AN ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF MALE EMPLOYEES AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR DECISIONS TO TAKE UP JOBS IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: A STUDY OF SELECTED HOTELS IN HO MUNICIPAL

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Abstract

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest growing industries on the globe. The dynamics of the industry worldwide are not the same. A lot of hospitality facilities and outlets are springing up in the Ho metropolis. The purpose of this study is to identify the public perceptions of male employees in the hospitality industry and the factors that motivate males to take up jobs in the hospitality industry. The research design employed was both qualitative and quantitative (interview and survey) using semi-structured interview guides and questionnaires as the main instruments. The population for the study was all the customers and staff in the hospitality industry in Ho Metropolis. The sample size was 200, and the simple random sampling technique was used. The data was analysed using the software known as Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The findings on the demographics of the educated respondents showed that 58% were males and 42% were females, most of whom were between the ages of 41 and 50 years old. Results revealed that culture, nature, nurture, and educational level influence people's perceptions of male workers in the hospitality industry. Again, it showed that the working environment, passion, and orientation at home motivate males' to take up jobs in the hospitality industry. The study recommends that there should be a change in the negative perception of people towards male workers in the hospitality industry because they seem harder-working than their female counterparts, and in most cases, people prefer male chefs to female chefs.

Keywords: Public perceptions, Male employees, Hospitality industry, working environment, Ho

Introduction

The hospitality industry is one of the fastest growing industries globally. The hotel business is arguably the most lucrative business within the hospitality industry. This is proven by the astronomical growth rate of the industry. This growth in the industry has resulted in the generation of employment worldwide for both sexes. This is supported by UNWTO, who indicates that the hospitality, catering, and tourism (HCT) industries are among the world's

top creators of jobs. It is estimated that 296 million jobs will be created and opened by 2019 [1] [2] [3].

It is important to note that the industry consists of a broad category of fields within the service industry, which includes accommodation, food and beverage, events, transportation, and others within the tourism and hospitality industry. Again, the hotel industry, being a vital part of the wider hospitality industry, occupies an important place in the economies of most countries. It is worth noting that a huge gap is perceived between the demand and supply of manpower in the industry. This gap may be due to the negative perceptions conceived by people about the industry globally. Some of these perceptions include long working hours, low salary packages, low-profile jobs, and gender bias, among others. In the industry, there is an uneven distribution of males and females in respect of work. Thus, the ratio of men and women in the workforce is not equal. A study conducted in China by Yafang and Gongyong [4] indicates that females are more inclined towards opting for hospitality as a career than males owing to their positive perception towards the industry.

The orientation, customs, and traditions in Ghanaian society have segregated occupations and jobs along gender lines. The nature of activities as ascribed within Ghanaian society, by and large, influences work. Cooking, cleaning, bed making, food serving, and other related activities are thought to be the domain of women. However, these very activities underpin most hospitality activities. In Ghanaian society, it is unusual for men to do these activities, considered traditionally as household chores for women.

The dynamics, to a greater extent, have impacted negatively on the industry where there are fewer men to women in most hospitality destinations. In most developed countries, most males work in the industry. Contrarily, in developing countries, particularly Ghana, very few males are in the industry. They are usually found in offices rather than in the hospitality industry. According to Manwa and Black, [5] [6] men are often seen in top managerial positions. However, this cannot be said of the Nigerian and Indian hospitality industries, as these countries' hospitality sub-sectors are dominated by the challenge of seasonality. This deters women from continuing their professional careers in the field of hospitality [7].

Perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensations to produce a meaningful experience of the world [8]. In other words, a person is confronted with a situation or stimulus. The person interprets the stimuli into something meaningful to him or she based on prior experiences [9]. However, what an individual interprets or perceives may be substantially different from reality. The perception process follows four stages: stimulation, registration, organization, and interpretation. A person's awareness and acceptance of stimuli play an important role in the perception process. Receptiveness to stimuli is highly selective and may be limited by a person's existing beliefs, attitude, motivation, and personality [10]. Individuals will select the stimuli that satisfy their

immediate needs (perceptual vigilance) and may disregard stimuli that may cause psychological anxiety (perceptual defense) [7].

Broadbent [11] addressed the concept of perceptual vigilance with his filter model. Broadbent argued that, on the one hand, due to limited capacity, a person must process information selectively and, therefore, when presented with information from two different channels (i.e., methods of delivery such as visual and auditory), an individual's perceptual system processes only that which it believes to be most relevant. However, perceptual defense creates an internal barrier that limits the external stimuli passing through the perception process when it is not congruent with the person's current beliefs, attitudes, motivation, etc. This is referred to as selective perception. Selective perception occurs when an individual limits the processing of external stimuli by selectively interpreting what he or she sees based on beliefs, experience, or attitudes [12].

Broadbent's filter theory has been updated in recent years. A "Selection for-Action View" suggests that filtering is not just a consequence of capacity limitations, but is driven by goal-directed actions [13] [14] [15]. The concept is that any action requires the selection of certain aspects of the environment that are action-relevant and, at the same time, filtering of other aspects that are action-irrelevant. Therefore, when one is working toward a goal, one will skip over information that does not support one's plan. Recent studies of the brain have also led to new models, suggesting multiple channels of processing [16] and selective perception as a result of activation of cortical maps and neural networks [17]. In any case, people are selective in what they perceive and tend to filter information based on their capacity to absorb new data combined with preconceived thoughts [9]. It is worthy to note that the varied perceptions about males in the industry may be due to cultural relativism. The cultural orientation of people varies from one place to another and, most often than not, results in the perception that people have about the industry in the Ho Metropolis. This study, therefore, sought to assess perceptions that people have towards male employees in the selected hotel industries in Ho, Ghana.

Methodology

Research Design

Mixed method designs were adopted by the researchers which involved a survey using questionnaire and an interview schedule. The survey is economical and practical in terms of resources, time, and effort. This assertion is supported by [18], who established the advantage of survey as providing extensive quantitative data relatively cheaply while broad generalization can be made from a relatively smaller number of observations as long as probability sampling methods are used. These two designs are combined to form a fusion of the strengths that the two methods hold, and this is what Bryman [19] refers to as mixed methods. The mixed methods approach allows comprehensive analysis as views and opinions derived from the qualitative study are complemented by quantitative

data. Thus, the quantitative approach provides the advantage of explaining reality numerically, with emphasis on measurement and relationship between variables, as well as a faster analysis of field data, the qualitative approach provides a phenomenological view of the research problem from the subjects themselves.

Study Area

Ho Metropolis is located between latitudes 6o 20"N and 6o 55"N and longitudes 00 12E and 00 53E. The Municipality shares its boundaries with Adaklu and Agortime-Ziope Districts to the South, Ho West District to the North and West, and the Republic of Togo to the East, consisting 772 communities and a land area of 2660 sq. km. The municipality has a total population of 192,871 with 94,951 males and 97,920 females. The area selected for the investigation is the Ho municipality; the choice of Ho is influenced by the cosmopolitan nature of the area and the fact that the hospitality industries are predominant and growing at a fast rate. This allows for the gathering of data from people of different backgrounds, and it enables the researcher to do in-depth analysis.

Target Population

The target population for this research is all customers and staff in the hospitality industry in the Ho Metropolis, and for the purpose of this study, the researchers chose a number of respondents from each of the selected hotels within the metropolis as indicated. Since the researchers were bound by time to complete this study and also to meet other academic requirements.

Table 1: Name of hospitality industries and of respondents sampled

Name of hospitality industry	Number of Respondents Sampled
Chances Hotel	25
Freedom Hotel	35
Sky Plus Hotel	35
Hotel Stevens	35
Lawnia Hotel	35
Taurus Hotel	35
Total Number of Respondents Sampled	**200**

Sample Size

In order to achieve the objective of the study, two hundred (200) respondents were selected to participate in this study. Out of the total number, one hundred and fifty (150)

respondents were selected from the public (customers). Twenty-five (25) females and twenty-five (25) males were also chosen from selected hotel industries. The respondents were drawn from six hotels, comprising a 3-star, a 2-star, and a 1-star, all being licensed hotels. For this study, 50 customers and 20 staff were selected from the three (3)-star and fifty (50) customers and eleven (15) staff each from the two (2) and one (1)-star hotels, respectively.

Sampling

For the purpose of this study, snowballing and purposive sampling techniques were used. This was considered the most appropriate because it helps the researchers access the total number of respondents (customers). Neuman [20] opines that snowball sampling, which is also referred to as network, chain referral, or reputational sampling, is a method used for identifying and sampling the cases in a network. Similarly, Noy [21] attests that in order to make a sample of a specific group of respondents, the researchers have to rely on the assistance of one informant to get other informants to be interviewed. In contrast, simple random sampling allows researchers to select from the population.Freankel et al. [22] state that in random sampling, every member of the population presumably had an equal chance of being selected.

Instrument for Data Collection

The study employed a structured questionnaire as the main tools for data collection. This was done for the reason that a large amount of data needs to be collected within the shortest possible time; the researchers get the liberty of sighting the situation on the ground. Again, the method was used because it permits easy analysis of collected data. The questionnaire administered has both open-ended and closed-ended questions. These data collection instruments were augmented by in-depth interviews.

Data Analysis

After the administration and retrieval of the questionnaire, the coding of the questionnaire was the first thing done to the quantitative data. The responses from the questionnaire, or quantitative data, were organised and analysed using the software known as the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. The coded responses were therefore cleaned and screened to remove errors from the data. The data was analyzed in line with the objectives of the study and was based on the meaning expressed through words and by classifying the data into meaningful categories. Descriptive statistics, including some of the measures of central tendencies such as mean, were employed to describe the data. Other descriptive statistics used in analysing the data included frequency tables, bar charts, and figures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gender of respondents

With regards to the gender of the respondents, it showed that out of the 145 respondents, 84 of them representing 58% were males whiles the remaining 61 respondents made of about 42% were females who responded to the questionnaire meant for the educated public customers.
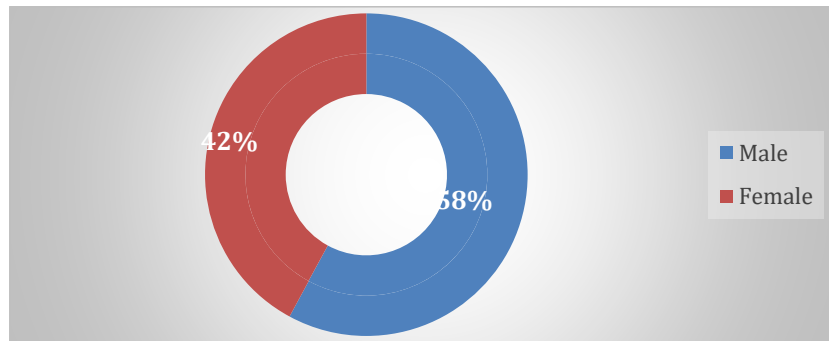

Figure 1: Gender of the respondents

Age of respondents

The results revealed that out of the total number of respondents, 7 (5%) of them were below 20 years old, 19 (13%) of the respondents were between 20-30 years, 36 (25%) were between 31-40 years, while 53 (37%) of them were between 41-50 years, 20 (14%) of the respondents were between 51-60 years, and only 10 (7%) of them were above 60 years. These results meant that most of the respondents, 53 (37%) of them were between 41 and 50 years old, followed by 36 (25.0%) of the respondents who were between 31 and 40 years old who took part in the study.

Table 2: Age Group Distribution of Respondents

Age (years)		Frequency	Percent
Valid	< 20	7	4.8
	20-30	19	13.1
	31-40	36	24.8
	41-50	53	36.6
	51-60	20	13.8
	> 60	10	6.9
	Total	**145**	**100.0**

Educational level of respondents

With regards to the educational level or status of respondents as displayed by Figure 2, it shows that 16 (10.3%) had basic education, 48 (31.7%) of them either Senior High School/Technical/Vocational (SHS/TECH/VOC) certificates, followed by 61 (40.0%) indicated that they were Diploma or HND holders, while 20 (11.7%) were first degree holders as their highest educational qualification. The results therefore show that 61 respondents, or 40%, were Diploma/Higher National Diploma or HND holders, followed by 48 of them, representing 32% of them either Senior High School/Technical/Vocational (SHS/TECH/VOC) certificates, with 20 of the respondents constituting about 12% who were First-degree holders.
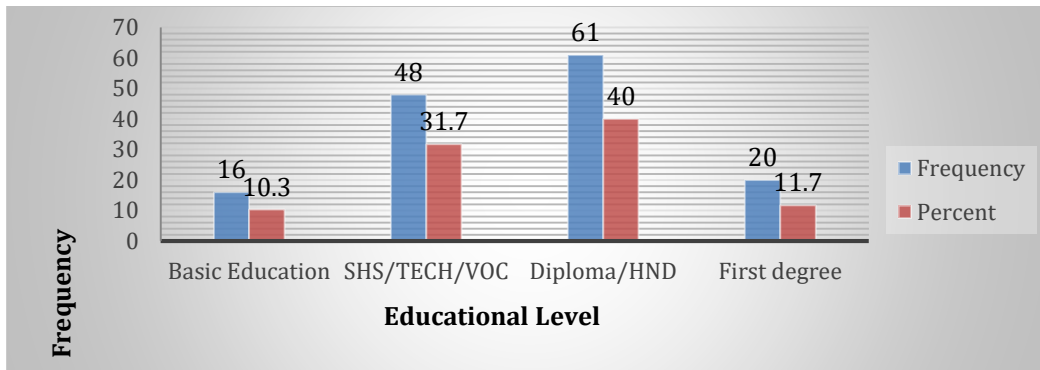

Figure 2: Educational level of respondents

Public Perception on Male Employees in the Hospitality Industry

Table 3 presents public perception on male employees in the hospitality industry using the five-point Likert Scale. The results were presented using a Descriptive Statistics and the scoring key: N=Number of respondents, Min=Minimum value, Max=Maximum value, Mean and Std Devtn=Standard Deviation.

In determining the public perception of male employees in the hospitality industry using descriptive statistics as shown above, it revealed that most of the respondents indicated yes to the question that males in the hospitality industry are harder-working than their female counterparts, with a mean value of 1.34. Again, in finding out the views of respondents on the perception that males have taken the work of females by working in the hospitality industry, most of the respondents stated No to the question instead of Yes, with a mean value of 1.62. This means that the respondents are of the view that though males have ventured into the hospitality industry, they have not taken up the work of females by working in the hospitality industry.

More so, the question that states that the services of males are needed in the hospitality industry shows that most of the respondents indicated yes to the question that the services of males are needed in the hospitality industry, which recorded a mean value of

1.37. In addition to that, on whether males enter the hospitality industry so as to compete with their female counterparts, it showed that most of the respondents stated yes to the question that males enter the hospitality industry so as to compete with their female counterparts, with a mean value of 1.41. Finally, on whether people prefer male chefs to female chefs, it appears that most of the respondents stated yes to the question, indicating that they were of the view that people prefer male chefs to female chefs in the hospitality industry, which recorded a mean value of 1.35.

The results on the public perception of male employees in the hospitality industry revealed that most of the respondents indicated yes to questions such as that males in the hospitality industry are harder-working than their female counterparts. The services of males are needed in the hospitality industry. It is therefore necessary that males enter the hospitality industry so as to compete with their female counterparts and, finally, that people prefer male chefs to female chefs.

The above findings disagree with the study by the Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network [23] in Nigeria that found that masculinity and manhood are constructed through a gradual, timely, and orderly process of socially prescribed, family-centered, and community-related roles and responsibilities. The extent of these (male) focused roles is, to a large extent, undertaken by women at the household level, where primary socialization takes place. Boys are taught by their mothers and shown by their fathers how to be a man, and they are excused from performing 'female' tasks around the house.

Table 3: Public Perception on Male Employees in the Hospitality Industry using Descriptive Statistics

Public Perception Variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Males are hardworking in the hospitality industry than females	145	1.00	2.00	1.34	0.47
Males have taken the work of females by working in the hospitality industry	145	1.00	2.00	1.62	0.49
The services of males are needed in the hospitality industry	145	1.00	2.00	1.37	0.48
Males enter into the hospitality industry the same way as their female counterparts	145	1.00	2.00	1.41	0.49
People prefer male chefs to female chefs	145	1.00	2.00	1.35	0.48
Valid N (listwise)	**145**				

Motivational factors that influence males to take up jobs in the Hospitality Industry

By comparing the views of male and female staff on what motivates males to take up jobs in the hospitality industry using the One-Sample Test and by observing their mean differences, one can deduce that both male and female staff sampled stated emphatically yes to the statements that males are harder-working in the hospitality industry than females, that the services of males are needed in the hospitality industry, and that people prefer male chefs to female chefs. Again, a careful examination of the mean difference values and their t-statistics values shows that the male and female staff who responded to this questionnaire indicated no to the statements that males have taken over the work of females by working in the hospitality industry and are all statistically significant.

The result is in conformity with [24] that motivation refers to the reasons underlying behavior. Gredler et al. [25] broadly define motivation as "the attribute that moves us to do or not to do something" (p. 106). Intrinsic motivation is motivation that is animated by personal enjoyment, interest, or pleasure. As Deci et al. [26] observe, "Intrinsic motivation energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action. It is manifest in behaviors such as play, exploration, and challenge seeking that people often do for external rewards "and is what usually motivates most people to venture into some disciplines."

Table 4: What Motivates Males to take up Jobs in the Hospitality Industry Using One-Sample Test

Variables on what motivates males to take up jobs in the hospitality industry	Test Value = 0				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Lower	Upper
Males are hardworking in the hospitality industry than females	34.29	144	0.00	1.40	1.32	1.48
Males have taken the work of females by working in the hospitality industry	40.73	144	0.00	1.63	1.56	1.71
The services of males are needed in the hospitality industry	34.03	144	0.00	1.37	1.29	1.44
Males enter into the hospitality industry the same way as their female counterparts	37.89	144	0.00	1.57	1.48	1.65
People prefer male chefs to female chefs	35.14	144	0.00	1.23	1.16	1.29

Males are hardworking in the hospitality industry than females	33.95	144	0.00	1.34	1.27	1.42
Males have taken the work of females by working in the hospitality industry	38.14	144	0.00	1.57	1.49	1.65
The services of males are needed in the hospitality industry	36.08	144	0.00	1.50	1.42	1.59
Males enter into the hospitality industry the same way as their female counterparts	36.08	144	0.00	1.50	1.42	1.59
People prefer male chefs to female chefs	38.14	144	0.00	1.57	1.49	1.65

Conclusion

This study assessed the public perceptions of male employees in the hospitality industry in selected hotels in Ho Municipality. Results on the factors influencing people perceptions on male workers in the hospitality Industry revealed that, culture influences, people perceptions on male working, nature and nurture in Ghanaian society also influences perceptions of people on males working in the hospitality industry. Again, it was revealed tha working environment, males' passion and their orientation at home motivates them to take up jobs in the hospitality industry and not to compete with their female counterparts.

Recommendations

Based upon the numerous findings and discussions from this study, the following recommendations were made: The study recommends that

1. The negative perception of people towards male employees in the hospitality industry should be changed because males in the hospitality industry are harder-working than their female counterparts, and in most cases, people prefer male chefs to female chefs.

2. Through career guidance and counseling, people should be educated on the factors influencing people's chances of working in the hospitality industry irrespective of their gender, so as to encourage more male workers in the hospitality industry.

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