

THE PRAGMATIC STUDY ON NECESSITATE ROLE OF ACADEMIC MENTORING AT HOTEL MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Mentoring is a professional act of enhancing the capability of a person in developing his skills, knowledge and overcome difficulties. The prime fact of the study is to actively exhibit the expectation, need and importance of the academic mentoring system at hospitality institutions in mentoring their students. The study revolves around the students from hotel management colleges and institutions. An organized questionnaire is circulated among the students (N= 127) to bring out the influence of the mentoring practices at their institutions, the data is analyzed with SPSS (21.0) software. The result show signs of the expectation, relationship quality and area of need for the mentoring system. The study concludes suggesting more practical and personalized practices to be induced in the mentoring systems and a substantial training program to be provided for the mentors.

KEY WORDS - Hospitality, Educator, Mentor, Student

INTRODUCTION:

Students are the future citizen and an intangible asset for the nation to succeed its goal or mission. No nation grows can survive and develop without the efficient and effective skill or knowledge contribution of the students. Hotel management students, the future employees of the hospitality sectors act as a welcoming identity for all national and international guest. These students, future hoteliers have to be both physically and psychologically fit to face the industry. They must acquire all professional and personal skills to thrive in the sector.

Hotel management courses are industry based as the curriculum are more oriented towards the practical skills and understanding of professional operations of the departments at hotel.¹ Career at hotel industry is quite stressful in nature a sound minded employee is always a great boom for the industry to service their guest. The students have to be practiced to overcome many stressful circumstances.² Therefore the curriculum is compiled with such objectives with long hour practical classes, on job and off job trainings to necessary allied subjects to make the students multi task personality.³

Beside the support in studies a student expects his educator to be a guide or mentor to help him to understand the views about the industry. A proper mentorship will pave way to produce hoteliers than graduates. For the past few years the governmental organizations compels the education sectors to follow an organized mentorship program for the students.⁴ Many practices and policies have been framed by the government heads and initiated the universities and colleges to tag on these procedural setups.

Mentoring is a practice that helps both the mentor and mentee; it is portrayed to be one among the best educational tool.⁵ Mentoring provides an opportunity to carry forward the professional experiences, identifies the communication gap between the educator and students and promotes a personalized professional relationship transferring skills and knowledge that helps beyond universities.⁶ The mentorship program enhances the best outcome from the institution with regard to students quality, professional skills and career opportunities.

A mentor at academic sector posses more responsibilities than at industrial units. He should be aware of all issues and problems faced by mentee the students academically and also personally. He has to perform many roles like being an advisor, counselor, interpreter, expert, friend, motivator, coach, protector, critic, role model, supporter and guide.⁷ Hereby the mentor plays an effective role in bringing in an eminent outcomes.⁸

Need for Mentorship Programme for Hotel Management Students:

A hotel management student enrolls the course with high expectation with no awareness about their actual essence. Any individual can grow in a sector by pursuing good knowledge and hard working attitude.

- Nowadays the attitude of the students have been changed they are more oriented towards making money than making themselves fit and equipped for the career.⁹
- Remuneration packages is considered the prime criteria in selection of higher studies¹⁰ they consider the hotel management courses can yield them a immediate job with high remuneration, foreign opening, immediate entrepreneurial opportunities.
- The hotel management courses are widely preferred by the low average students in studies. The reason for their preference is that there are no difficult theoretical subjects like mathematic or science. Beside the practical subjects the curriculum for these courses also constitutes some allied subjects like management topic, computer, accounts and nutrition sciences these facts disappoint the students at initial stages.
- Industrial exposure training the on job training program is a part of the hotel management curriculum the students are sent for a period of training for hotels as a trainee.¹¹ The fundamental works allotted for the students at the industry creates negative impressions to the students about the course that even lead the students to discontinue the course.

Beside the above facts students at hospitality institutes also faces problems like fluency in English communication, personality developments etc. Hereby there exists a need for an organized mentor system for the hospitality students to prepare themselves for a successful completion of the course.

The study discusses about the mentor systems followed at the hotel management institution, view and expectations of the present practices by students the mentee and also discusses the need, importance and the positive advantages of the mentor systems at hotel management institutions.

MATERIALS AND METHOD:

The study documents the personal ideas and perceptions of the educators and the students of the hotel management institutions. Initially a pilot study was conducted gathering more information about the mentorship programs.

Personal suggestions, views and ideas of the study respondents were recorded and from the information, a systematized questionnaire with 15 questions were framed and circulated among the students and educators online and personally.

The responded questionnaire were checked for consistency and sorted and the information provided were fed in excel and finally uploaded in SPSS (21) software for statistical analysis. The opinions of the respondents were checked for the reliability and other statistical tests like correlation and chi-square test were carried out. Beside the results of statistical analysis the records the list of information and experiences of the respondents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The study is more conversant and deals with the personal feelings of the respondents. The primary and secondary data for the study is acquired from the personal experiences of the respondents than any external sources like books or internet.

The study list outs the expectation of the students and suggestion for the mentors at hotel management institutions to develop and make the mentoring program successful.

The study minutes and list outs the following expectations from their academic mentors. Their expectations from the mentors are very common and acceptable.

- The students expect the mentors to be friendly, share knowledge and information with care.
- Expert with good experience and familiarity about the industry.
- Provide suggestion to build up the career or future goals.
- Open to constructive discussions and help to build up the skills
- Respect personal feelings. Not disclose personal problems.
- Active listeners, possess an appreciating attitude towards mentee.

The academic mentors at hotel management institution have a great responsible part to be play to enhance the hotel management students in improving their knowledge, skills, and personal attitude and develop a liking to work in hotel industry.

- The mentor handling the fresher at the institution have an important role to develop the attitude of the students towards the course. They must motivate the student to understand the importance of grooming, polite and professional behavior, following basic etiquettes, learns basic knowledge about the industry.

- Importance of the Industrial Exposure training can be brought into the students by organizing industrial visits to the hotels and other hospitality outlets, creating awareness about the training as it imposes the job knowledge and teaches hand to hand practices and procedures at hotel.
- The students have to be made understand that the curriculum is a composite of subjects to make the student familiar in all departments of the industry and promote the students career in future.
- Periodic conduction of competitions, events, games etc more related to the industry or curriculum can be organized to improve the personal liking of the students towards the course and industry.
- The mentors can share positive experiences of the industry and can conduct guest lecture of heads from industrial delegates. Thus networking students with successful individuals at industry and the alumni of the institutions extensively empowers the students.
- Conducting extra coaching programs for the final year students like career counseling, carving classes, seminars to impose added knowledge about the food, beverages, etc will bring in an eminent confidence for the student that enlighten the morale towards the mentor and institution and helps the student in future career.
- Videos, pamphlets and awareness programs can be conducted among the students to be away from the smoking, consumption of alcohol and other bad habits. Students with these habits can be counseled by the mentor periodically to show evidence of ill effects of those bad habits.

The information collected with the questionnaire are sorted and checked for their reliability using SPSS (21.0) software the result shows the data are more reliable with cronbach's alpha value (0.742).

Student's Opinion about mentoring system

S. No	Particulars	Agree		Disagree	
		Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
1	The mentoring system is satisfactory	107	84.3	20	15.7
2	There exist a good relationship with mentor	93	73.2	34	26.8
3	Mentoring is done in a regular interval of time	112	88.1	15	11.9
4	The Mentor is easy accessible	101	79.5	26	20.5
5	The system helps out academically and personally	89	70.1	38	29.9

Pearson correlation:

The correlation test was done between the variables mentor's attitude in Mentoring and the mentee's satisfaction level, the analysis show there exist a positive correlation between the variables with correlation r – value (0.654) and significant at (0.05) level.

Chi square test

The chi square test was conducted to bring out the influence of the age of mentor towards mentoring practice and procedures. The study reveals that there exists a significant impact of mentor's age on the mentoring system with Chi-Square value (61.02) and significant at (0.00) level. Students feel more comfortable with faculties of younger age as they are more friendly in nature and easy accessible.

The test conducted for the test variable whether there exist a positive outcome due to the mentoring system the students have acceptance is more significant with the Chi-square value (47.2) and significant at (0.03) level. This shows that the students are benefited due to mentoring practice and there exist a positive attitude towards the mentoring system from hotel management students.

CONCLUSION:

The study depict the need for mentoring systems at the hotel management institution they provide a detailed report on the individual expectation of the hotel management students from their academic mentors and shed light on the areas to be handled for mentoring. Hopefully it may stimulate the interest of educators at hospitality industry to enhancing their willingness towards mentoring students.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

The study involves the students and educators to a small area of coverage just in and around Chennai. The complete ideas or feel of the students could not be just brought out though a questionnaire as the study is more oriented towards the psychological frame of mind of an individual.

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE: Nil

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