality Industry can take full positive advantage of the modernization and globalization of the tourism and hospitality industry and realize the economic benefits it can bring to the country.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

It was hard to get appointment from most of the respondent as they were busy in their own working hour in the hotel. I wanted to have some face to face discussion session with the respondents but the hotels did not permit.

CONCLUSION

This research particularly focused on the employee view on tourism and hospitality based education and its impotence in career expectations as well as to identify a path of communication with the tourism and hospitality industry and its demand. The survey took place at 11 different hotels in Cox's Bazar on 60 employees. The research outcomes indicate that high quality professional human resources would help to improve the quality of work experience and the image of the tourism and hospitality industry. As a result in the long term, the general employment conditions in the tourism and hospitality industry could be improved to enable today's graduates with formal qualifications and up to date technical skill to become the effective managers of tomorrow. So it can be ascertained that tourism and hospitality based education is one of the most realistic factor to get modernized manpower for fulfilling industrial demand

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dimensions and measurement of internal service quality in the hospitality industry." *Australian Journal of Hospitality Management* 06(2): pp. 13-22.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire:

The aim of this survey is to understand Employee View on Tourism and Hospitality Education.

Since your response will be kept strictly confidential. Your frank and honest answers are very important in order to provide a correct picture of your perceptions. Please answer the questions after reading them very carefully. Thank you in advance for your valuable contribution.

Table A: Total Number of Hotel

Serial no	Hotel Name	Employee Surveyed
1.	Hotel Sea Palace Ltd.	15
2.	Hotel Prashad Paradise	5
3.	Hotel Seagull	4
4.	Uni Resort Ltd.	15
5.	Hotel The Cox Today	4
6.	Hotel Mishuk Cox's Bazar	4
7.	Ocean Paradise Ltd	6
8.	Hotel Kollol	2
9.	Hotel Sea Park	1
10.	Hotel Oviseer PVT Ltd	1
11.	Hotel Sea World	3
	Total	60

Table B:

Q1. What is your Gender?	Number of Respondents
Male	57
Female	3
Total	60

Table C:

Q2: What is your educational qualification?	Number of Respondents
SSC	15
HSC	15
Diploma	2
Graduation	17
Masters	11
Total	60

Table D:

Q3 Do you have any professional degree/diploma/certificate?	Number of Respondents
Yes	23
No	37
Total	60

Table E:

Q4 If you have any professional degree/diploma/certificate, write it bellow	Number of Respondents
6 months Course on Front Office	1
Food and Beverage Course	4
Diploma in Hotel Management	2
Hotel Management/ Higher Diploma	1
Front Office Short Course	2
NCC (NHTTI-National Hotel & Tourism Training Institute)	2
Certificate Course of House Keeping	1
Hotel Management from Malaysia	1
Hotel Management	2
Diploma in Tourism Management	2
Diploma or Short Time Professional Course	1
Bachelor in Tourism and Hospitality Management	1
Certificate Course	2
Nothing	38
Total	60

Table F:

Q5 Do you think that employees without tertiary/ university level qualification are jealous of graduate counterparts?	Number of Respondents
Yes	36
No	24
Total	60

Table H:

Q7 What type of education can give you advantage in Tourism and Hospitality Industry?	Number of Respondents
Tourism and Hospitality Graduation	25
Tourism and Hospitality Diploma	11
Tourism and Hospitality Certificate Course	24
Total	60

Table G:

Q6 Do you need any Tourism and Hospitality related degree/diploma/certificate?	Number of Respondents
Yes	46
No	14
Total	60

Table I:

Q8 In which department do you work?	Number of Respondents
Front Office	32
House Keeping	8
Food and Beverage	12
Food Production	2
Others	6
Total	60

Chart A:

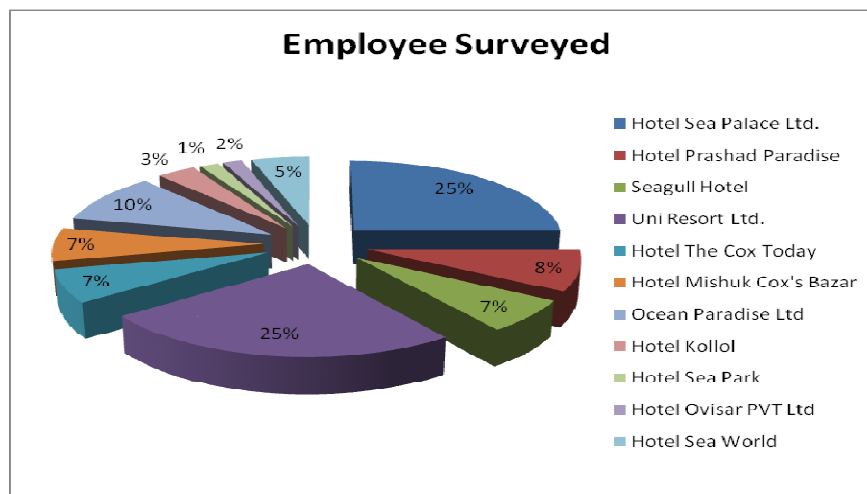


Chart B:

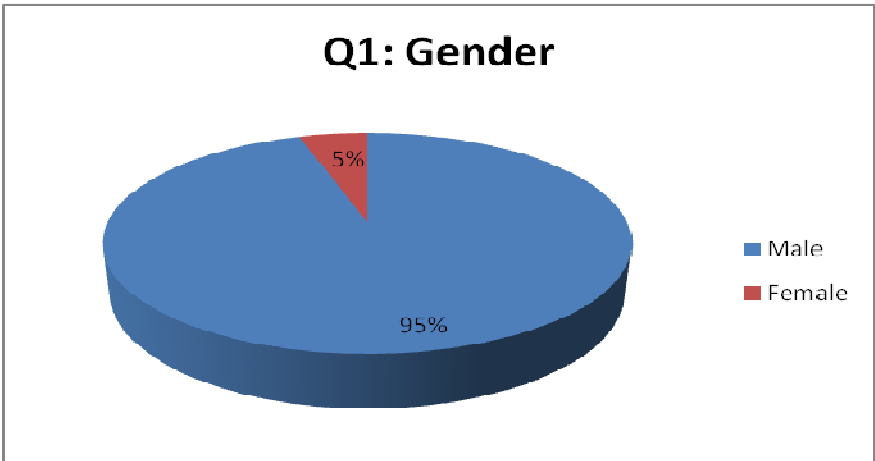


Chart C:

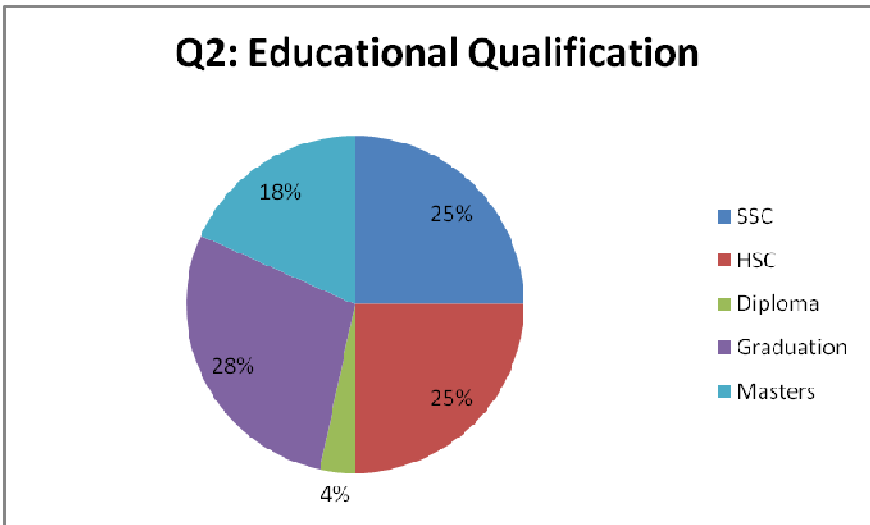


Chart D:

