Undergraduates’ Perception of Human Resource Requirements in Hospitality Industry in Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

Tourism and hospitality industry has been confronted with the problem of attracting and retaining quality employees that has led to a shortage of skilled personnel to staff the ever-growing number of tourism and hospitality businesses and the turnover rate in the hospitality sector rose due to several factors, including higher proportions of teenagers, students and part-year employees in the industry workforce. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to identify the expectation of undergraduate who willing to work in hospitality and to identify the relationship between industry perception of undergraduates and willingness to working with hospitality industry. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were deployed. Despite many students find the nature of the job too stressful and strenuous. Students have also cited reasons such as long working hours, shift work, dealing with unpredictable circumstances in the job environment and having lower starting remuneration as compared other industries. The universities also play a major role in influencing the choice of career of their students through their faculty, curriculum, resources and links to the industry. Therefore the universities would need to manage student expectations prior to and during the course of studies to encourage students to stay within the industry after graduation.

Keywords--- Hospitality, Human Resource, Undergraduates

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is probably the earth's fastest growing industrial sectors plus the major earner of foreign exchange along with one of several critical services of work chances besides to the Sri Lankan framework however around the world wide also. According to World Travel & Tourism Council (2015) economic impact report, Travel & Tourism’s direct contribution to world gross domestic product (GDP) and employment in 2014 was US$2.4 trillion and 105 million jobs respectively. Taking its wider impacts into account, Travel & Tourism’s total contribution to the global economy in 2014 was US$7.6 trillion (2014 prices), which equates to 9.8% of total economy GDP in 2014. 2.1 million new jobs were generated directly in the sector in 2014, and in total 6.1 million new jobs were created as a result of total direct, indirect and induced activity. The total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment grew 2.3% in 2014, while the total GDP contribution grew 3.6%, faster than wider economy in 2014 and registering positive growth for the 5th successive year. This is again evidence that Travel & Tourism is a key engine for continued global growth and job creation.

According to Annual Statistical Report 2014 (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority), the total number of persons directly employed in the tourist industry amounted to 129,790 in 2014, representing an increase of 15.3 per cent over the corresponding figure of the previous year. Majority of those employees were in the accommodation and catering sector. This amount is 80.9 per cent of the total direct employment, recording a substantial increase of 16.1 per cent against the previous year amount of 90,444. Due to the more registration of Travel Agents and Tour Operators, the employment in this sector has increased again to 9,092 which was an increase of 29.7 per cent compared to the previous year.

According to Tourism development strategy 2011-2016 Sri Lanka, SLTDA divided two major categories to fill the human resource gap (1) meeting the human resource gap of the accommodation industry; providing necessary training for four major sectors, F&B professional cookery, housekeeping and front office operation, Sri Lanka institute of Tourism and Hotel Management is specialising in these areas. As the annual output of about 1500 graduates are the industry requirement, incentives will be provided to promote skills in the industry. (2) meeting the human resource gap of in related service: providing necessary training for tour guides, homestay and other formal and informal sector service providing in order to meet the human resource building requirement, Sri Lanka tourism also work closely with other interested groups such as local university, local authorities, industry partners, private sector education institute, potential training providers of public and private sector and NGO s to meet the emerging requirement.
The tourism and hospitality industry has been confronted with the problem of attracting and retaining quality employees that has led to a shortage of skilled personnel to staff the ever-growing number of tourism and hospitality businesses and the turnover rate in the hospitality sector rose due to several factors, including higher proportions of teenagers, students and part-year employees in the industry workforce. Therefore these issues highlight the importance in recruiting and retaining high quality and well-trained staff, such as recent graduates of tourism and hospitality programs. According to Tourism development strategy 2011-2016 Sri Lanka, the annual output of about 1500 graduates are the industry requirement, incentives will be provided to promote skills in the industry.

But many students who embark on a tourism and hospitality education trek do not join the trade, upon graduation. It is taken that students who enrol in a hospitality course will pursue a career in the tourism and hospitality industry immediately after graduation. It will be causing to the unemployment of the sector and the lack of educated and well trained people in the industry.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Hospitality & Tourism Employment
The tourism and hospitality industry has a very large scope. It covers significant areas including food and beverage, conferences and conventions, recreation, etc. In order to understand the diversity of job roles within the tourism and hospitality line, Airey & Frontistitis (1997) has advocated that it is important to see the job roles from the point of view of the individual rather than from the macro industrial perspective.

Personal Factors
Fundamentally, the self is both separate from and connected to others. Yet while everyone can think of the self as separate or as connected, cross-cultural and racial-ethnic (Oyserman& Markus, 1990) research point to between group differences in whether the self is typically construed as related to or separate from others. Terming this difference agency–communion (Bakan, 1966), individualism–collectivism (Gaines et al, 1997) or independence–interdependence (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), each of these literatures posits chronic stable differences between groups (gender, race, or cultural) in chronically available self-knowledge.

According to M.A. Kiffly (personal communications, July 15, 2010) another reason why students are disinclined to join the hotel trade is due to the perceptions of the education for the positions in the tourism trade. Recruitment advertisements featured in the Singapore local newspapers for entry-level positions for the hospitality and tourism grade always peg diploma graduates with GCE ‘O’ level school leavers. By doing so, diplomas holders are unable to leverage on their educational qualifications earned and are seen to be competing with students who are from a lower educational stratum.

Educational Factors
Concerning educative factors, there are numerous factors that can shift a student’s career choice. As cited by Litvin (2000), hospitality teachers’ knowledge, perception and outlook of the industry can be a motivational factor in joining the tourism and hospitality industry. Curriculum does also play an important role. Curriculum can be further subdivided into academic (classroom-based, guest speakers) or field based (i.e. site inspections, field trips).

Tas & Dopson (2004) mentioned that the development of curriculum should be pegged to industrial standards and reviewed through competencies grids as well as analysis. The curriculum must also enhance greater interest as the student progress through the years. Many polytechnics have adopted different pedagogies of teaching ranging from lectures, tutorials, discussions, problem-based learning, online games, etc. This is similar to programmes that are offered in Hong Kong hospitality institutions (Kivela & Kivela, 2005).

Industrial Factors
Since many hospitality students upon graduation enter the operations divisions in hospitality and tourism industry, they are subjected to the needs of operations which are carried out throughout the day (shift work), including weekends and public holidays. Coupled with the stressful nature of the work, dealing with irate guest and the fast pace nature of the line, students are disinclined to work in the industry (Kang & Gould, 2002) after joining the trade.

Attitude of Hospitality Students
There have been quite a few researchers who have studied the attitudes of hospitality students who are seeking careers in the hospitality and tourism line. According to Kusluvan (2003), it was crucial to understand the attitudes of students to gain an insight to the reasons why many students are disinclined to join the line or choose to leave the industry after having stayed in the trade for a relatively short period. As way to see why, Kusluvan (2003) mentioned that it was important to see the perspectives of students who are currently pursuing a hospitality curriculum and those that have graduated.

Conceptual frame work

Source: Justin Matthew Pang (2010)

Hypothesis
H1: There is a significant relationship between willingness to join a career in Hospitality Tourism Industry and Personal Factors
H2: There is a significant relationship between willingness to join a career in Hospitality Tourism Industry and Educational Factors
H3: There is a significant relationship between willingness to join a career in Hospitality Tourism Industry and Industrial Factors

III. METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve objectives of the research, the analysis used both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data were obtained by means of semi structured questionnaire. The quantitative data were analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Minitab. Descriptive analysis, including means was calculated along with frequencies, graphs, charts and tables and regression analysis and correlation analysis were used to analyze the data. Qualitative data were collected by means of a structured interview.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Background Information

The general information of the undergraduates from three national universities are discussed as below. Concerning on this research study, primary data were collected from 120 tourism and hospitality undergraduates, from three national universities. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize the demographic data including gender distribution, universities and academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background Information</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UWU</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUSL</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RUSL</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4th year</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey - 2016

According to above research findings, majority of undergraduates were male. As a percentage it is 52.20 percent. Furthermore, it presented that, 59.20 percent of undergraduates were in 3rd year.

Expectations of undergraduates who willing to work in hospitality industry

According to research findings majority of undergraduates willing to join hospitality industry after graduation due to interested in working with hospitality industry, self-satisfaction, hospitality and tourism industries are developing industries and have more job opportunities in future, with the degree relating to hospitality, tourism industry it will add value and favourable remuneration and friendly environment. Furthermore, they are expecting high social states with their job position as well as salary. Apart from that with the help of academic qualifications they wanted to gain promotional opportunities in immediately. And also, they wanted to work in 8 hours without heavy work load. The reasons why not selecting hospitality industry as a career choice after graduation are barrier from the family background, high risk and less security, have different desire as a career (bank sector, accountant field, etc.) and more responsibilities than other sectors.
Table 2: Correlation between independent variables and dependent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Pearson correlation</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Factors</td>
<td>0.410</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Factors</td>
<td>0.284</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Factors</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey – 2016

Above Table 1.2 illustrates the correlation between Independent Variables and Dependable variable. For the personal factors, it denotes a 0.410 value of correlation with overall customer satisfaction which was suggested that there was moderate positive relationship between independent variable quality of food and dependent variable customer satisfaction. Moreover, there was a significant association at 0.00 significant levels between these two variables for the reason that P-value was less than 0.05.

For the quality of educational factors, there was a 0.284 correlation coefficient value with dependent variable, indicating that there was a weak positive relationship between educational factors and willingness of join in the hospitality industry. In addition, p-value of 0.000 indicates that there was a significant association between these two variables at 0.05 level of significant.

The highest correlation coefficient was 0.487, between industrial factors and dependent variable. Furthermore, there was a moderate positive relationship between those independent industrial factors and willingness of join in the hospitality industry. P-value of 0.000 implies that there was a significant relationship between quality of physical environment and customer satisfaction at 0.05 level of significant.

Table 3: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of independent variables versus dependent variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>ß Coefficients</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>0.624</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Factors</td>
<td>0.197</td>
<td>0.060</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Factors</td>
<td>0.124</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Factors</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent variable</td>
<td>0.509</td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey – 2016

According to table 1.3, constant (ß0) was 0.624 which illustrate that while all independent variables equal to 1, willingness of join in the hospitality industry was 0.624. P- Value of constant was 0.000 which statistically significant at 0.05 level of significant. In addition, all the beta coefficient values represent positive values. In that case there was a positive relationship between independent variable and dependent variable.

According to above analysis independent variables were highly significant for the model as its p-values were less than 0.05. Among these two variables willingness to join in hospitality industry was highly impacted by industrial factors than the personal factors and educational factors, its coefficients are 0.371 and 0.197, 0.124 respectively.

When consider personal factors dimension, the ß coefficient of 0.197 indicates that when personal factors was increased by one unit while other variables remain constant, willingness to join in hospitality was increased by 0.197 units. Furthermore personal factors contributed significantly to the model since p-value of 0.000 which was less than 0.05 level of significant. Therefore null hypothesis H0 was rejected and alternative hypothesis H1 was accepted. Hence, there was a significant relationship between willingness to join in the career in hospitality tourism industry and Personal factors.

Coefficient of educational factors, one unit of increase in educational factors while other variables remain constant, willingness to join in hospitality was increased by 0.124. Moreover, educational factors were significant as p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significant. Therefore null hypothesis H0 was rejected and alternative hypothesis H2 was accepted. Hence, there was a significant relationship between willingness to join in the career in hospitality tourism industry and Educational factors.

According to coefficient of industrial factors, one unit of increase in industrial factors while other variables remain constant, organizational commitment was increased by 0.197. Furthermore, industrial factors were insignificant as p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 level of significant. Therefore null hypothesis H0 was rejected and alternative hypothesis H3 was accepted. Hence, there was a significant relationship
between willingness to join in the career in hospitality tourism industry and industrial factors.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Personal factors, educational factors, industrial factors have an impact on undergraduates’ perception of willingness to join in hospitality industry. In practical terms, this means these dimensions can be affect when selecting hospitality industry as a career choice. 74 percent of participants are willing to join in the hospitality industry as a career choice and 26 percent of participants are not willing to join in the hospitality industry after graduation.

Majority of them agreed with the personal factors which represent by mode 1.25. Furthermore it explained that the perception on remuneration, perception on educational level, values, perception of family background, and perception of industry are the key dimensions which will affect for undergraduates’ perception when selecting a career in hospitality industry.

Majority of the undergraduates agreed with the educational factors and the indications were lecturers’ attitude, knowledge and experience, academic curriculum, internships, facilities and resources, links to the industry, reputation of education institute.

Enhancing the practical exposure, arranging management training, establishing training programs and Conduct mentoring programs, workshops in institution wise in order to build the personality of the students to will have a direct influence on undergraduates’ perception of human resource requirement in hospitality industry in Sri Lanka.

REFERENCES