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Preference of Women in Hotel Industry: An Empirical Study

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Abstract:

The hotel industry is a human based industry. The success of a hotel depends on the human relationships. The hotel management has realized that in order to keep their guest happy right employee must be hired. An insight into the services provided in the hotel shows that the employees in the hotel needs to be patient, soft spoken and have high level of human understanding. Keeping this in mind the present study was carried out in the 5 star hotels of Mumbai, Pune, Nashik and Aurangabad to find out the reasons for preference of women employee in hotel. The Human Resource managers of these hotels were taken as samples to collect the information. The study showed that the women employees are preferred to be hired in Front Office due to their soft skills expertise and in the House keeping department due to their esthetic sense. Very few women employee were found to be working in Food Production department. The study reveals why women are preferred more in guest service areas of the hotel with the help of variables like Human Understanding, Patience Communication Skills, and Aesthetic sense. The study also analyses the reason for preference of Women Employee at managerial level. The variables taken into consideration were interpersonal skills, decision making ability, democratic leadership, coordination and flexible nature. One Way Analysis Of Variance was used for interpretation and verification for the significance relationship amongst each variable. The study proves that the women employees are more suitable at the Guest service areas and also at the managerial level. Her coordinating and Democratic style of leadership was appreciated, however she was found lacking in her decision making ability. The study concludes that there are benefits of hiring women in hotel industry.

Keywords: - Preference, Women Employee, Hotel, Guest service Area

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry has experienced tremendous growth within the past decade and it is expected to continue beyond the year 2010. As a result, the industry overall faces a worldwide shortage of trained hospitality staff Robinson and Barron (2007) and job opportunities are continuing to increase. Although the hospitality industry has embraced many aspects of modern technology, the provision of services in hotels has not changed radically from the last century. They are dependent on critical human elements of service and what Korzensky (2002) calls customer sovereignty' to ensure a successful and profitable operation. The characteristics needed in today's environment are those that embody the entrepreneur: drive innovation, energy and a special commitment to seeing something through its maturity. Along with the ability to work cooperatively with other people in the organization, what is important for employers is that they must maximize the contributions and value all employees- regardless of age, ethnicity, gender or style Mohammed (2012).

According to Muley (2009) women are drawn to hospitality because they like to work with people. Hospitality industry is the largest employer of any industry in the world. Its growing by leaps and bounds this gives women a chance to hone their management skills. She further adds this is a great time for women in business there are more opportunities available than ever before and a high demand for people with leadership management and marketing skills at the same time women continue to face challenges in getting ahead achieving the reorganization that they deserve and integrating the career and personal life. Kellerman, B., and Rodhe, D. (2007).

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The study intends to find out the benefits added to the human capital of the hotel due to the presence of women employee for this purpose the preference of women employee in four major operating and revenue generating department was analyzed for the study.

The department selected where were Housekeeping, Front office, Food & Beverage service and Kitchen Department. This study will help the hotels to realize the importance of women employee in their organization.

1.2. Aim

- To Study The Preference Of Women Employee In Hotel Industry

1.3. Objectives

- To study the preference of women employee in major operational revenue producing department.
- To analyze the reasons of preference of women in guest service area.
- To analyze the reasons of preference of women in Managerial Level.

1.4. H1 Hypothesis of the Study

Women Employee are preferred in hotel industry

1.5. Limitations of the Study

- The study is only subjected to women working upwards from low level management and does not foray into the lower working staff.
- It should be noted that the area of study selected were the selected cities of western Maharashtra (Nasik, Pune, Mumbai, and Aurangabad).
- The researcher has studies only limited variables while assessing the reasons of preference of women employee.

2. Methodology

The study entitled “Preference of Women in Hotels” was conducted with proper methodology which involved the following

2.1. Selection of Area

The cities selected for the study were Mumbai, Pune, Nasik, and Aurangabad from Western region of Maharashtra. The above cities were selected as they have large numbers of five star hotels and also for their easy accessibility.

2.2. Sampling Technique

For this research non probability sampling technique were used for selection of Human Resource Managers. Thirty Human Resource managers of five start hotels were selected as respondents.

2.3. Sample Selection

2.3.1. Human Resource Managers

The samples selected for the study were the Human Resource Managers. The Human Resource Managers are the medium of link between the employee and the top management. They are responsible in formulating policies for the organizations. In their endeavors to do so, they are guided by company's own policies and the international conventions for workers working conditions requirements, such policies are made by ILO, OHSA. These guidelines provide a detailed study of the working hours, work environment, and stress aspect of the Human Resources and how to keep the employees satisfied. Out of the 40 hotels surveyed, only 30 Human Resource Managers agreed to opine on their policies and practices. The information from the Human Resource Managers was collected through scheduled interviews with prior appointment with the help of pre designed questionnaire.

Sr. No	City	Human Resource Managers
1	Mumbai	15
2	Pune	12
3	Aurangabad	02
4	Nasik	01
Total		30

Table 1: Area Wise Respondents Selected For the Study
Source: Developed for the Study

2.4. Data Collection

Primary and secondary data were collected for the study

- **Primary Data:** In this research, the primary sources had been gathered by using the questionnaire survey as a research tool. 5-point Likert Scale with anchor of (1) 'strongly disagrees' to (5) 'strongly agree' was used in the questionnaire.
- **Secondary Data:** In this research, the secondary data was obtained by reviewing and summarizing the articles Journals, and other printed work related to the study books, etc. The online database such as University of Tunku Abdul Rahman, information was gathered from such relevant journals that are useful and helpful for the research. Most of the secondary data were obtained from Internet, Journals and Articles Books, Text Books.

2.5. Research Instrument

Keeping in mind the nature of study, survey questionnaires was used as the primary research instrument.

The questionnaire was framed keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

- The researcher applied 5 point Likert scale; this format of questionnaire is very simple for the respondent to answer the respondent will indicate with the help of the scale to the extent to which a person agrees or disagrees with a statement. The common scale is 5 to 1. The scale used is

- 5 - Strongly Agree
- 4 - Agree
- 3 - Neutral
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 - Strongly Disagree

- Certain data was collected with the help of Dichotomous Yes or No Answers.
- This questionnaire was design in order to get the view of Human Resource Managers representing the management, so as to get insight into their perception regarding the advantage of having women employee.

2.6. Pilot Study

The pilot study is conducted to refine the survey questions to ensure that no mistakes occurs in the questionnaire, The questionnaire, to check for its validity, reliability and correctness was pre tested in a pilot study. A pilot group of ten respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire and allowed to discuss the questions. Amendments were made to assure that the questions would be in simple manner to be able to measure the variables and were based on a common interpretation of their intention.

2.7. Data Analysis

For this study data collected was analyzed using Software Packages for Statistical Analysis (SPSS). Data was analyzed and summarize in a readable and easy interpretable form. To ensure accuracy and to minimize cost the computer performed all the statically procedures. The main analyses involved were descriptive analysis, co-relation, one way ANOVA, and Chi Square test.

3. Result and Discussions

Each variable has been studied under different sub factors. In the study it is assumed that the data is normally distributed.

3.1: Preference of Women Employee in Five Star Hotels

Sr. No	Department	Preference of Male %	Preference of Female %
1	Housekeeping	26.6	72.2
2	Front Office	20	80
3	F&B	53.2	46.2
4	Kitchen	72.2	26.2

Table 2: Gender Preference in Hotel Department

$$\chi^2 = 22.2$$

Source: Developed for the Study

The preference of women employee was established, firstly according to the various operating department. It is evident from the above table 2 that since the χ^2 computed is 22.22 at 5% level of significance, which is more than the tabulated value of χ^2 7.815. It means that gender wise preference is given to women employee as per the department by the Human Resource Manager. Women employees are preferred in Hotels is the Front office, followed by Housekeeping and food beverage service and the least preference is given to them in kitchen department. As all front line department demands the employee to be constantly in front of the guest requiring specific skills related to soft skills women are required in these departments. The preference in food and beverage department is less in comparison to the Front office and Housekeeping department. The Human Resource Manager preferred women

least is in the kitchen department due to the laborious nature of work involved in this department. These findings are in accordance to earlier study by Hamid (2012) which argued that women are more visible in front line areas.

3.2. Preference of Women Employee in Guest Service Area

Once the department preference was analyzed, the reason of preference of women in guest service areas was analyzed with the help of one way ANOVA. The attributes of women selected for the study are, their understanding, patience, Communication, Aesthetic sense.

Attributes for preference	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
Human Understanding	Between Group	17.014	4	4.254	16.481
	Within Group	6.452	25	0.258	
	Total	23.467	29		
Patience	Between Group	21.414	4	5.354	22.485
	Within Group	5.952	25	0.238	
	Total	27.367	29		
Communication skill	Between Group	20.524	4	5.131	20.882
	Within Group	6.143	25	0.246	
	Total	26.667	29		
Aesthetic sense	Between Group	38.429	4	9.607	31.038
	Within Group	7.738	25	0.31	
	Total	46.167	29		

Table 3: Preference of Women in guest service Area (One way ANOVA)

Source: Developed for the Study

The above table 3 depicts the attributes preferred by the Human Resource Manager in guest service area which is discussed below:-

3.2.1. Women Have Greater Understanding

Since the F value calculated 16.481 is greater than F value tabulated 2.76 at 5% level of significance for (4,25) df, it proves that women are preferred in the guest service areas as they have significantly better understanding for guest needs and wants. A greater understanding of human nature & their problems makes a women employee preferred on this area. This enables the hotel to take care of guests in a better fashion. The above findings are in consistent with the past studies conducted Korzensky (2002); Robinson and Barron (2007) who have studied the importance of human element in the hospitality industry which justifies the preference of women employee.

3.2.2. Women Are More Patient

As the computed F value 22.485 is greater than the F Value Tabulated 2.76 at 5% level of significance for (4,25) df, it clearly shows that the Human Resource Managers give preference to women employee due their significantly being more patience in nature. Being

patience is an essential attribute required to deal with the ever demanding different type of guests. Women are more patience in handling various situations that arises in the hotel due to the guests varying wants and demands.

3.2.3. Women Have Better Communication Skills

The F value derived is 22.882 at 5% level of significance for (4, 25) df, clearly goes to prove that the preference of women in guest service area is due their significantly better communication skills. The employees in the guest service areas have to constantly keep communicating with their guests as they are physically present all the time in front. At the same time they have to handle telephone for answering various queries. A better communication is an essential quality that is needed here, as can be seen in table 3. This also shows that the women are most preferred in the Front office, where there is a demand to be a good communicator as the guest first encounters this department and also they are needed to handle various guest complaints.

3.2.4. Women Have Better Aesthetic Sense

Table 3 shows that as F value derived is 31.038 at 5% level of significance for (4,25) df in case of aesthetic sense, which is greater than the tabulated F value 2.76 at 5% level of significance for (4,25) df. Hence women have significantly better aesthetic sense and eye for detail. The women are preferred in Housekeeping department (Table 2) as they have high aesthetic sense and possess the quality to have an eye for detail. These two qualities are essentially required in housekeeping department, which helps in upkeep of the hotel and to meet the demand of guest on the guest on individual basis. This finding is in accordance with earlier study by Hamid (2012).

3.3. Preference of Women at Managerial Level

In the earlier part the preference of women in different department was analyzed for operating and revenue generating department. The study further analyzed the benefits of women employee in guest service areas. The study discusses the attributes of Women Employee that make them beneficial at higher management level too. These qualities have been further discussed in the following section.

Attributes for preference	Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F
INTERPERSONAL SKILL	Between Groups	23.767	4	5.942	46.419
	Within Groups	3.2	25	0.128	
	Total	26.967	29		
DECISION MAKER	Between Groups	35.556	4	8.889	13.378
	Within Groups	16.611	25	0.664	
	Total	52.167	29		
DEMOCRATIC LEADER	Between Groups	32.589	4	8.147	41.473
	Within Groups	4.911	25	0.196	
	Total	37.5	29		
CO-ORDINATION	Between Groups	47.467	4	11.867	16.481
	Within Groups	18	25	0.72	
	Total	65.467	29		
FLEXIBLE NATURE	Between Groups	43.022	4	10.756	45.234

	Within Groups	5.944	25	0.238	
	Total	48.967	29		

Table 4: Preference Of Women At Managerial Level (One Way ANOVA)
Source: Developed for the Study

The above table 4 shows the reasons for preference of women at managerial level, which are discussed below:-

3.3.1. Women Have Better Interpersonal Skills

From table (4) one can note that the F value derived 46.419 is greater than F value tabulated 2.76 at 5% level of significance for (4, 25) df which shows that women are significantly better when it comes to interpersonal skills. At higher level as a team leader one needs to build up relationship to get the work done and manage things which require a healthy relation with the colleagues and subordinates. The Human Resource Manager found the women better in this regard.

3.3.2. Women Are Better As Decision Maker

Table (4) shows that the F value calculated 13.378 is greater than F value tabulated 2.76 at 5% level of significance for (4,25) df, hence it proves that even at decision making women are significantly good. Some of the Human Resource Manager feels that women are good at taking decisions, which is an essential ability for a person at managerial level.

3.3.3. Democratic Style of Manager

As Table (4), the F value derived 41.473 which is greater the F value tabulated at 5% level of significance for (4,25) df, hence it proves that women at managerial level function significant in a democratic style which is the need of today's managements style. The present day functioning pattern demands the manager to be open, flexible, and considerate rather than being an autocratic leader. The Human Resource Manager feels that women function more in democratic way. This finding is in consistent with previous study by McPherson (2010).

3.3.4. Women as Coordinator

In the same table (4) F value arrived 16.481 is more than F value tabulated 2.76 at 5% level of significance for (4, 25) df, it proves that women are found to be significantly far better at coordinating with people by Human Resource Manager. A good manager needs to co-ordinates with people for managing the smooth functioning of the department with the staff. Women do possess this quality, to manage as departmental head.

3.3.5. Women Are Accommodating and Flexible By Nature

Since the F value 45.234 is much greater than the F value tabulated 2.76 at 5% level of significance for (4, 25) df, it proves that women are significantly accommodating and flexible by nature as per the Human Resource Managers of the hotels. These qualities of women employee makes them suitable for managerial posts as the manager is required to be working as per situation and adjusting to one and all rather than being rigid to rules and regulations of their department.

From the above table 2, 3 and 4 it is clear that the Human Resource Managers of the hotel not only find the woman employee more suitable is hotel jobs at the guest service areas but the hotel also would gain benefit at higher level of management. Hence hypothesis H1, is supported that the Women Employee are preferred by the hotel Human Resource Managers and this result is in accordance with past studies by ILO Report (2010) which argued that women have important role on management. Timo and Davidson (2005) also studied that in 5 star international hotel chains women shared equal jobs to men.

4. Summary and Conclusion

4.1. Summary

The study proves that the women are preferred to be hired in Front office department followed by Housekeeping Department. In the front office department they were preferred due to their ability to communicate and understanding human nature. In the Housekeeping area they are preferred due to their better aesthetic sense and eye for detail.

The attributes in the guest service areas were analyzed on six parameters which include the understanding of human nature, patience level, and communication skill, their aesthetic sense and eye for detail and their ability to handle different type of guest at ease. These attributes were analyzed from the Human Resource Managers perspective. The F value of aesthetic sense scored the highest significance value and this justify their selection in Housekeeping department.

Further the F value for women being more patient was 22.485, followed by better communication skill with F value of 20.882 and lastly their ability to handle different type of guest with F value 17.911 this high significance shows that women are preferred in guest service areas. This clearly proves that it is beneficial to appoint women staff in hotels as per the departmental need. The department that calls for good aesthetic sense is the housekeeping which hires employee for upkeep of the hotel property (Rooms, Public areas). At the same time the hotel calls for constant dealing with different types of guest, situation, problem solving etc. this again requires

the ability to be calm, patience, to have indepth understanding and a good effective communicating ability to pacify, convince or simply handling queries. Possession of all these attributes helps in Customer Satisfaction. Apart from the preference in guest service areas, the women employees are also suitable for various managerial positions. The antecedents variable for managerial qualities analyzed clearly depict that the women are not only suitable for guest service areas but also have the ability to be good at managerial positions. The antecedent variables studied were interpersonal skill, which scored the highest significance value of 46.49. Women have the ability to handle different types of role at the family front and this quality of getting along with people helps her in smooth operation of department in hotels too. In hotels the managerial job demands handling guest and colleagues, and sub-ordinates together. Her capability as a decision maker scored the least significant value. As a decision maker she is not much appreciated as compared to other attributes. Her democratic style of leadership makes her preferred with a scoring of 41.473. Similarly her flexible and accommodating nature makes her today's suitable leader, which is the demand of today's time. In today's age more than autocratic and dictatorship style the higher authorities are required for function in a more democratic and flexible manner. This style takes all the staff in loop for its functioning. For the hotel industry these qualities of leader are required as the employees further down the line have to be in good spirit to serve their guest with positivity. So that leaders should keep the spirit of their colleagues high.

4.2. Conclusion

The study carried out with an objective to gain insight into the value added by women employee to a 5 star hotel. The research has strongly argued that the women are preferred hotel employee as they bring along their own added value with their understanding of Human nature, their well groomed pleasing personality along with their communication skills and their ability to handle different types of guests with patience. Her sense of aesthetic gives her place is Housekeeping. All this gives them a place in Front office department, and in Food and Beverage department. The kitchen is not a department where women are much preferred due to the hard laborious demand of the work. Not only she has a place in the guest service areas of the hotel but her capabilities of a good manager have also been appreciated. Although she has not been appreciated in the decision making ability at higher level but her flexibility and accommodating nature while dealing with 'people' has been appreciated. The Human Resource Managers feel that she is a democratic leader, and makes her suitable to head a department in today's time.

5. Recommendation for Future Research

The present study was carried out gathering the point of view of Hotel Management (Human Resource Managers). Further study could be carried out by taking the view point of the guest and the employees of the hotel. Limited attributes that selected for this study, an extensive study could be carried out by taking other attributes into consideration.

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