

DECODING THE HURDLE OF FEMALE EMPLOYEE IN HOTEL INDUSTRY

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Abstract:

This study examines various working female challenges and the impact they have on their professional growth in the hotel sector. Female who wants a high career growth at top level they get effected by different growth barriers like family factor, motherhood, sex decimation, organizational culture etc. Female can take entry easily in the hotel industry but after some time they feel lots of obstacles in their career and in the personal life, only few females survived in this situation, but they have to fight for them.

Design/methodology/approach: Data were collected from secondary recourse like websites, research papers and publications.

Findings: Findings shows that female employee faced lots of challenges in their professional life which were family factors, personality traits, organizational culture and organizational practices. This study found female who are working at the top management level experienced lots of hidden obstacles and they get more engaged in their jobs.

Originality/Value: The focus of this study Decoding the Hurdle of Female Employee in Hotel Industry

Key words: Challenges, career growth, working female, sex decimation, personal life.

Introduction:

Female employee participation in hotel industry has been increased but challenges and barriers to gain leadership position remain same. These barriers and challenges impact their ability to retain positions and advance in their career's growth in hotels. Some of barriers faced by female's for getting promoted to the highest-level role; corporate culture, family conflict, professional conflict, gender inequality and gender discrimination. Female in hotel industry is struggling to reach at top level positions because of juggling work and family commitments. Gender inequality leads to expectations that female should manage the family and household, whereas men often spend the majority of their time outside the home. Working female faced challenges in balancing personal and professional life. In hotels top level female managers also faced challenges related to gender inequality. In hotels universal thinking is that female as week and less committed to work than man. Due to these gender inequalities female work harder than male. **Narayanan, E. (2017)** stated the main barriers towards career advancement in the hotel management in Malaysia is gender inequality. The key focus of the study was to find out challenges for female employees in hotel management undergraduates towards female career advancement in hotel and hospitality industry. In this research they found the triangular relation between education, industry, and students, with the research, it is explored and analysed for the better understanding of female career advancement in hospitality industry. Female employees were facing the lots of issues in their career growth. **Jauhar, J., & Lau, V. (2018)** explored the concept of the glass ceiling in female's lives and its impact on their professional journeys. The presence of the glass ceiling restricts the growth and progression of many females in their careers.

Despite the increasing number of females graduating, acquiring quality education, and entering the workforce, they remain underrepresented in top management positions. The research focused on several factors, including family influences, organizational practices, and organizational culture. It found that organizational culture, networking opportunities, and business practices directly influence female's career advancement. However, family factors and personality traits were not found to have a significant impact on female's career growth

Literature Review:

Researchers have identified numerous barriers to female's job advancement. This included discrimination based on gender, physical mobility, lengthy work hours, and work-life balance, glass ceiling, vertical segregation, gender prejudice, corporate culture, mentorship. An additional set of difficulties stated by **Van Vianen, A. E., & Fischer, A. H. (2002)** Female are encouraged to strive for higher management, with preferences being important predictors of their career motivations in a male-dominated culture. Female getting less opportunities as compare to the men due to the male dominated culture. In this study gender difference was investigated in the organizational culture, both in the higher management post or at the lower level of post also. But most of the gender discrimination was founded at the lower management post. In study, organizational culture preferences were found to be predictive of the working environment for non-managerial employees but not for middle management employees. Overall, females are less ambitious than male employees due to personal life conflicts, which present a more significant barrier to career advancement. **Bierema, L. L. (2005)** stated that female in companies form networks aimed at improving recruitment, retention, and career advancement for female. However, these efforts have not significantly improved female's standing within the organization due to the way female participate. The female's career growth was weak due to its members attitudes, awareness of gender power relation, and their participation. The female career growth was also threatened by organization culture. Gender inequality directly affect the female's career growth. The success of female in their careers has a direct impact on organizational culture **Burke, R. J. et.al, (2006)** Studied how the presence of organizational practices that support female employees' career growth relates to their work attitudes, job satisfaction, and psychological well-being. According to the research, female employees were found to be more supportive, more engaged in their work, more satisfied with their jobs and careers, and had higher levels of psychological well-being. But they get demotivated when they did not get promotion and increment in their career. The organisational structures in fact advantaged masculinity and disadvantaged female at a certain age stage. The lack of female role models in the hotel industry creates difficulties for human resource managers who want to attract, nurture, and hire talented individuals. It affects how appealing hotel management is to younger female who wants to balance a family with their chosen job. It is the duty of the Human Resource manager to ensure that barriers to female's professional growth are identified, considering that the existing organizational culture could have an adverse effect on the advancement of female managers. This method would involve examining certain organizational culture components, such working hours. Procedures for selection that might impede female's progression to senior management roles. It would be fruitful to revisit the hotel group that served as the basis for this study in order to assess the success of their efforts to foster an organizational culture that upholds workplace equality. **Berry, P., & Franks, T. J. (2010)** examined female who have worked in higher positions. These females have made minimal distinctions between personal and professional life in order to maintain leadership roles. It is now evident that female have made limited progress in attaining positions of power. According to the research, female may not have a strong desire for leadership roles, did not want to endure the isolation that comes with leadership, or were hindered by gender biases. A review of the timeline for female's advancement also highlights the gap between societal perceptions and reality, specifically regarding the challenges female face in positions of power. The research indicates that female aspiring to power in the

corporate sector face significant barriers: Some of the most qualified female for leadership roles leave their companies or are never promoted, and they often do not return. The research also shows that the greatest decline in corporate structures is due to factors such as: the exclusion of female from higher positions, the lack of a female-friendly environment, and the absence of mentoring systems for female in the workplace. **Varghese, T. (2011)** examined in the addition to these struggles, working female also face numerous challenges and barriers in the workplace. These can include gender biases, unequal opportunities for career advancement, and the societal pressure to perform at a high level both at home and at work. After dealing with these barriers, when female employees are met with denial in terms of career growth or professional recognition, the emotional and psychological toll becomes even more significant. Such situations contribute to feelings of disillusionment, leading to a lack of motivation and even burnout. The weight of these challenges can severely hinder a woman's ability to thrive in both her personal and professional life. **Martin, P., & Barnard, A. (2013)** stated that female employees in a male-dominated society face unique challenges, and various strategies impact their motivation and career retention. In few organisations where female employees get the support in their career, they were suffering due to male dominated thinking of the other employees. No one motivate the female employees to work in male dominated society females can retain and supported by tangible physical support and visible growth in career. **Ineson, E. M. et. al, (2013)** examined the problem which led to Sex-based discrimination or harassment in hospitality industry. Working female face lots of problems during the official hours in the hotel and even when they reached at their home again, they have to perform the task before they will go to the bed. No one bother them that how they are adjusting and what kind of problems they are facing. And due to this schedule, they get frustrated from their life and even after doing lots of hard work when they did not find any kind of motivation in the organization, they quit the job. **Nzioka, A. M. (2013)** examined the document maintained by the Kenya Association of Hoteliers and Caterers indicates that, out of the sixty-six (66) hotel general managers working at classified hotels in Kenya's coastal regions, only about three to four percent of female hold senior management positions. The goal of the study was to identify the factors influencing female's career advancement in the hospitality sector and how hotel general managers perceive these factors. The study found that work-related traits, sociocultural and organizational factors, work-family conflicts, and gender discrimination are the key elements affecting female's career advancement in the hospitality sector in Kenya's coastal area. **Zinyemba, A. (2013)** stated that Zimbabwe is not the only country where there is a lack of female at the top of their organizations. Female of Zimbabwe's hotel and financial services industries experienced a variety of leadership and gender related obstacles that prevented them from shattering the glass barrier. The difficulties took the shape of discrimination against female managers, with certain companies favouring the employment of males over female for top management roles and male co-workers who don't submit to their female superiors. The results also demonstrate that female's greatest obstacles are striking a work-life balance, which from time constraints and need to balance the many responsibilities of female manager must perform as a wife, mother, and manager at work. **Marinakou, E. (2014)** examined the hospitality industry shows growth, but only a few females are found in higher managerial positions. In the hospitality sector, female represent an average of 55.5% of the workforce in hotels, yet the management is predominantly male. Female employees are mainly found in positions that are stereotypically ascribed to their gender, such as sales directors, executive housekeepers, and marketing managers. The author interviewed 15 female managers and 15 male managers at 5-star hotels in Greece to explore their leadership and management styles, as well as the challenges they faced during their leadership roles. It was found that both female and men were capable, with female being nurturing, better at communicating with people, caring, and adopting supportive behaviours. **Santero-Sanchez et.al, (2015)** stated that female faced challenges in hospitality industry. Most of female quit at the starting level of their career due to the glass ceiling. As female have to take care of their families also and if she is a working female, she has to complete

double responsibilities and due to this she suffered a lot in her professional life. And at the time when she is just a new mother, she has the lots of hormonal changes in her body and moods due to this she gets unstable and sometime she quit the job. **Karmarkar, A. (2018)** stated that the female employee who are working at the higher level have to faced hidden challenges. There are very few female employees who are at the higher position. we can find a greater number of employees at the entry level but due to the discrimination only few females' reach at the higher position. Some time they get paid less than her colleagues and due to this they get demotivated at the job. Sometime female is more educated or capable but due to the gender discrimination they did not get paid accordingly. **Zhong, Y. et. al, (2018)** Examined that the status of female in hospitality sector is a major problem due to their underrepresentation in top management roles. The focus of the study was to figure out whether there were any notable variations in the perspectives of educators, industry recruiters, and hospitality students about the barriers and supports to female's professional development progression. The gender inequalities between male and female recruiters and instructors were found in the online survey. The findings indicates that gender concerns and hurdles in the hospitality business should be brought to light via education. **Segovia-Pérez, M., et. al, (2019)** examined that even if the number of females working in the hospitality sector is increasing. However, empirical data reveals that wage disparity, persistent upward and downward segregation, and other challenges continue to hinder progress, causing the industry to miss out on significant opportunities. Using Barbara Risman's "Gender as a Social Structure" model as the primary framework, this study adopts a gender-focused strategy tailored to the hospitality sector.

In line with the "Gender as a Social Structure" concept within the hospitality industry, Risman's three levels of analysis—individual, industrial, and institutional—are complemented by an intersectional level. The study is based on thirty in-depth, semi-structured interviews with female executives working in the Spanish hotel sector.

The findings reveal that the primary barriers to achieving gender equality include challenges associated with gendered organizational practices, difficulties in balancing work and personal life, entrenched gender norms, and self-imposed restrictions.

Deiana, M., & Fabbri, C. (2020) stated quantitative study which is focused on female employee who hold a senior management position, and this paper seeks to explore the factors involved which affect the female's choice a non-senior management position to advance their career growth. The study identified various techniques recognized as beneficial for enhancing the careers of working female, based on the insights of female employees. According to the study's findings, the hospitality industry is advised to adopt constructive methods, such as flexible working hours and skill development programs, to promote gender equality and create more career advancement opportunities for female aspiring to reach senior management positions. **Wong, A., & Sixl-Daniell, K. (2020)** stated that the female employees facing lots of obstacles in their professional life and they have the major responsibility at their personal life also and they have to manage both the life. Female are more educated and skilful then a man but because of their gender they did not get even equal salary. And due to this they get demotivated. **Rudhumbu, N., et. al, (2020)** stated that the biggest obstacle faced by female entrepreneurs in Botswana is restricted access to financing, even though there are several sources of funding available , ranging from bank to government organizations like CEDA (2012).Second, as these female lack the knowledge and technical skills necessary to create company strategies and obtain financing from financial institutions, entrepreneurship education and training can assist in empowering female entrepreneurs in this area. Lastly, female entrepreneurs in Botswana have ample opportunity to grow and expand their business despite the numerous obstacles they face in the country's market. This is because the government has established a favourable legal and regulatory framework that female can utilize to their advantage. Based on the study's findings. The following suggestions were made. Initially, in order to improve and expand their business acumen and abilities, female entrepreneurs need entrepreneurship training. They will benefit from this while

developing their company's marketing strategy and business plan. Second as part of their mandates to promote entrepreneurship in the nation, all governance agencies tasked with doing so must create programs to equip female entrepreneurs with fundamental knowledge through specially designed entrepreneurship education and training sessions, with a focus on teaching them how to find and access funding sources. **Mooney, S. K. (2020)** stated that the purpose of this paper is to address the problem of how gender is approached in hospitality and tourism management research. In order to properly analyse how gender is represented in organizational process, it suggests using particular modern ideas. The gender undercurrent in sectoral studies that is, the ideas that female leadership is different and therefor a challenge to the traditional male leadership system-is explained in the article. Critical research designs in hospitality and tourism have been hindered by positivist orthodoxies and theoretical frameworks. Gender studies that one well designed will help teachers create curriculum that better serve the needs of all students, including non-binary and gender diverse students perusing degrees in hospitality, tourism or events. Gender studies that are well planned and focused will result in more industrial collaborations and offer equitable employment prospects in the field to people of all genders one of the main contributions of the study is highlighting the benefits that academic leaders and academics may derive from adopting a critical gender perspective, which challenges the gendered status norms in hotel and tourist management research. **Manzi, F., & Heilman, M. E. (2021)** examined challenges of females at leadership position will automatically break the Invisible career barrier for another female. It was not only female leaders who includes the evolution of the candidates but also their performance. Because of the salience of another female in past at managerial level was the cause of the increases in gender salience. According to this paper there are five studies, first one leadership opportunities depend upon whether she is successful or unsuccessful in her career, whether she confirm or not stereotype expectations about the female leadership quality. Supporting the role of gender inequality and do shear group membership in the process, this effects only occurs between female in male type leadership roles but it does not observe in between men in male-typed leadership.

Table no. 1.1

Year	Author Name	Theoretical Evaluation
2019	Saner, R., & Yiu, L.	The female in Jamaica is more educated than male but still they did not get better job opportunity, due to the gender discrimination. Female employees have good skills but they are not getting promotion according to that.
2021	Kourtesopoulou, A., & Chatzigianni, E.E.	Examined that, there are issues in advancement of female in their careers in hospitality sector, particularly in five-star hotels in Egypt, located in Cairo and Giza. Researcher also define how the female workers have to face the issue in the hotels and females are handling the present issues in the hospitality industry.
2024	Blayney, C., & Blotnick, K.	Stated that greater higher number of females at a higher level compared to men but still, female is facing lots of hidden problems in work life. At present time people are aware of the gender inequality term. These problems arise because of the old way of thinking, old culture, and religious beliefs.

2017	Peshave, J., & Gupta, K.	Stated lots of barriers to gender equality in local tourism. In local tourism, females participate because they get harassed at their workplace, and other problems they have to face while working in hotels are safe transportation and childcare harassment at the workplace.
2024	Adhikari et. al,	Stated that the meaning of the work-life balance is the balancing the both life professional and personal. But this is just in the books that females use to balance both of their lives but practically females fight every day for their own rights in their professional and personal lives.
2017	Peeters, L. W., & Ateljevic, I.	Stated that the females who are working in the industry or any organization who have to struggle a lot. The needs of working female have changed due to social or economic needs. Nowadays the working pressure is increasing for female and due to this they have the shortage of time for themselves.
2018	Khan et. al,	Examined that female who work in the kitchen have to suffer from different problems. The female chefs are hired at a low cost which is the first demotivation of them in the workplace and even they are sexually harassed in the kitchen because very few females work in the food production department.

Objectives of the study:

To identify the growth hurdle faced by female in their profession.

To assess the relationship between hurdle faced by female employees and their career growth.

Research Methodology:

Secondary data will be utilized in order to accomplish the goals, including gathering information on the difficulties faced by female in the hospitality sector. These resources will be used to provide data as needed to meet the study's goals. Secondary data will be gathered from a range of publications, websites, and research papers.

Findings and Interpretation:

At the end of study, it is found that females are struggling for their carrier growth by facing different issues like family issue, organizational culture, work conflict, gender inequality in support with study of **Manzi, F., & Heilman, M. E. (2021)** examined those challenges for females at leadership

position will automatically break the invisible barrier for another. Female at starting level face lots of issues obstacles due to this they quit the job also support with **Santero-Sanchez et. al, (2015)** stated that female faced challenges in the hospitality sector most of the female quit at the starting level of their career due to the glass ceiling.

1. Gender Composition and Occupational Segregation

Findings: Women predominantly occupy entry-level and service-oriented roles (e.g., front desk, housekeeping, food & beverage service), while men are more likely to hold roles in finance, operations, and senior management.

Interpretation: This occupational segregation reflects deep-rooted gender norms and stereotypes, where soft skills roles are feminized and leadership or technical roles are seen as male-dominated. It hinders women's ability to diversify their skills and access high-paying, decision-making roles.

2. Educational Background and Career Entry

Findings: Women in hospitality often enter the industry with similar or higher educational qualifications than male, especially in hotel management and tourism programs.

Interpretation: Despite having equal or superior academic credentials, women are not progressing at the same rate as men. This indicates that systemic issues—not a lack of competence or education—are contributing to the empowerment gap.

3. Promotion and Career Progression Opportunities

Findings: Women reported longer waiting periods for promotions and fewer opportunities for internal mobility. Very less women in mid-level roles believed they had a clear path to leadership.

Interpretation: The lack of transparent promotion criteria and mentorship contributes to stagnation in career advancement. Hospitality organizations may lack gender-sensitive policies to address these disparities.

4. Gender Pay Gap

Findings: A consistent pay gap exists between male and female employees in equivalent roles.

Interpretation: The pay gap is a key indicator of inequality and contributes directly to lower economic empowerment of women. It also affects motivation, retention, and overall job satisfaction among female employees.

5. Work-Life Balance and Family Support

Findings: Many women expressed the difficulty of managing irregular shifts and long hours with family responsibilities. Only very few employers offered flexible working conditions or parental leave support.

Interpretation: Without family-friendly policies, women may be forced to leave the workforce or accept limited roles. Empowerment must include work-life integration strategies, especially in sectors like hospitality that require non-traditional work hours.

6. Self-Perception and Confidence

Findings: While many women believed in their abilities, a significant number lacked confidence in applying for senior roles due to fear of rejection or perceived bias.

Interpretation: Empowerment also involves psychological readiness. Building confidence through mentorship, leadership training, and visible female role models can shift perceptions and encourage more women to aim higher.

Conclusion: In the hospitality industry female employees faced various challenges in their career progression. Sometime these challenges are visible and sometime invisible. According to the research, female employees faced problems at all levels in the hospitality industry, when she started growth in her career, she faced more challenges and hurdle in her growth period and suffered in her both lives personal and professional. According to the study there are five variables which affect the female career growth. The key variables in this context include family factors, corporate culture, networking within the organization, corporate practices, and personality traits. In this study family factor and personality traits have not any effect on the professional advancement of female employee

but organizational practices, organizational culture, organizational networking have the direct impact on female's career progression employee.

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