

Career as Hotel Managers: Scope of Post Graduation In Hotel Management

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Abstract

The main thrust of this research is to explore whether post graduation in hotel management provides any competitive advantage with respect to a graduate in hotel management in selection process of different management positions in hotel industry, to provide a perspective from hotel industry point of view in identifying the gaps in learning and development of the Institutes providing post graduation and how best to place these Institutions of higher learning in a position of competitive advantage over Institutions providing only graduation as far as career path and growth prospects of the hotel management students are concerned.

Twelve leading hotels / hotel chains of the country have been selected for the research on the basis of judgement sampling; The Oberoi Cecil, J.W. Marriott Chandigarh, The Leela Gurgaon, The Park Hotel, New Delhi, Taj Mahal Hotel, New Delhi and so on, wherein HRD Managers / Training managers were the source of information. The research also included 83 samples of students from premier post graduation Institutions/ Universities offering Post Graduation in Hotel Management. The Institutions were selected on the basis of convenience sampling which included National Council for Hotel Management, Noida, Kurukshetra University, Lovely Professional University, and Chandigarh University, Gharuan. The samples within these institutions were selected randomly to provide neutrality. Also 21 ex-students of these Institutions were also included in the sample for research.

The data was collected through both primary and secondary sources including Surveys, Questionnaires from HRD/Training Managers and students either pursuing post graduation programmes in hotel management or have passed out, Internet, references from brochures, past collection of data from placement records and was tabulated through flow charts, pie charts, bar graphs. Objectives of the research were; To list the reasons for pursuing a post-graduation degree in hotel management, To compare growth potential in hotels between a post graduate and a graduate in hotel management, To provide feedback of gaps in learning and development to the Institutions offering post graduation in hotel management.

Some of the findings were that most hotels have hotel management students with graduation as their prime work force in the management level, almost all the hotels cite performance as the indicator than higher qualification as far as promotional avenues are concerned, almost none of them give any sort of monetary incentives to pursue post graduation, though, some of them have tie ups with overseas institutions for providing certificate programmes, also majority of the students indicate joining as faculty in hotel management institutions is their first preference for pursuing post graduation rather than taking up management positions in hotels. Having said that, post graduation in hotel management has emerged as a crucial qualification for taking up career as trainer /faculty in hotel management institutions in today's competitive market place.

Keywords: CTC, NCHMCT, HRD, MBA

Need for the Study/ Expected Contribution from Research

Being Principal and a senior faculty with varied experience as hospitality trainers in a premier Institute of Hotel management in Chandigarh, it had been our quest to explore the scope of students pursuing post graduation in hotel management as offered by NCHMCT and various universities in India and their acceptability in the hotel industry in terms of better pay, start and recognition as compared to a graduate in hotel management. The feedback from the passed out students were that there is neither any specific status being given to the postgraduate in the hotel Industry nor there are any plans and policies in place in the hotels for differentiating between graduate and post graduate students. On the contrary, hoteliers generally don't find any significant differences between a graduate and a postgraduate in hotel management in order to offer the latter a better start up in their career.

As such, we felt there is a need to study the problem and explore the causes and come up with the suggestions to be provided both to the hotels as well as Hospitality Institutions of higher learning.

Introduction

Hospitality management is the part of the service industry that brings more placements, and money than any other. Managers in the hospitality industry are trained in business, human resources and customer service. They are required to coordinate staff members and give guests an excellent experience. A degree in hospitality management prepares students for managing positions not only in the hospitality industry but also in the allied areas like retail, banking, insurance and so on. As such, with a post graduate degree in hotel management there are different career options which can be pursued.

About the post graduate courses in hotel management

The program provides opportunity to 3 year diploma and 3/ 4 year graduates in hotel management to pursue advanced post graduate course in Hospitality Administration. The program provides specific focus on the services sector as against majority of MBA programs which concentrate on merchandise and manufacturing businesses. Specialized components such as team project and mentorship, under the guidance of industry specialists, broaden the learning spectrum and position the post graduate scholar to be readily accepted in the hospitality and service industry.

The Program is a judicious blend of intensive classroom contact, self learning, industry mentorship and counselling sessions. With the built-in industry mentorship the scholars learn current industry trends which offers scope for building case studies and writing dissertation in the selected areas of specialization. The mentor's relevant industry experience combined with one-to-one interaction immensely contributes to the scholar's professional growth and development. The mentorship experience also offers valuable networking opportunities.

The post graduate program has a built in specialization in Semester III wherein students have the option to take up either Human Resource Management or Sales & Marketing.

Career opportunities for hospitality post graduates

- Opportunity to acquire recognized higher Post Graduate qualifications in Hospitality Hotel Administration
- Enter the hospitality industry at supervisory level in departments like training, sales and marketing, human resource management.
- Faculty positions in Hotel Management and Tourism Management Institutes.

- Opportunity to acquire higher qualification for in-service sponsored candidates from industry. Such in-service candidates can then shoulder managerial responsibilities in their area of specialization;
- Opportunity for the faculty from recognized Hospitality/Hotel Management and Tourism Institutes for enhancement of professional qualification towards advancement in teaching careers.

Research Methodology

Data collection

Both Primary & Secondary methods of data collection were used:

- Primary data

For the purpose of collection of primary data an unbiased, undisguised structured questionnaire was prepared which was administered to the respondents for the purpose of getting the information. In a number of occasions, due to time constraint interview based on questionnaire were administered to solicit information, specially from the HRD / training managers of some hotels.

- Secondary Data

For the purpose of secondary data, information available from programme brochure, placement records, internet, etc. have been used to a large extent. Besides, some newspaper and magazine articles also proved out to be a great help for the same.

- Statistical tools used

The tools that are used in data analysis and interpretation is percentage tables, primarily for easy interpretation.

Data analysis and interpretation

At first, the sample of students either pursuing or have passed post graduation in hotel management were asked to give their views on various aspects of undergoing this course. Initially, they were encouraged to give the reasons for pursuing the higher study and rank them accordingly, from Rank 1 to Rank 4 with Rank 1 as the most preferred option. The response suggest that the main purpose of studying post graduation in hotel management is for Higher Qualification and the least purpose for the same is for earning status in the society.

Table 1

<i>REASON</i>	<i>RANK 1 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 2 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 3 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 4 (%)</i>
HIGHER EDUCATION	57.1	28.57	0	14.28
BETTER SALARY PACKAGE	9.52	33.33	28.57	28.57
STATUS IN THE SOCIETY	9.52	14.28	38.09	38.09
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	23.80	23.80	33.33	19.04
OTHER REASONS IF ANY	----	----	-----	----

Next, the students were given the option to rank the career they would like to take up or have taken up after the completion of the course with Rank 1 being the most preferred choice and Rank 5 the least.

The response clearly indicates that the most preferred career option is to become a trainer in hotel management institute whereas the least preferred career option is to take up any assignment apart from a hotel.

Table 2

<i>CAREER OPTIONS</i>	<i>RANK 1 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 2 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 3 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 4 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 5 (%)</i>
TRAINER IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE	38.09	28.57	0	9.52	23.80
JOIN HOTEL AT MANAGEMENT LEVEL	28.57	14.28	23.80	19.04	14.28
START YOUR OWN BUSINESS	9.52	14.28	23.80	33.33	19.04
CAREER APART FROM HOTEL	4.76	23.80	14.28	23.80	33.33
PURSUE HIGHER STUDIES	19.04	19.04	38.09	14.28	9.52

Then, the student respondents were asked if they have any job experience prior to joining the above course. More than 75% do not have any job experience and have taken up this course directly after completing the graduate programme in hotel management. Less than 25% respondents have one to three years of job experience in hotels, Quick service restaurants or teaching.

Table 3

<i>JOB EXPERIENCE BEFORE PURSUING POST GRADUATION IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT</i>	<i>PERCENT</i>
YES	23.81
NO	76.19

Students were then made to share their opinion about how strongly they agree on the view that a post graduation degree will make one achieve a better position in hotels than a graduate in hotel management. The response suggests that there is a fairly strong agreement on this view.

Table 4

	<i>STRONGLY AGREE</i>	<i>AGREE</i>	<i>NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE</i>	<i>DISAGREE</i>	<i>STRONGLY DISAGREE</i>
<i>PERCENT</i>	33.33	42.85	14.28	9.52	0

They were also encouraged to share their feelings on which of the aspects will offer a post graduate with upper edge than a graduate in hotel management. Majority of respondents felt that Higher qualification is the aspect which would give them the advantage over a graduate though few of them were unable to make any choice.

Table 5

<i>ASPECT</i>	<i>PERCENTAGE</i>
HIGHER QUALIFICATION	57.14
BETTER SALARY PACKAGE	9.52
SECURING MANAGEMENT LEVEL POSITIONS IN HOTELS	19.04

CAN'T SAY	14.28
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Also, a different set of questionnaire was administered to the Human Resource managers / Training Managers of reputed hotels in the sample to elicit their different views on the post graduate in hotel management course being offered by different institutions /universities and their present policies regarding the same.

At first, they were asked about the qualification they look in a fresher for taking up management level position in the hotel and were requested to rank them in order of preference from 1 to 4 with rank 1 as most preferred and rank 4 as the least. The preference of Hotel management graduate for selection in management level was unanimous with all the hotels ranking it as first choice. This was followed by their preference for general graduates and the least preferred were post graduate in hotel management and other post graduates including MBA.

Table 6

<i>QUALIFICATION</i>	<i>RANK 1 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 2 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 3 (%)</i>	<i>RANK 4 (%)</i>
HOTEL MANAGEMENT GRADUATES	100	0	0	0
GENERAL GRADUATES	0	66.66	33.33	0
POST GRADUATES IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT	0	33.33	16.66	50
OTHER POST GRADUATES INCLUDING MBA	0	0	50	50
OTHER	----	---	-----	----

Next, the Human Resource managers were given to share their opinion regarding the extent to which they agree that post graduation in hotel management gives an upper edge while selecting management level job positions over a graduate in hotel management. The findings state that fifty percent of the training personnel in hotels agree that post graduation provides an advantage to selection process at management level.

Table 7

	<i>STRONGLY AGREE</i>	<i>AGREE</i>	<i>NEITHER AGREE OR DISAGREE</i>	<i>DISAGREE</i>	<i>STRONGLY DISAGREE</i>
<i>PERCENT</i>	50	33.33	0	16.66	0

Then, the HR managers were requested to furnish the information regarding the proportion of employees with different qualifications working in management level. The findings clearly indicate that the highest proportion of employees working in the management level in hotels is hotel management graduates.

Table 8

<i>HOTEL</i>	<i>PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYEES WORKING AT MANAGEMENT LEVEL</i>			
	GENERAL GRADUATE	HOTEL MANAGEMENT GRADUATE	GENERAL POST GRADUATE	HOTEL MANAGEMENT POST GRADUATE

			INCLUDING MBA	
1	0-20	61-80	0-20	0-20
2	0-20	81-100	41-60	61-80
3	41-60	61-80	21-40	21-40
4	21-40	61-80	21-40	0-20
5	----	61-80	0-20	----
6	41-60	41-60	0-20	0-20
7	0-20	81-100	0-20	0-20
8	0-20	81-100	0-20	0-20
9	21-40	61-80	0-20	0-20
10	0-20	81-100	0-20	0-20
11	0-20	61-80	21-40	0-20
12	0-20	61-80	0-20	21-40

Next, the HR personnel in the hotel were asked if there is a difference in remuneration package/ CTC between a graduate and a post graduate in hotel management working at the same managerial level. The majority of respondent state that there no difference in remuneration package between them.

Table 9

<i>DIFFERENCE IN REMUNERATION PAKAGE/CTC BETWEEN A GRADUATE AND A POSTGRADUATE IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT</i>	<i>PERCENT</i>
YES	33.33
NO	66.66

Further, they were asked if their promotion policies specially encourage post graduation in hotel management qualification as one of the criteria to secure a senior management position in the hotel. To which almost all of them answered in negative citing there is nothing mentioned regarding the same in promotion rules and regulations

Table 10

<i>PROMOTION POLICIES SPECIALLY ENCOURAGE POST GRADUATION IN HOTEL MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATION AS ONE OF THE CRITERIA TO SECURE SENIOR MANAGEMENT POSITION</i>	<i>PERCENT</i>
YES	16.66
NO	83.33

Conclusion

As per the above observations and analysis of the sample of the students, it seems that most of them pursuing post graduation in hotel management are doing so for higher qualification and subsequently taking up suitable careers as trainers in hotel management institutes. Majority of them don't have any prior job experience before taking up the course and have directly enrolled after their graduation. The study also reveals that a large proportion of respondents agree to the fact that post graduation degree

will give them an edge over simple hotel management graduates in terms of higher qualification and also in terms of future career growth prospects in hotels.

On the contrary, the sample of HR managers / Training managers brings out the fact that most of them prefer fresh hotel management graduates for selection at management level than post graduates, though they do feel that post graduation would provide an upper edge while selecting candidates for management level. It was also revealed that major proportion of employees working in the hotel at management level is hotel management graduates. Also, the HR managers expressed that there is neither any clear cut promotion policies in place specially for encouraging post graduation qualification in hotel management nor there is any significant difference in CTC / remuneration package between a graduate and a post graduate in hotel management. The HR personnel suggested more inputs in management topics to be incorporated in the Institute level to make the post graduation course more appealing and attractive enough to be considered superior to graduation in hotel management in terms of career growth and remuneration.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- Post graduate in hotel management course should be designed by a committee of people from academia and hotel industry to make it more rewarding and appealing to the students pursuing the same. This initiative would also encourage the hoteliers to re- design their recruitment policies providing post graduates with better starts and career prospects vis-a -vis a graduate in hotel management.
- Awareness sessions regarding the course should be organised by the Institutes / NCHMCT / Universities and presented to the owners of the hotels and students pursuing final year of their graduation in order to validate that there is a difference in level between a graduate and a post graduate in hotel management in terms of strategic and management skills.
- As a part of curriculum, the students pursuing post graduation may be provided exclusive exposure at the management level learning in different departments of the hotels to understand the finer nuances of strategic planning, problem solving and decision making involved in the departments.
- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India should also popularise and publicise the post graduation in hotel management and provide strong technical, marketing and infrastructural support to the Institutes / Universities delivering the same.
- As this is a higher level of learning, quality rather than quantity should be the priority for the Institutes. The students should be properly screened at the entry level so that the optimum number of students with right attitude to take up higher management positions in hotel industry is selected.
- Although the Institutes and universities at present are advertising this course for better career prospects in hotel industry, still it is designed primarily to attract the students who wish to join as trainers or faculty in different institutes of hospitality. This perception needs to be changed by revamping the course modules and by providing suitable inputs in terms of research oriented experiential learning wherein the superior level inputs of the students can be source and foundation for overall integration of academia with the hotel industry.
- To add value to the post graduate programme in hotel management, the latest trends in the hospitality industry followed globally such as fusion cuisine, molecular gastronomy and molecular mixology needs to be incorporated in the curriculum as specialisation. As the people worldwide travel a lot these days and wish to enjoy the cuisine of other countries, the demand for expert hospitality personnel in these areas would be perpetual. Taking such initiatives would make the post graduate programme unique, enriched, lucrative and attractive not only for the students but the industry as well.

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