

An Assessment of Women Career Participation and Advancement in the Hospitality Industry in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: - A Case Study on Five Star Hotels

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Abstract

This study is undertaken to investigate the factors that influence women career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: A case study in five star hotels. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches so as to answer the research questions and achieve the stated objectives. Primary data mainly through a self-developed questionnaire with five point likert scale (5= strongly agree (SA) to 1= strongly disagree (SD) as well as dichotomous and checklist questions were used for this study. Besides, face to face interviews and secondary data including government documents and reports, hotel management brochures, several published and unpublished materials were utilized to gather information for the study. After the completion of the data collection, all the questionnaire survey were coded and enter into statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20.0 for analysis. The study clearly indicated that women participation in hospitality industry particularly in higher position is dominated by men and women work in low status, and unsecure jobs such as waitress, housekeeping, and front-line services. The major societal and organizational factors which contribute to women to have such low position are the stereotypes about women's commitment to work in the hospitality industry and the job characteristics of the hospitality industry respectively. Besides, lack of general management experience and lack of confidence among women are the major personal factors that influence women participation and career advancement in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Hospitality industry, Career advancement, Stereotypes

Introduction

The hospitality industry has recently become the largest and the fastest-growing service sector which generates a multi-billion dollar throughout the world. The hospitality industry is a broad category of fields within the service industry that includes hotels, lodging, restaurants, theme parks, and other accommodation services. During the last decades there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women who have involved in hospitality industry and other branch of the economy in order to generate income and support their households in both developed and developing countries (Davidson & Burke, 2004). However, women are underrepresented in senior positions and tend to work in the most vulnerable jobs, where they are more likely to experience poor working conditions, inequality of opportunity and treatment, violence, exploitation, stress and sexual harassment" (Baum, 2013). The issue is more critical in developing countries like Ethiopia where women faces many challenges and has not been involved in the higher managerial positions in most of the hospitality sectors such as star related hotels and lodges though the number of women who engaged with higher education in tourism and hotel management increased in the country in the past few years.

The modern history of what is now known as the "Ethiopian hospitality industry" dates back to more than 100 years with the opening of Taitu Hotel in 1895, the first hotel in Addis Abeba by Empress Taitu. Since then, many star rated and basic level hotels are built in the city by adopting the international hotel classification system in Ethiopia. Such remarkable growth in the hotel industry in the capital is closely linked to the development of tourism industry in the country. Addis Ababa, which is the center of AU and UNECFA, currently attracts a large number of international conference and business tourists thereby increasing the number of star hotels and lodges in order to accommodate those tourists and generate appropriate returns from visitors. However, there are significant disparities in women's and men's access to top management and performance particularly in star rated hotels and lodges despite the national policy on women stipulating that a particular care shall be exercised to ensure that there is no overt or unintended discrimination against women in the selection and career development (FCSC, 2005). Therefore, this study aims to assess the factors that influence women career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry in Addis

Materials and methods

The main concern of the study was to assess factors that influence women career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry. Therefore to serve this proposes, descriptive research design was used as an appropriate design to obtain reliable and relevant information about the issue under the study since the design is characterized by prior formulation of specific research questions. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches so as to answer the research questions and achieve the stated objectives. The qualitative method was applied for interview and document analysis and the quantitative method applied for questionnaires survey of employees working in Elilly international hotel in Addis Ababa.

Both primary and secondary data were used to collect data on the factors influencing women career participation and advancement in hospitality industry. Primary data mainly through a self-developed questionnaire with five point likert scale (5= strongly agree (SA) to 1= strongly disagree (SD) as well as dichotomous and checklist questions were used for this study. besides, face to face interviews and secondary data including government documents and reports, hotel management brochures, several published and unpublished materials were utilized to gather information for the study. After the completion of the data collection, all the questionnaire survey were coded and enter into statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20.0 for analysis. The researcher used descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage to analyze quantitative data from the responses of questionnaire survey to come up with results and discussions while qualitative data from face to face interviews will be analyzed using narration.

Results and Discussions

Demographic characteristics of respondents

The respondents were characterized on the basis of gender, age, educational background, marital status and Job position. Accordingly, 65.0 % of the employees respondents participated in the survey of the study were male, whereas the remaining 35.0 % of the respondents were female. The age of the employee respondents in between 25 and 44 had the greater value among others with a share of 45.0 % followed by 30.0 % age range of 18-44 years old. Nevertheless, Age range of 44-54, 55-64 and ≥ 65 years old of the respondents had value of 20.0%, 5.0% and 0% respectively.

According to the analysis stated on the table below, 45.0% of the employee respondents who answered the questionnaire were bachelor degree holders followed by 30.0% of employees educated at diploma level where as 20.0% of the respondents share value of high school. This entails that a good number of respondents involved in this study are well educated and hence knowledgeable on most of the concepts which were asked. Others 5% of the respondents educated by other factors such as traditional school, experience etc. Regarding job position, 30.0% of employees work as waitress followed by cooks and housekeeping with a value of 15.0 each whereas those respondents who work as front office and marketing share a value of 10.0% and 5.0% respectively. Moreover, those respondents who answered the questionnaires consisted of the highest ranking of single individuals (65.0%) followed by married individuals (30%). The remaining respondent was divorced with a share value of 5%.

Table 1: Distribution of demographic characteristics of employee respondents

<i>Item</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
<i>Gender of employee respondents</i>		
(a) Male	14	35.0
(b) Female	26	65.0
<i>Age range of respondents</i>		
(a) 18-24	12	30.0
(b) 25-44	18	45.0
(c) 44-54	8	20.0
(d) 55-64	2	5.0
(e) >=65	-	-
<i>Educational background</i>		
(a) Elementary	--	0.0
(b) High school	8	20.0
(c) College Diploma	12	30.0
(d) University Degree	18	45.0
(e) Post graduate	-	0.0
(f) others	2	5.0
<i>Job positions</i>		
(a) Front office	4	10.0
(b) waitress	12	30.0
(c) Cookers	6	15.0
(d) housekeeping	6	15.0
(e) sales and marketing	2	5.0
(f) others	10	25.0
<i>Marital status of tourist respondents</i>		
(a) Single	26	65.0
(b) Married	12	30.0
(c) Divorced	2	5.0
(d) Widowed	-	0.0

Respondents view over gender inequality in the hospitality industry

As stated in table 2 below 45.0 % and 20.0% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively that there is gender inequality in the hospitality industry of Ethiopia. On contrary, 10.0% and 5.0% of the respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that there is gender inequality in the hospitality industry. However, 20.0 % of the respondents were neither agreed nor disagreed about gender inequality in the hospitality industry. This result clearly pointed out that there is gender disparity in the hospitality industry. For detail see the following table.

Table 2: Gender inequality in the Ethiopian hospitality industry

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No Opinion	8	20.0	20.0	20.0
Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	25.0
Disagree	4	10.0	10.0	35.0
Agree	18	45.0	45.0	80.0
Strongly Agree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The above result were also supported by the interviewed managers and staff profile in which only three females were involved in higher positions among 8 managers and 9 supervisors of the hotel. According to table 3 below there is only 2woman participated at a deputy directing management level and 2 women at a supervisor level which accounts 6% and 12% among the total number of managers and supervisors respectively. Generally, 82.0% of the total senior position of the hotel is occupied by men and the level of women participation in managerial position comprises a value of 14.0% among the total position which is very low comparing with the rivals. This clearly indicated that there is gender inequality in the managerial position of the hospitality industry. For detail how interviewee respondents considers the issue revealed in table 3 and fig 2 below.

Table 3: interviewee feedback over the managerial position of the hotel

No. of departments	No. of managers	No. of supervisor	Sex
Managing director	1	-	M
Deputy managing director	1	-	F
F&B director	1		M
➤ Service		1	M
➤ Kitchen		1	F
Sales & Marketing	1	-	M
Finance	1	-	M
HRM	1	-	M
Room division director	1		M
➤ Front office		1	F
➤ Housekeeping		1	M
➤ Spa & healthcare		1	M
➤ Maintenance		1	M
IT	-	1	M
Security	1	2	M
Total	8	9	3F/17

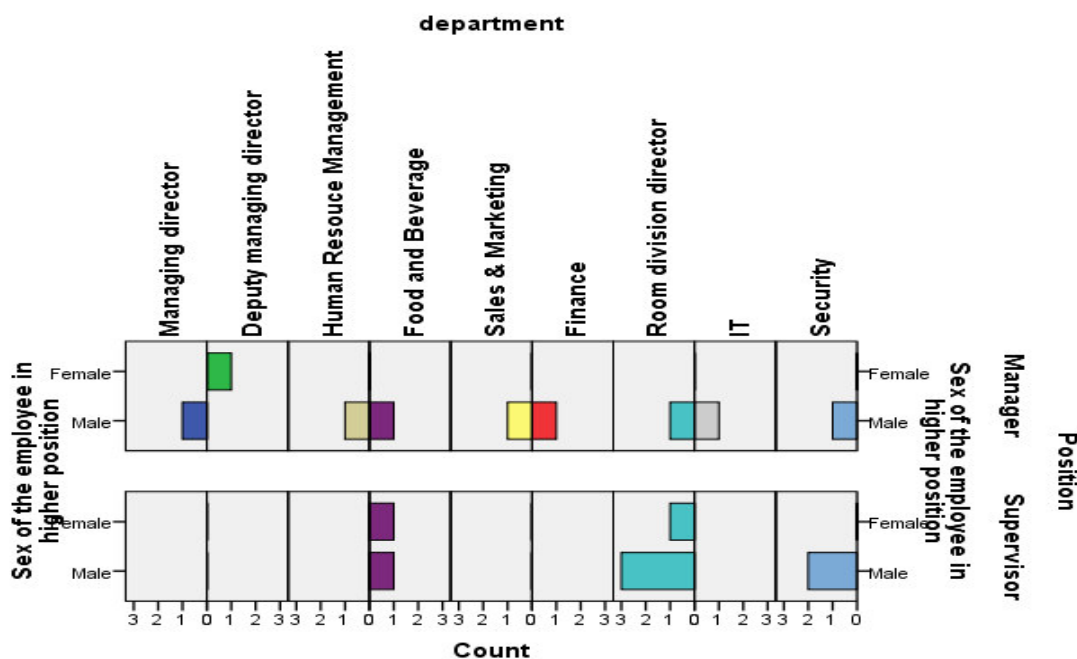


Figure 2: description of sex of employees in higher position in Elilly hotel

Respondents view whether there are career advancement measures in the hotel

As shown in the table below 40.0 % and 25.0% of employee respondents were disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively about effective career advancement measures on their work place where as 15% of the respondents have no opinion about the issue. The rest of the respondents (20.0%) revealed that there is an effective career advancement measure in the hotel. Therefore, we can conclude that employees lack appropriate effective career measurements in their work place. For detail see the following table.

Table 5: There is effective career advancement measures in your work place

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No Opinion	6	15.0	15.0	15.0
Strongly Disagree	10	25.0	25.0	40.0
Valid Disagree	16	40.0	40.0	80.0
Agree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Organizational factors that influence women career participation and advancement in hospitality industry
 According to table 4 below Job characteristics of the hospitality industry share the highest value of the alternatives (70.0%) that influence women participation and advancement in the hospitality industry followed by the notion that woman are not good manager which accounts a value of 55.0%. Other factors such as lack of role models and lack of support systems at work share a value of 50.0% and 25.0% respectively. Whereas lack of mentoring and lack of promotional decisions share a value of 20.0% each and other factors share a value of 10.0%. The results were also supported by interviewees who stated that the notion that women are not good manager is the major influence that hinders women career participation, performance and competitiveness in hospitality industry of the country. For details see the table below.

Table 5: Organizational factors that influence women career participation and advancement

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Description
Job characteristics, e.g., irregular work hours	28	70.0	Respondents were free to choose more than one answers among the given alternatives.
Lack of equity in promotion decisions	8	20.0	
Lack of mentoring/coaching	8	20.0	
Notion that women are not good manager	22	55.0	
Lack of role models	20	50.0	
Lack of support systems at work	10	25.0	
Others	4	10.0	

Personal factors that influence women career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry

As revealed in table 5 below the majority of the respondents which accounts 60.0% of the total gives high a value for lack of general management experience as a major personal factor that influence women participation and career advancement in the hospitality industry. lack of confidence among women share a value of 40.0% among others whereas inadequate job knowledge and sexual harassment share a value of 30.0% and 25.0% respectively as a personal factor that influence women participation and career advancement in the hospitality industry. For details see the following table.

Table 6: personal factors that influence women career participation and advancement

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Description
Lack of general management experience	24	60.0	Respondents were free to choose more than one answers among the given alternatives.
Sexual harassment	10	25.0	
Inadequate job knowledge	12	30.0	
Lack of confidence among women	16	40.0	
others	-	0.0	

Societal factors that influence women career participation and performance in hospitality industry

According to table 6 below stereotypes about women’s commitment to work in the hospitality industry take the highest value of 65.0% among other alternatives followed by childcare responsibilities which a value of 45.0% among others. However, lack of family support and lack of societal factors had a value of 35.0% and 5.0% respectively. Other factors such as conflicts with family share a value of 10.0%. Thus, the findings clearly indicated that categorical beliefs about the traits and behavioral characteristics attributed to individuals on the basis of their gender remains dominant in the hospitality industry in Ethiopia. For details see the table below.

Table 7: Societal factors that influence women career participation and performance in hospitality industry

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Description
Childcare responsibilities	18	45.0	Respondents were free to choose more than one answers among the given alternatives.
Stereotypes about women’s commitment to work	26	65.0	
Lack of family support	14	35.0	
Lack of societal networks	2	5.0	
Others	4	10.0	

Factors that Facilitates women career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry

As shown in the following table the majority of the respondents which consisted of 75.0% of the total revealed that educational qualification is a major factor that helps to facilitate women’s career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry followed by family support which share a value of 45.0% among others. while effective communication skill and problem solving skill had value of 35.0% each as a factor that help facilitate women’s career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry. Other factors such as job knowledge and equal access to training and development had a value of 15.0% and 10.0% respectively.

Table 8: Factors that Facilitates women career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Description
Equal access to training and development	4	10.0	Respondents were free to choose more than one answers among the given alternatives.
Effective communication skills	14	35.0	
Problem solving skills	14	35.0	
Job knowledge	6	15.0	
Educational qualifications	30	75.0	
Family support	18	45.0	
Others	-	0.0	

Conclusion

Although it is difficult to generalize the whole organizations which engaged in the hospitality industry of the country, our case study clearly indicated that women participation in hospitality industry particularly in higher position is dominated by men and women work in low status, and unsecure jobs such as waitress, housekeeping, and front-line services. The major societal and organizational factors which contribute to women to have such low position are the stereotypes about women's commitment to work in the hospitality industry and the job characteristics of the hospitality industry respectively. Besides, lack of general management experience and lack of confidence among women are the major personal factors that influence women participation and career advancement in the hospitality industry. All each contributed their negative effect on women's shoulder to undermine themselves from competitiveness, participation and their contribution to the development of the industry and the country in general. However, educational qualification and family support were revealed as the major factors that help facilitate women's career participation and advancement in the hospitality industry.

Recommendations

- Key stakeholders as well as all concerned body should collaborate in order to solve the gender barrier and providing them with fair representation across different managerial positions of the hospitality industry.
- Organizations in the hospitality industry should review their organizational structure and promotional procedures and adjust them as suitable for women.
- Protecting the rights of women to make them active participants in the economic, social, political, cultural, and other arenas of the country, thereby bringing about development.
- Government and other concerned bodies should build and enhance awareness creation campaigns to alleviate gender stereotypes throughout the country.

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