Need of measuring service quality in hospitality education: a conceptual framework

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Abstract: This paper explores the need of measuring the service quality in hospitality education and proposes the association between service quality, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioural intentions from the perspective of key stakeholders. Expert views were solicited from academicians and industry recruiters. The available literature was also referred and past placement records of IHMs were analysed to support the study. The findings suggest that in a competitive scenario, besides service quality in hospitality education, there is a need to simultaneously measure value and satisfaction leading to behavioural intentions. Accordingly, a framework is conceptualised for the stakeholders by adopting the research model (Cronin et al., 2000). The outcome in the form of behavioural intentions of stakeholders would then provide the direction to IHMs to better utilise their resources towards facilitating improved service quality, enhanced satisfaction or superior value.

Keywords: service quality; customer satisfaction; perceived value; perceived sacrifice; behavioural intentions; hospitality education.

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1 Introduction

The prevailing cut-throat competition in the Indian hospitality industry has encouraged hotels to expand and adopt strategies to outperform their rivals. The buoyant room inventory coupled with the urge for persistent customer delight has led to the relentless pressure on the talent managers to recruit quality human resources (Nagar and Jaiswal, 2019). The challenge remains that about 15,000–18,000 students are graduating across the country every year but fewer than 25% are industry-ready (Minds, 2014). As the competition within the hospitality industry intensifies, the education and training needs to evolve in chorus with the demand in the industry (Dahiya, 2013). Hospitality education as a form of technical education is one of the fastest-growing sectors in India (Jain et al., 2011). With the amplified contest, the educational institutes need to implement quality practices keeping in mind the expectations of all stakeholders (Sahney, 2016). Such initiatives on quality can lead to, for example, better decision making by the students regarding the choice of the institute to pursue their study (Bayraktaroglu and Atrek, 2010). The present scenario of the hospitality education research concept has shifted to achieve the requirements of not only students but all key stakeholders – students, faculty and industry recruiters (Barber and Goodman, 2011; Kim and Jeong, 2018; Sahney, 2016). The system has many stakeholders with different and conflicting requirements (Sahney, 2016). This transfer has triggered an evaluation of quality in hospitality education delivered to train and equip budding hospitality professionals with relevant skill sets (Kim and Jeong, 2018). It is complex to define service quality in the educational system. Assessing the same from the perspective of only one stakeholder will be incomplete and unjustified (Owlia and Aspinwall, 1997; Quinn et al., 2009; Sahney, 2016; Trivellas and Santouridis, 2016). Hence, the education provided, accordingly, should also balance, satisfy and motivate all its stakeholders in terms of quality and strive to maximise the benefits to each one of them (Sahney, 2016). A recent example of such effort is attributed to EHL Switzerland, a top-ranked hospitality school which has re-branded itself. With the internationalisation and changing demand in hospitality education, EHL Group (2019) has aligned the activities and strategies to attract their stakeholders worldwide. It depicts that to remain competitive, even the top hospitality schools need to realign, reconsider and create new brands. As all stakeholders have their expectations in terms of how hospitality education is to be aligned to benefit, a holistic perspective is essential to evaluate the service quality.

In India, hospitality education is provided by several institutions termed as Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) under the aegis of National Council for Hotel Management (NCHMCT), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and many central, state and private universities. Amongst all the hospitality education providers, NCHMCT, under the Ministry of Tourism (MOT), is the leader for delivering hospitality management education through its affiliated IHMs. At present, the undergraduate academic program by NCHMCT is promulgated in 21 central government-funded IHMs,

25 state government-funded IHMs, one public sector undertaking IHM and 24 private IHMs in the country.

The paper aims to determine the need for measuring service quality in hospitality education and to develop a conceptual framework proposing the association among service quality in hospitality education with satisfaction, perceived value leading to behaviour intentions of key stakeholders.

The paper is developed in the following format. In following Section 2, the theoretical background including the uniqueness of hospitality education and how it differs from traditional higher education is established. This section also cites the importance of value and satisfaction along with service quality to make the study significant. In Section 3, the methodology including research design, data collection and analysis is being depicted. Section 4 relates to the findings of secondary data analysis and expert interviews. It includes placement data regarding trends in management trainee recruitment over the last five years and the movement of key performance indicators of branded hotels over the same period. A conceptual model is developed and inter-relationships among service quality of hospitality education with customer satisfaction, perceived sacrifice and perceived value leading to behavioural intentions of stakeholders is stated in Section 5 followed by a discussion on current initiatives by the MOT towards assessing the service quality of IHMs in Section 6. The concluding Section 7 summarises the findings of the research, highlights the practical implications, portray the limitations and provides a direction for future research in this field.

2   Theoretical background

2.1   Hospitality education vs. higher education

Hospitality education is still finding its status as evolutionary due to controversy over the disciplinary nature with regards to its place in higher education as an independent area. It seems that there is a link between hospitality programs with general higher education disciplines like business management, social studies and behavioural science (Hsu et al., 2017). In addition to active learning techniques and traditional lecture-based learning, hospitality education strives to train the students based on experiential learning which includes real life-business experiences where more of practical knowledge and its application prepares the students to be industry-ready once they graduate. The hospitality management institutions must design the courses to complement the needs of the industry by adopting experiential learning tools and methods. The changing demand of the industry would solicit similar adjustments in the design (Kim and Jeong, 2018). As such, hospitality education is unique and different from general higher education.

2.2   Need to measure service quality, satisfaction and value

In fierce rivalry, organisations are focussing on the behavioural intentions of the stakeholders (Tam, 2004). Though quality was a strategic tool which remained to assess the organisations' competitive position and increased profitability (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990), the rise in customer demand and intense competition led to the understanding that quality may not be the adequate factor for providing a firm with the edge. It was believed that customer value is an important source for providing an advantage to firms in market

rivalry (Woodruff, 1997). Only satisfying customers may not lead to positive behavioural intentions as well (Tam, 2004). A simultaneous influence of the three constructs, that is, service quality, satisfaction, and value is crucial for understanding the service encounter outcomes leading to behavioural intentions. Measuring only the subsets or ignoring any one of these three constructs will confuse the understanding on behavioural intentions of the firm (Cronin et al., 2000). As such, for measuring service quality of hospitality education, all three constructs need to be evaluated together from the perspective of stakeholders to measure their behavioural intentions.

Hospitality literature shows a growing trend of research on service quality, customer satisfaction, and service value during the period from 2000–2015 (Oh and Kim, 2017). In the literature, substantial gaps towards the use of these constructs were found. Of the 242 articles published in the leading journals, which mostly stressed on combining these three constructs in a single model for better understanding (Oh and Parks, 1996), only 4% of these articles integrated service quality, customer satisfaction and service value in determining the behavioural intentions of the customers (Oh and Kim, 2017). Further, these studies were confined to the hospitality industry only and none was found on hospitality education. So, there is a scope to study these constructs simultaneously in this domain.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

As the study is qualitative in nature, an exploratory design is opted for the research (Pantano and Priporas, 2016). The need for undertaking further quantitative research for measuring service quality in hospitality education required to be justified through qualitative methods due to a lack of previous researches in this area. Interviews with experts would lead to better understanding and elicit varied viewpoints for the problem (Maxwell, 1996). Also, secondary data analysis provides convenience in terms of time and cost (Smith et al., 2011).

3.2 Data collection and analysis

A sample of general managers, human resource managers, director, National Council for Hotel Management (NCHMCT) and principals of IHMs were interviewed to elicit the contemporary issues on service quality of hospitality education and its relevance in the current scenario. The reason for expert interviews which were in-depth stresses on minimising space between interviewee and interviewers and offer mutual cooperation (Johns and Lee-Ross, 1998). Also, researchers stated the efficiency of such interviews in supplying in-depth information (Stokes and Bergin, 2006). As the experts were chosen to represent the leading IHMs and reputed hotel chains in India, a purposive sampling technique was used. For hotel experts, the interviews were conducted when the team of recruiters visited for campus interviews at IHM Chandigarh. Five leading hotel chains of India namely ITC, IHG, Hyatt, Oberoi, and Leela participated in the interview process. Further director (NCHMCT), principals and head of departments of five IHMs were interviewed at NCHMCT head office. These included IHM Kolkata, IHM Bhopal, AIHM Chandigarh, IHM Gurdaspur, and IHM Lucknow. Also, views from director NCHMCT

were taken. In total, information was elicited from 18 participants. These interviews took place in the month from February to April 2019. The sample size is considered adequate for qualitative study which ranges from 15 to 20 (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2007). The questions which were put forward to the interviewers were related to the issues regarding the fresh graduates joining the hotels, matching the industry demands with the quality of manpower supplied by IHMs, quality of hospitality education in the country, uniqueness of hospitality education, choice among service quality, satisfaction or value for continuing as faculty in IHM, choice among service quality, satisfaction or value for returning back to the IHM every year for campus placement. On average the interviews lasted from 20–30 minutes and included mostly open, clear and neutral questions to elicit in-depth information and avoid bias. The responses from interviewer were either noted or recorded. The content collected through interviews were analysed on the same questions so that similar responses and differences can be observed.

Further, the placement details of IHMs all over India were collected to find out the proportion of students being offered management training programmes by leading hotel chains such as Taj, Oberoi, ITC, IHG, Hyatt Marriott and Accor with that of management trainees offered by all organisations visiting the campus. In this context, placement details were solicited from all 21 Central IHMs for the period of five academic sessions (2013–2018). Only eight central IHMs of Gandhinagar, Chennai, Gurdaspur, Bangalore, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Hajipur and Trivandrum provided the complete information for the period in three different categories as solicited, depicting the number of management trainees selected by all recruiters visiting IHMs; management trainees selected by 5 star hotel top brands (only Taj, Oberoi, IHG, ITC, Accor, Marriott and Hyatt) and management trainees selected by other 5 star and 4 star hotels. Also, key performance indicators of hotels such as average room rate (ARR), occupancy percentage and revenue per available room (RevPar) were collected from reliable published sources for the same five years.

4   Findings and results

4.1   Expert interviews

The recruiters of top hotel brands including India Tobacco Company (ITC), Taj, Oberois, Intercontinental Hotel Group (IHG), Leela and Hyatt were interviewed to elicit their views on hospitality education delivered by IHMs.

ITC Ltd. Hotels Division stated that students need to develop social confidence and polish their soft skills and general awareness along with networking skills. This would help them to deal with the guests more effectively. There is an urgent need to recalibrate the syllabus not only according to the needs in different years of study but also according to the changes and needs in the hotel industry. Also to provide more experiential learning to the students, the current internship period should be increased from 17 weeks to 40 weeks spread throughout the three years. At the same time, industrial exposure to the faculty and academic exposure to the managers in the industry will make hospitality education more innovative and contemporary. Quality is the criteria for selecting students for the management trainee programme at IHMs and it is the search for this attribute which brings the company over the years for campus placements (interview with Principal, ITC Limited – hotels division, February 2019).

According to the IHG team, the education should provide inputs to develop the emotional quotient of the students to handle guests effectively. Also, the leadership and supervisory programs in IHG would be based on DISC leadership profiles and there need to be inputs in hospitality education for developing these dimensions in the students. Satisfactory previous experiences and quality of students in IHMs are the reasons for repeated campus visits (interview with Human Resource Manager, Holiday Inn New Delhi, February 2019).

Hyatt recruitment team stressed the soft skills which are critical in the industry and as such, requires more attention in the overall curriculum. Also, loyalty, patience, and attrition of recruits are the concern. The mindset of the students to start their career in hotels and the challenges therein should be inculcated as a part of their training in the institute. Quality is primarily looked for at the management trainee positions and it is never compromised (interview with General Manager, Hyatt Regency Chandigarh, and Director of Human Resources, Hyatt Regency New Delhi, February 2019).

The team from the Oberoi group of hotels stated the importance of mindset building of the students working in hotels. A strong orientation of the students to take up their careers with hotels can be done in the IHM itself. The need for applying emotional intelligence is another issue that can make the students flexible with their technical knowhow. These inputs should be focussed on in the curriculum. Value, satisfaction, and quality all are important for the repeated visits at IHMs (interview with Director Human Resources, Oberoi Sukhvilas, March 2019).

The Leela recruitment team stressed the practical exposure and case study-based learning for the students. They should be given quality inputs on organisation behaviour and development. Loyalty, attrition, and patience remain the key challenge for the recruits. The students should be encouraged to acquire in-depth knowledge through both theoretical and experiential learning. Its value more than the quality we look for in a student as a part of human resource investment (interview with Human Resource Manager, The Leela Ambience Gurugram Hotel & Residences, March 2019).

Similarly, the director (studies) NCHMCT, principals and HODs of five central IHMs were interviewed and their views were noted.

Principal IHM Kolkata advocated that there should be a comprehensive evaluation of service quality from the perspective of all stakeholders to provide direction to the hospitality education. It is said that hospitality education is unique as it provides opportunities for the students to different sectors in addition to the hotels such as banks, cruises, food retail, etc. As culture and outlook vary from place to place, it is difficult to compare Indian and global hospitality educational practices. Moreover, at present, hotels as a part of the business are more keen on value for money than quality which encourages mushrooming of hotel management institutes with poor quality. For faculty, its job security and satisfaction which has encouraged them to work over the years (video interview with Principal IHM Kolkata, April 2019).

According to the principal IHM Bhopal, there needs a greater industry-academia interaction, practical exposure of students in industry, involving students in industry-based case studies, a better pay structure to keep the students motivated to work in hotels. Also, faculty needs to be up to date by undergoing industrial exposure at regular intervals. The opinion was similar regarding hospitality education which is more practical-based than traditional higher education. Only a few hotel chains still focus on service quality while many thrive on value. The satisfaction of faculty is the major reason for continuing in IHMs though few faculty in the system imbibe delivering quality to be

their primary motive over the years (interview with Principal, IHM Bhopal, February 2019).

As principal was not available, head of the department, IHM Chandigarh was solicited to share his views. According to him, there is an urgent need to revamp the syllabus of the hospitality education delivered by IHMs. As conditions have changed considerably from the past, education needs to be contemporary to match the industry demands. Also, the students need to be further challenged in their areas of preference. Industry also needs to make IHMs as their partners for minimising the academia-industry gap. Few chains like Oberoi and Taj give priority as quality while selecting students. Faculty in IHMs continue for job security even if they are paid considerably less than industry (interview with HOD, AIHM Chandigarh, March 2019).

Principal IHM Gurdaspur had advocated for the vast gap between the demands of the hospitality industry and the skill set of pass out graduates from IHMs. They need to be trained in more practical situations than merely learning the theoretical aspects. The infrastructure of IHMs is also a concern which needs to be upgraded to match the industry standards. There is an urgent requirement to evaluate the service quality to improve the overall performance of IHMs in the country. It is value for money which is more preferred by industry at present than service quality. Faculty primarily choose the career in IHMs for better value in the form of work-life balance and satisfaction in form of job security than industry. (interview with Principal, IHM Gurdaspur, February 2019).

The view of principal IHM Lucknow focussed on joint measures to be taken by both the industry and academia to encourage exchange programmes amongst them. In this way, latest trends, demand, and expectations of the industry can be proliferated among the students. Also, the curriculum needs to be aligned with the demand of the industry. As the hospitality industry is dynamic, there is a need of IHMs to upgrade the infrastructure and provide opportunities for the faculty to undergo industrial exposure at regular intervals. It is satisfaction in the form of job security, timely promotions and quality provided by IHMs that motivates faculty to continue their career at IHMs (interview with Principal, IHM Lucknow, February 2019).

Director (studies) expressed his positive view on the need to measure service quality of IHMs from the perspective of various stakeholders. It will be a feedback for us and identify the areas on which we need to put our efforts and strategy to enhance the overall quality of hospitality education. MOT is already taking several initiatives in this area. All faculties of IHMs are being trained in certified learning facilitator (CLF) or qualified learning facilitator (QLF) programme which is accredited by top hotel school in the world, that is, École hotelière de Lausanne (EHL). Also, the practice of filing annual returns by IHMs is made mandatory to identify the gaps and requirements of each institute so that the quality of hospitality education is maintained. In his view, every faculty is motivated by all these dimensions – quality, value, and satisfaction; however in varied proportions [interview with Director (Studies) NCHMCT, April 2019].

All the interviewees were of the view that service quality in hospitality education needs to be measured to benefit all the stakeholders. The interviews involving experts from industry and academia opined that the behavioural intentions in the form of repeat visits in IHMs (industry recruiters) and continuing their careers in IHMs (faculty) are driven by not only service quality but also value and satisfaction. As such, it can be inferred that all these three dimensions need to be studied together to measure the behavioural intentions of the key stakeholders.

4.2 Secondary data analysis

The expert interviews were followed by secondary data analysis to find the relation between the experts' concerns regarding the behavioural intentions of industry recruiters and placement data of the IHMs. It is seen from the last five years data, that average percentage of students selected for management trainees have soared from 26% to 44.58% from academic session 2013–2014 to 2017–2018 in the IHMs, which includes the selection in all industries including hotels, retails and quick service restaurants (QSR). However, the average selection of students as management trainees in top hotel brands that includes Taj, Oberoi, IHG, ITC, Marriott, Accor, and Hyatt have dipped from 3.305% to 1.44% over the last five academic sessions.

Figure 1 Comparison of management trainees selected (in percentage) (see online version for colours)
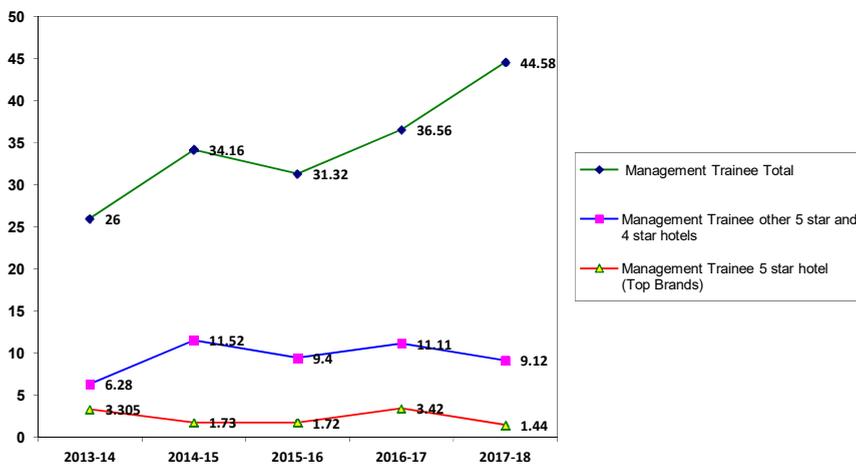
Source: Author compilation

It clearly shows that recruitment by top branded hotels for the post of management trainees have reduced over the years at IHMs. The inflated management trainee recruitments in IHMs are attributed to retail, business process outsourcing units and QSR segments.

Figure 2 Key performance indicators by hotel market positioning (occupancy percentage) (see online version for colours)
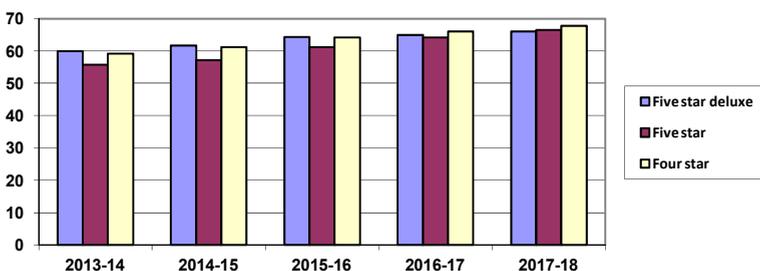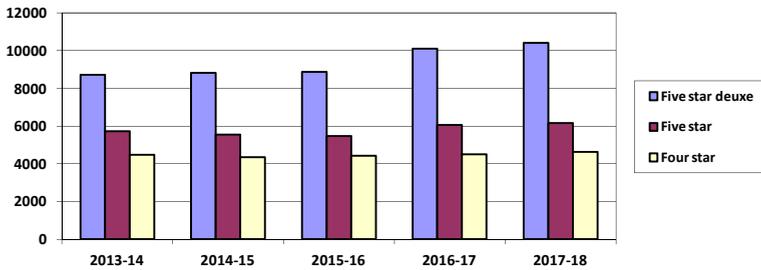

Source: Adapted from Khanna and Rahan (2018)

The key performance indicators of hotels were checked during this tenure to verify whether the dip in the selection of management trainees by top hotel recruiters is attributed to the reduced demand in the hospitality industry as well.

The figure depicts that occupancy percentage of five star and five-star deluxe hotels have increased from 55.7% (2013–2014) to 66.5% (2017–2018) and 59.9% (2013–2014) to 66.1% (2017–2018) which is positive growth.

Figure 3   Key performance indicators by hotel market positioning (ARR) (see online version for colours)

Source: Adapted from Khanna and Rahan (2018)

Similarly, the ARR of five star and five-star deluxe hotels in the same period rose from Rs. 5,720 (2013–2014) to Rs. 6,160 (2017–2018) and Rs. 8,727 (2013–2014) to Rs. 10,099 (2017–2018), respectively, which is again a favourable trend.

Figure 4   Key performance indicators by hotel market positioning (revenue per available room) (see online version for colours)
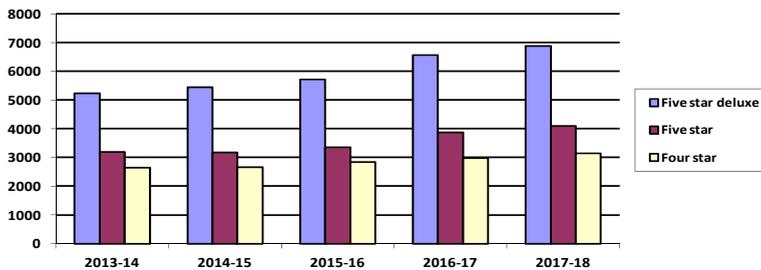
Source: Adapted from Khanna and Rahan (2018)

The final performance indicator in the form of revenue per available room (RevPar) of five star and five-star deluxe rooms increased from Rs. 3,185 (2013–2014) to Rs. 4,097 (2017–2018) and Rs. 5,231 (2013–2014) to Rs. 6,874 (2017–2018) which is again encouraging. A similar robust trend can be seen for four-star hotels too (Khanna and Rahan, 2018).

The comparison of placement data, when compared to performance indicators of the hotel industry, reveals a piece of startling information. While the key performance indicators of hotels in branded four stars, five stars, and five-star deluxe categories have shown healthy upward trends during the period 2013–2018, the number of management trainees recruited in these hotels from IHMs has plunged. This supports the concern regarding the quality of hospitality education delivered in IHMs as expressed by the

experts. It may also suggest that the industry recruiters may be exploring other sources for their management trainee programs.

5   Developing a conceptual framework and propositions

The literature expressed that in a competitive scenario, the behavioural intentions of stakeholders are a significant focus by the organisations and that quality may not be the only criteria for providing success to the firm. Value and satisfaction delivered by them are also critical. Further, expert interviews with academicians and industry recruiters supported the view that the behavioural intentions of key stakeholders may be influenced by service quality, satisfaction or value delivered by IHMs. As such, a framework is conceptualised for the stakeholders of IHMs by adopting the research model (Cronin et al., 2000) so that the effect of these three constructs on behavioural intentions can be studied together for all the key stakeholders.

Figure 5   Conceptual framework (see online version for colours)
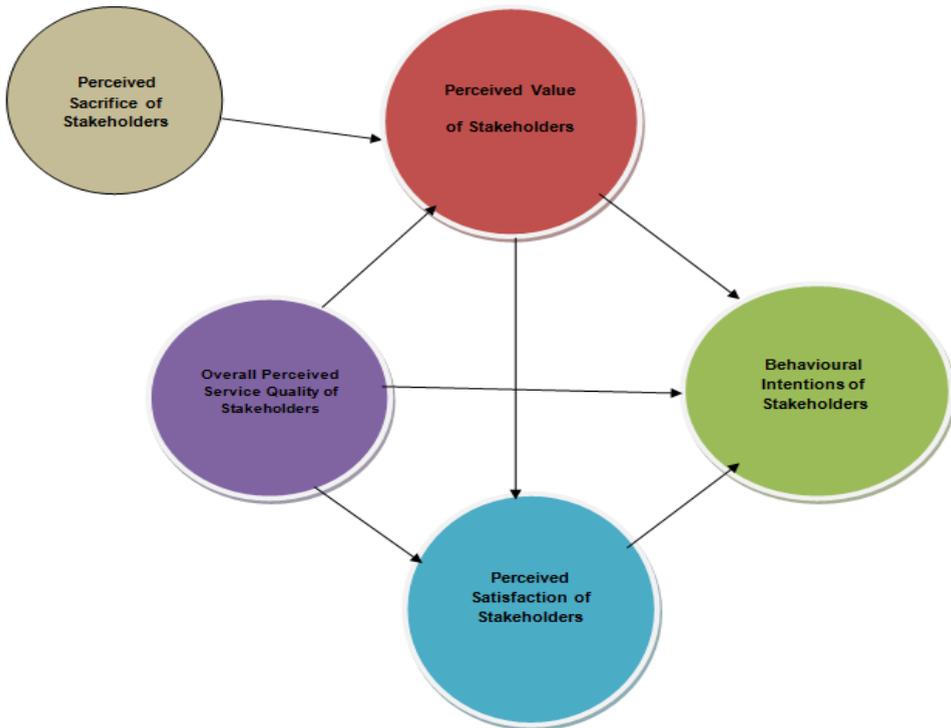
The behavioural intentions of the customers are governed by customer satisfaction; service quality and perceived value and their relationship have attracted many practitioners and academicians (Cronin and Taylor, 1992; McDougal and Levesque, 1992; Tam, 2004; Chen and Chen, 2010; Prentice et al., 2018). It is to be seen how these constructs will be related to each other to influence the behavioural intentions of key stakeholders in hospitality education.

5.1 *Association between perceived service quality and customer satisfaction*

There are a lot of differences between the relationships between these two variables. Many research suggested that perceived service quality leads to customer satisfaction (Carlson and O'Cass, 2010; Cronin and Taylor, 1992; Ravald and Grönroos, 1996; Chen and Chen, 2010; Trivellas and Santouridis, 2016). It was considered because both of these variables were influenced by the attitude in which service quality is long-term evaluation and satisfaction is considered as an outcome of evaluation (Sultan and Wong, 2012). Many others considered satisfaction as an antecedent of service quality (Bolton and Drew, 1991). It was later considered that the researchers operationalised these variables according to their focus. Service quality was considered as holistic or global perspective whereas satisfaction was considered as transactional perspective which is mostly service encounters (Teas, 1993). So at the transaction level, service quality would lead to satisfaction and the satisfaction of these encounters will further lead to overall service quality (Tam, 2004).

According to the GAP model modified to quality customer service delivery in international higher education, and variables affecting customer satisfaction from an industry perspective, it is suggested that service quality of university higher education would lead to satisfaction of customers (Vauterin et al., 2012). Therefore, we assert the same to hold for the stakeholders in the hospitality education.

P_1 Perception of service quality of IHMs positively influences the satisfaction of stakeholders.

5.2 *Association between perceived value with perceived sacrifice and perceived service quality*

The value in a service is perceived when the customers perceive the quality of service exceeding the costs which have been sacrificed, time that has been invested and efforts that have been put to get the service (Cronin et al., 2000). Empirical evidence supports that perceived value is positively related to perceived service quality and perceived sacrifice is negatively related to perceived service value (Agarwal and Teas, 2001). Also, it is conceptualised that value has two components – 'get' or benefits and 'give' or sacrifices, and is the tradeoffs between the two. It is asserted that more the service quality, higher will be the service value whereas more costs perceived to have sacrificed to obtain the service, lower will be the service value. From the hospitality industry viewpoint, cost to company (CTC) offered to the selected students, time and effort devoted to training them are sacrifice. Similarly, for the students, fees, time and effort are considered as a sacrifice. The faculty in IHMs are not compensated equivalent to UGC or AICTE scales. Salary of the faculty, time and effort in the IHMs are considered as a sacrifice. So, it is proposed that:

P_2 Perceived service quality of IHMs will lead to a positive influence on the perceived value of stakeholders.

Also, there are literatures to support a positive relationship between quality and sacrifice, however; studies have displayed that the influence of price on quality is reduced in presence of customer familiarity with the brand (Dodds et al., 1991). As, it would be interesting to know whether brand and familiarity plays an important role for the

stakeholders with regards to perceived service value of hospitality education, we assert that monetary and non monetary costs have no influence on perceived value with regards to service quality of IHMs which are prominent brands in hospitality education in the country. So we propose:

P₃ Perceived monetary and non-monetary costs of stakeholders will be insignificant with regards to the perceived value of IHMs.

5.3 *Association between perceived service quality, perceived value and customer satisfaction with behavioural intentions*

Though it is seen that the quality is taken as a strategic criteria to strengthen and improve the profitability of the organisation (Reichheld and Sasser, 1990), due to cut-throat competition, service quality will not prevail as a tool for competitive advantage and as such customer value could play an important role which would differentiate various organisations offering products in the demanding market (Weinstein, 1999).

All the variables that are, service quality, perceived value, and customer satisfaction influences the behavioural intentions and not considering any of these three variables will lead to confusion and misinterpretation (Cronin et al., 2000). Also, there are evidences that customer satisfaction has positively influenced the behavioural intentions (Cronin and Taylor, 1994; Eggert and Ulega, 2002; Chen and Chen, 2010). The relationship between perceived value and behavioural intentions also has different results. Some study suggests that perceived value is the most important factor altering behavioural intentions (Brady and Robertson, 1999); other studies suggest that customer satisfaction is the mediator between perceived value and behavioural intentions (Cronin et al., 2000; Patterson and Spreng, 1997).

Concerning previous research, it is perceived that perceived service value will have a positive effect on customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Also, perceived value impact on behavioural intentions via customer satisfaction is tested. A study shown that all the constructs, i.e., service quality, value, and satisfaction have a direct impact on behavioural intentions (Cronin et al., 2000). As, in the latest study on service quality in higher education from a student perspective, the direct effect of service quality on behavioural intentions was not significant. However, when the same was mediated through service value and customer satisfaction, its impact was significant (Prentice et al., 2018). So, it is proposed:

P₄ Perceived service quality of IHMs will positively affect the behavioural intentions of stakeholders.

P₅ Perceived value will positively affect behavioural intentions of stakeholders.

P₆ Perceived value will positively affect the satisfaction of stakeholders.

P₇ Perceived value will lead to an indirect positive effect on behavioural intention via the satisfaction of stakeholders.

5.4 *Association of customer satisfaction with behavioural intentions*

There are several studies which show evidence of a strong direct influence of customer satisfaction with behavioural intentions (Chen and Chen, 2010; Cronin et al., 2000;

McDougal and Levesque, 1992; Prentice et al., 2018; Tam, 2004; Cronin and Taylor, 1994). It is inferred that customer satisfaction is a significant antecedent of behavioural intentions which in turn influences organisations' profits and market share (Tam, 2004). Hence, we propose:

P_8 Satisfaction will positively affect on behavioural intentions of stakeholders.

6   Discussion

There is keenness by the MOT towards studying service quality in IHMs as recently a committee of senior officers of the MOT is formed comprising of assistant director-general (tourism), joint secretary (tourism); economic advisor (tourism), and chief executive officer, NCHMCT. The committee met in April 2019 and discussed the affiliation norms of NCHMCT which is to be complied by all IHMs regarding infrastructure, existing syllabus, industry internship, campus recruitments and positions offered by the hospitality industry.

Later, a focus group discussion (FGD) was convened by the secretary (tourism) on April 2019 at their office at Transport Bhawan, MOT, New Delhi. Participants including eminent industry professionals, alumni and principals of IHMs discussed issues such as whether the industry is getting quality manpower from IHMs, why the passed out students are not industry ready and have to undergo an in-house training after the recruitment, which are the other sources of quality manpower than IHMs, whether the industry would start their institutions with NCHMCT affiliation or not, whether IHMs getting repeat responses from recruiters every year, reasons for dearth of employment in spite of high demand for manpower in the industry, whether a change in curriculum is required, if the average CTC offered by the industry is adequate with the timings and responsibilities, initial difficulties faced by passing out students, the reasons for opting other service industries by 25% of pass outs, whether any area-specific program is required to be started by NCHMCT for IHMs, are affiliation norms of IHMs as per the industry standards and so on (letter from Director Administration, NCHMCT, 24 April 2019). It is very much evident that even the MOT is eagerly interested to improve the service quality of IHMs from the perspective of all key stakeholders, that is, industry, faculty, and students. A very recent initiative following the FGD is providing consultancy tasks by the MOT to M/s Nielsen research consultants to assess the gaps between manpower demand and supply imbalance in the hospitality industry. Finally, the director (studies) NCHMCT is eager for getting the service quality of IHMs measured from the perspective of key stakeholders for an overall improvement of academic infrastructure and quality in hospitality education in the country.

7   Implications and suggestions

7.1   Summary

The study reveals the following findings which can be summarised:

a   the secondary data analysis reveals that the number of management trainee selected by top industry recruiters for four stars, five stars and above hotels have steadily decreased over the last five years

b   the total number of management trainee positions offered by all the companies have however increased over the last five years which includes QSRs, retail organisations and BPOs

c   the expert interview reveals the need for recalibration of curriculum, providing more focus on experiential learning in the overall weightage

d   there is a need for a better liaison between industry and academia through exchange programmes

e   all the participants in the expert interview were advocating the need for measuring satisfaction and value along with service quality of hospitality education to understand the behavioural intentions of key stakeholders

f   MOT and NCHMCT are also keen to improve the overall service quality of hospitality education in India.

7.2 Practical implications

The study establishes the need for measuring service quality in hospitality education not only from a student's perspective but from the perspective of all key stakeholders, that is, students, faculty and employers of the hospitality industry. The exploratory study strives to elicit the need for measuring service quality in IHMs from different stakeholder's points of view as the subject matter can be perceived by them differently according to their needs. As such, measuring the service quality of hospitality education from different stakeholders will provide impetus and correct direction to the IHMs for balancing their efforts and focus towards the overall improvement of their service quality in near future.

The study highlights the need to make efforts by IHMs towards increasing the number of students recruited at the management trainee positions in the branded hotels. The study reveals the fact that IHMs may be getting complacent over the years and contended with the total management trainee figures at the end of annual placement process irrespective of acknowledging how many out of these are selected by four stars, five stars, and above brands.

In the competitive environment, the study strives to awaken NCHMCT and IHMs towards providing focus on students so that they can be recruited as management trainees in top hotel brands which have been expanding over the years. IHMs need to focus on supplying their quality manpower to these hotels for which they train the students for six semesters.

In the end, the expert interviews of hoteliers, director (studies) NCHMCT and principals of IHMs suggest that there needs to be a greater focus in the curriculum regarding experiential learning and hotel industry exposure for both faculty and students by indulging them in real scenarios.

7.3   Limitations of the study

This study is limited to establish the need for service quality in hospitality education in NCHMCT affiliated IHMs, which are major manpower suppliers in the hospitality industry. Other hospitality institutions that are run by universities and private players are beyond the scope of the study. The model once developed can also be tested for its contribution towards evaluating service quality of hospitality education outside the purview of NCHMCT.

Also, the study pertains only to the students pursuing three year BSc in IHMs, searching for job placement in the best-branded hotels in five stars and above category at the management trainee levels.

The expert interviews have been conducted with hotel industry professionals and academicians of NCHMCT and IHMs only. In the study, the views from students were not elicited.

7.4   Suggestions for future research

The future research should employ the conceptual model to measure service quality in hospitality education from the perspective of key stakeholders. Once all the constructs in the model are measured, it will elicit the intention of stakeholders in hospitality education; what is it that is primarily solicited – service quality, satisfaction or perceived value. According to the framework, the service providers of hospitality education could comprehensively study the impact of service quality, satisfaction and value on behavioural intentions of stakeholders simultaneously, that is, students, faculty and the employers in the same model.

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