

Study Of Social Intelligence Levels Amongst Undergraduate Students And Professionals In Hospitality

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ABSTRACT

Social intelligence is required to make the situation intelligent which is when the situation is completely under control and that requires knowledge and understanding of cues arising from the situation. Social intelligence is not only reflected in one's professional life but also in everyday situations which are rather complex and not simply stated. The study was based on hospitality undergraduate students and hospitality professionals. There were 100 respondents taken, 50 of them were the hospitality professionals from various hotels across Bangalore and rest 50 of them were the hospitality undergraduate students from the final years of Christ university. The study aimed to compare the social intelligence amongst two groups and it was concluded with the various tests that there was no significant difference of social intelligence amongst the two groups. The discussion in the project gave light to social abilities and characteristics which are important to be possessed by leaders and upcoming professionals. This study will also help to predict if the physical environment affects the social intelligence

Keywords

Social Intelligence, Hospitality Undergraduate Students, Hospitality Professionals

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Introduction

The definition of social intelligence has always revolved around the concept of social interaction, being the base. In layman's term social intelligence is the ability to understand and therefore making it easier to manage them and also includes acting wisely in human relationship. Social intelligence is the ability to get along with others and the ability to deal with people respectively (Moss and Hunt, 1927). The ability to get along with others represents a different kind of intelligence also known as social intelligence which goes beyond IQ and is one of the six intelligences (Karl, 2004). Social intelligence can be defined as the ability to judge correctly the feelings, moods and motivations of others (Wedek, 1947). There has been an evolution of the way social intelligence has been perceived over a period of time. There are two types of social intelligence: unique and general social intelligence, while general social intelligence is shared by all members unique social intelligence is varied and specific to individuals resulting from a person's background, his life experience and unlike general social intelligence it happens in a conscious state of mind. There are five major dimensions of social intelligence namely situational radar, presence, authenticity, clarity and empathy also known as SPACE. The SPACE formulae which could be defined as the ability to understand social space and navigate within that space (Karl Albrecht, 2009). Social intelligence not only enables one to understand people better but it results into a positive work environment and therefore indirectly maintaining psychological health. According to Sells social intelligence is like oil to the communication and understanding wheel

which improves both the parties interaction with each other (Sells, 2007). Social intelligence enables an individual to maintain healthy relationships and achieve work satisfaction (Joseph and Lakshmi, 2010). People with high social intelligence are said to have a nourishing and welcoming personality and people with low social intelligence are termed as "toxic". Lack of social intelligence has been known to cause odd behavior and having lack of empathy (Joseph and Lakshmi, 2010) and making it a hindrance to be social to new people and meet new people. Individuals with high social intelligence are considered to have a better understanding of complex social knowledge enabling them to have an elaborate understanding of social events and people and they also happen to think flexibly varying according to different social situations (Jon Eun Lee, 1999).

There are two aspects of social intelligence. The first one would include having necessary knowledge to choose the right response which required abstract intelligence. The other one is abstract intelligence which includes making decisions in real life situations (Strang, 1930). In an industry like hospitality being socially intelligent is the key to success wherein meeting new people is a day to day activity and interacting with them a way of livelihood. Social intelligence has become an essential trait for a leader to understand the employees and adapt to the dynamic environment, he could be classified as efficient and inefficient on the basis of his understanding of social intelligence. Although social intelligence is studied along with the other two intelligence, it is very different and stands as an individual construct. The leaders need to possess social intelligence in order to solve problems arising in

social context by perceiving and interpreting cues and therefore an important leadership quality.

There are two types of approaches that a leader follows namely traditional trait approaches and situational approaches. Traditional trait approaches examines what a leader does across different leadership situations and situational approaches examines what a leaders does with the expectation that leader behavior would vary by situational requirements.(Janelle A Gilbert,1994). Over the period of time there have been various attempts to measures social intelligence some of them namely George Washington social test in 1926, but it was critized later on for the low correlation between social intelligence and its other measure and high correlation between social intelligence and verbal intelligence. Six factor tests of social intelligence was a third measure by Guildford in 1967. Another approach to study social intelligence is through non verbal form of communication considering the fact that most aspects of social intelligence takes place through non verbal cues (Mehrabian,1972) and the more accurate a person is in getting the right non verbal cues the more accurate is his ability to understand social intelligence. Social intelligence is an interpersonal and intrapersonal concept since it deals with individual and his/her relationship with other individual. Social intelligence is not only reflected in ones professional life but also in everyday situations which are rather complex and not simply stated. Social intelligence is required to make the situation intelligent which is when the situation is completely under control and that requires knowledge and understanding of cues arising from the situation(Schoen,1937).

Undergraduate degree in the one followed by post secondary education. The definition of undergraduate student varies from context to context. In United states of America an undergraduate is the one who is undergoing his bachelor's degree which is mostly of four years. In Britain an undergraduate is the one pursuing bachelors degree for a period of three years except in sciences and specialist courses which are of four years but not considered an undergraduate but a masters degree. In India an undergraduate student pursues a three or a dour year degree from an affiliated university.

Hospitality professionals are the ones working in administrative or management positions in hotels or any service based industry. The hospitality industry in wide and not limited to just hotels. It includes restaurants, spa,clubs, boardin hostels, youth hostels etc.

The study therefore aims to study and compare the difference in the social intelligence of both the groups and analyze the gap.

Literature Review

(Samoza,1990) The study explored the relationship between social intelligence and likability and also a third constraint, general intelligence. The study was conducted on 161 college students who took both social intelligence tests and general intelligence test, the roommates of 63 students rating them on a likability scale and social intelligence scale using the respective scales. The results indicated that the liking rating scale correlated with the social intelligence but the results couldn't reach significance. There was a strong

correlation between the roommate rating on social intelligence scale and likability test but no relation between SIS filled by roommates and ones filled by themselves. The tests intended to measure general intelligence did not correlate with likability and social intelligence, however a significant correlation was found between general intelligence and social intelligence.

(Gilbert,1996) The author investigates the characteristic required by the manager to interact with the social environment. It is important for the leaders to perceive and respond to their social environment correctly. The article also takes in consideration interpersonal perception, system perception and behavioral flexibility. The study includes a sample of 1364 leaders of both junior and senior organizational levels. Social intelligence was measured using a behavioral based background data instrument. After the data measure system, perception and interpersonal perception were highly correlated and predicted for leader's achievement therefore confirm that social intelligence thus have an effect on leader effectiveness. The social intelligence of a leader have an impact on employee motivation as well.

(Njoroge et al, 2014) In their work the authors emphasis on the importance of managers to motivate their multigenerational workforce through incorporating social and emotional intelligence which would turn these generational differences into positive experience. The companies today have globally become competitive and multigenerational workforce is posing a big challenge to it and social intelligence principle have been the answer to keep such workforce engaged and motivated. In organizations like these "one size fits all" approach of motivation would rarely work and need to go beyond the common monitory methods. Emotional intelligence could be uses in cases wherein managers need to pick up social cues and empathy and it is easier for managers with high level of emotional quotient and social intelligence to identify their employee needs and they are aware of the their team needs as well as they connect well with their subordinates. This way the company works better with a diverse workforce and are easily able to overcome challenges by uniting people and enabling them to co-exist in the organization irrespective of difference in goals.

(Bennett,2014) Social intelligence is not only required in leaders but it is an intrinsic part of being a student too. This study aims to compare the social intelligence levels of students pursuing the distance educational programme and students pursuing the traditional undergraduation at different classes namely sophomore, junior and senior respectively between the age group of 18-24, the study also establishing a relationship between learning environment and social intelligence. The responses of the survey for the research were 190 in number. The result indicated that

a) There was no significant difference in social intelligence levels of students pursuing distance learning and traditional undergraduation.

b) There was a significant difference in level of social intelligence between freshman and a junior

The learning environment didn't affect the social intelligence levels

(Lovejoy,2008) The scholars have also tried to distinguish the social intelligence levels on the basis of gender as well.

The research paper studies how the superintendent of Indiana public school perceives themselves with regard to their social intelligence and also the relationship between the levels of social intelligence and Gender of superintendents. The data was collected from a sample size of 257 participants, 32 female and 32 male were chosen at random. The data was gathered using TSIS (Tromso social intelligence scale). The findings indicated that there was no relation between gender and the level of social intelligence however there was a positive correlation between social awareness and skill in female unlike their male counterparts. There was also a higher level of social intelligence amongst superintendent who earned degree before 1990 especially in case of female superintendent than the ones who earned their degree after 1990.

(Crowne,1991) Social intelligence has always been linked with emotional intelligence and multiple intelligence. Although Crowne in her research tests a new model of the three intelligence namely emotional, social and cultural. The sample size was that of 467 students at a university located in northeast America. The findings of the research indicated that though emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence were separate, they had some aspects overlapping each other and it was possible to have a higher intelligence of one type as compared to the other. Social intelligence wasn't subordinate to either social or cultural intelligence and the three intelligence were rather independent.

(Crowne,2006) This was followed by another study done by the same scholar regarding the three intelligences establishing the relationship between social and emotional intelligence and how they are subsets of social intelligence, as well as how the emotional and cultural leadership have an effect on leadership. The results indicated that social intelligence explains variance between emotional intelligence and cultural quotient, social intelligence being a possible mediator between social desirability and emotional intelligence, social intelligence having a direct impact on leadership.

(Lee,1999) Apart from comparing social intelligence with the other intelligences, social intelligence itself has various components. The study compared two aspects of social intelligence (flexibility and complexity) with creativity. The study was conducted amongst 229 psychology students, 112 males and 127 females, their age ranging from 17-24. The results from the study indicated that social intelligence is a distinct identity and discriminated it from creativity.

(Silvera et al,2001) Social intelligence papers are seen as difficult to analyze and design. It is limited by issues relating to the right definition, Hindrances in numerical differences of social intelligence and the lack of current social intelligence measures. The purpose of this research was to analyse these hindrances of social intelligence by making a multi focused social intelligence scale that is simple and easy to use.

There are numerous measures of social intelligence, most are clinical or not openly available. They are also time consuming and tedious to conduct. The measures are not correlated in the right way and this gives way to discrepancies in the results. Self biases are also a cause for error.

The Tromso social Intelligence Scale has been taken into consideration to prove its authenticity. This was done via a

three pronged approach. The first prong studied a professional Psychologist's analysis of Social intelligence to arrive upon a common definition. The second prong was done by studying a large amount of social intelligence items and these were further validated by means of tests. This was a 21 item scale which was used. The third prong proved that these measures of TSIS were accurate.

The first study was conducted with 14 faculty from the psychology department from the university of Tromso. They were given a questionnaire, thus analyzing their social intelligence. The results showed that professionals saw social intelligence as a cognitive skill.

The second study was conducted on 202 students from the university of Tromso. They were given the Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale.

The third study was conducted on 290 students from the university of Tromso. They were given the TSIS questionnaire. This was used to analyse the effect of age and gender

The result showed that Gender did not affect these scores. Though there was a slight increase in the women's scores. Even age did not affect the scores. This proved that TSIS is not affected by gender and age.

Statement Of The Problem

To find out if there is a difference between the social intelligence levels of two different social groups and thus indirectly does the physical environment have an impact on the same. Two different social groups being referred here are hospitality undergraduate students and hospitality professionals.

Objectives Of The Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To determine the social intelligence of undergraduate students.
 2. To determine the social intelligence of hospitality professionals.
- To compare and analyze the social intelligence levels between the two groups.

Hypothesis

The study has the following hypothesis which would be analyzed and interpreted by the research findings:

H1: There is no significant difference in social intelligence amongst hospitality undergraduate students and hospitality industry professionals.

Scope of the Study

The study covers the hospitality professionals and hospitality undergraduate students from hotel management colleges.

Population:

The population for the current study comprises of hospitality professionals and hospitality undergraduate students from

hotel management. They represent the universe for the purpose of the research. The rationale for selecting a particular city was that the population is widely spread, and sampling frame was unavailable. Considering the fact that it was difficult to reach out to every nook and corner of the country a particular part of the country was selected.

Sampling Unit:

Sampling units of the present study were hospitality professionals and hospitality undergraduate students from hotel management from the city of Bangalore.

Sampling procedure:

Probability sampling technique has been used for the study. The study uses Convenience sampling method for data collection and data was collected based on the availability and willingness of the respondents. The sample size for the research would be 100 in number consisting of fifty hospitality professional and fifty undergraduate students from hotel management colleges situated in Bangalore. The age group of the sample size in both the cases, hospitality professionals and undergraduate students would be between 18-30 years old.

Questionnaire:

The tool of collecting the data would be a questionnaire and the scale would be social intelligence scale. The scale which was used for the questionnaire here was the Tromso Social intelligence scale also known as TSIS and it is a Norwegian scale for measuring of social intelligence. TSIS is a seven pointer scale and consist of 21 questions and it was distributed to the respondents and they had to rate themselves according to the questions on a scale of 7, so they would mark themselves out of 7, 1 describing them extremely poorly and 7 describing them extremely well. The scoring for the scale consisted of three sub dimensions : social skills, social processing and social awareness and the questions had different scoring for each of these.

There were some questions in the questionnaire for which reverse scoring had to be done. 2,4,5,8,11,12,13,15,16,20 and 21. If the respondent had marked himself 6 out the 7 scale then the scoring was directly converted into 2 at the time of analysis. The following questions were accredited to the following dimensions:

1. Social information processing skills (SP): 1,3,6,9,14,17,19
2. Social skills(SS): 4,7,10,12,15,18,20.
3. Social awareness (SA): 2, 5,8,11,13,16,21.

The scoring was done separately for each and the total score was calculated separately for both the groups including the SP,SA and SS.

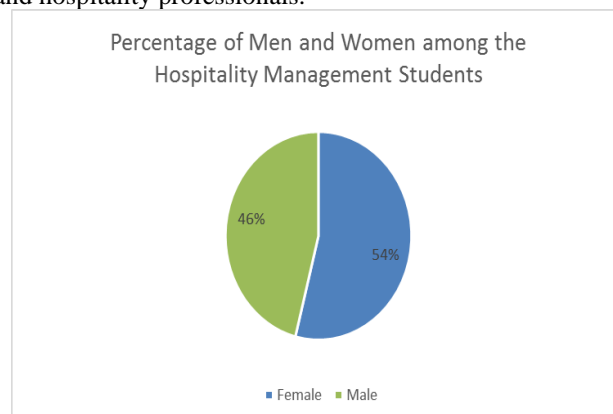
Data Analysis

Social intelligence has been defined as the ability to get along with others and the ability to deal with people respectively. Social intelligence differs from person to person and from industry to industry. People with a moderate level of social intelligence have an added

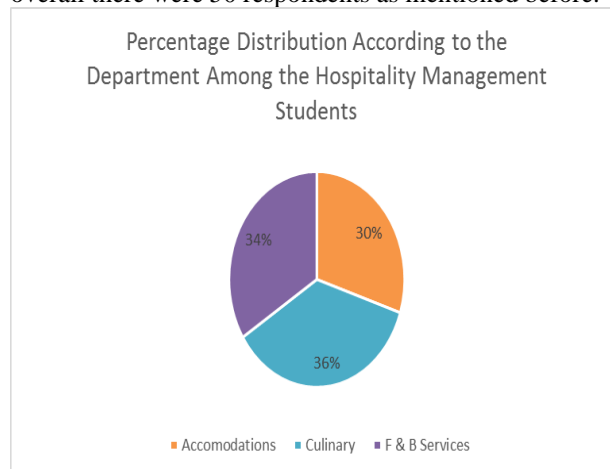
advantage in work places as well as they are able to maintain a healthy relation between their co-workers and there a better psychological health. In hospitality industry wherein it is very important to possess a moderate level of social intelligence as it a people-based industry and consists of a higher level of human interaction. The study aimed to compare the social intelligence levels between two social groups: hospitality undergraduate students and hospitality professionals and so the data was collected from the respective groups. The data from the first group was taken majorly from the last two year of under graduation at random. The data from the second group was taken from the professionals in the hospitality industry majorly working in the hotels and the responses consisted of professionals with varying work experiences.

Method Of Analyzing Data

There were 106 respondents used for this quantitative form of study and the responses were taken 50-50 for each group i.e. for hospitality undergraduates and hospitality professionals. Out of 106 respondents, 100 were valid. The questionnaire was given out at random in two social setting amongst two social groups that is hospitality undergraduates and hospitality professionals.

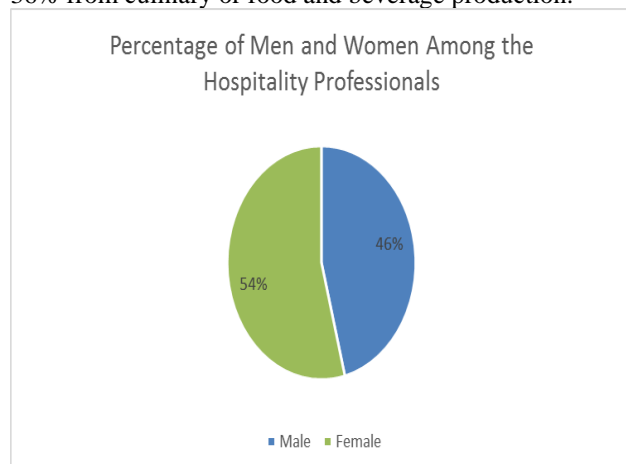


Amongst the hospitality management students the respondents were 46% female and 54% male and in overall there were 50 respondents as mentioned before.

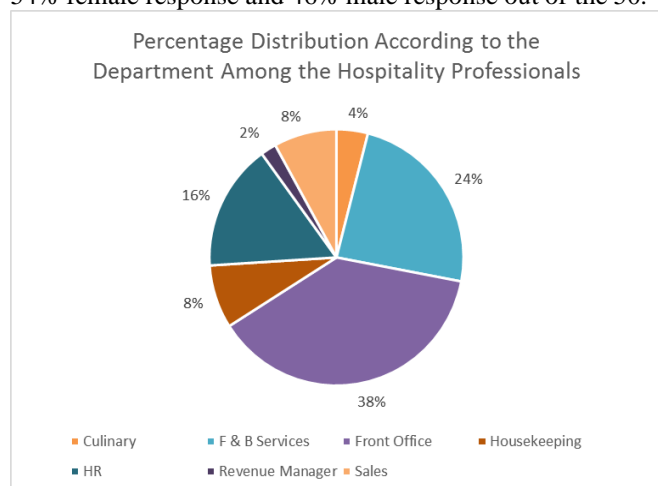


The students have three specialization in the hospitality management course in the final years of under graduation , namely food and beverage service, accommodations and

food and beverage production and the respondents were from all over these three specializations. 30% of the total was from accommodations, 34% from F and B service and 36% from culinary or food and beverage production.



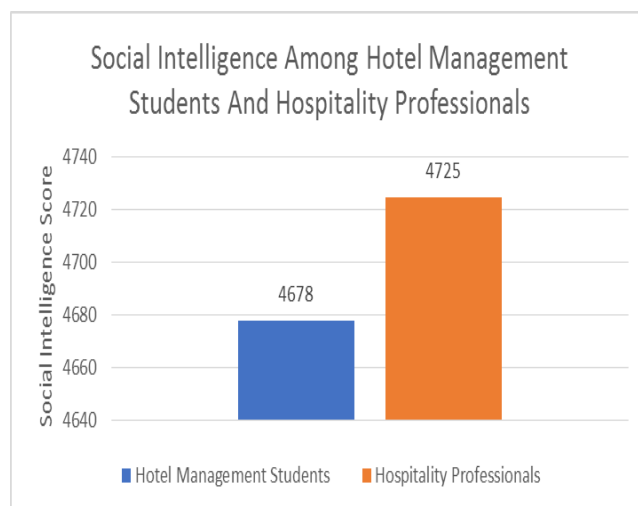
The next 50 respondents were from the hospitality industry and from various backgrounds and departments but everyone working in the hospitality industry. There were 54% female response and 46% male response out of the 50.



Since the data was taken from various professionals working in various hotels in and around Bangalore, they were not selected out of one department and the respondents were not only from the front of the house departments but back of the house as well, example: culinary and revenue management. The majority of responses were from the front office and food and beverage service i.e. 24% and 38%

1. **Objective 1** : To determine the social intelligence average of undergraduate students.

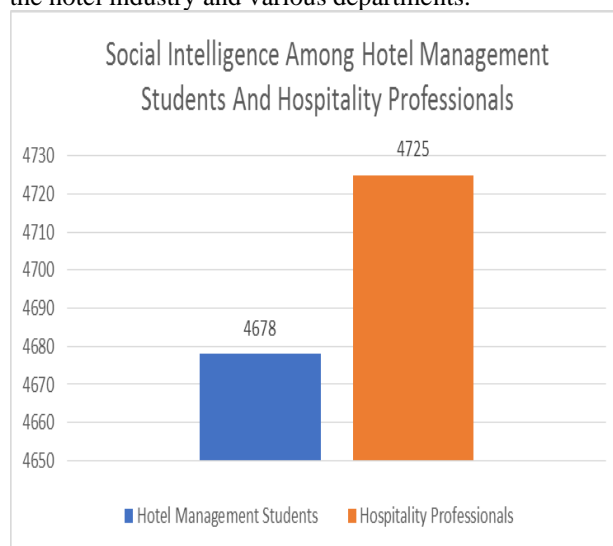
The data was collected from the last two years of the undergraduate degree and then it was totaled and run statistical tests on to determine the social intelligence levels. It is inherent that the hospitality undergraduates should possess a required level of social intelligence especially the front line employees because of the nature of the profession and the following study would determine the current situation.



Component	Hotel Management Students
Total	4678
Mean	93.56
Median	93.5

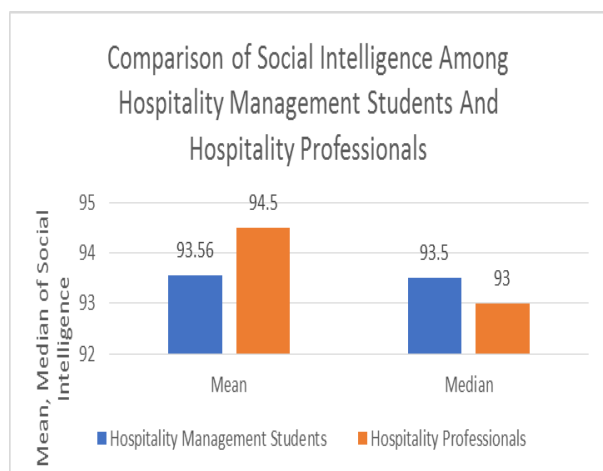
2. **Objective 2** : To determine the social intelligence of hospitality professionals.

It is very important for hospitality professionals to possess this trait to maintain effective guest engagement. The 50 respondents consisted of various working professionals from the hotel industry and various departments.



3. **Objective 3**: To compare and analyze the social intelligence levels between the two groups

Component	Hotel Management Students	Hospitality Professionals
Total	4678	4725
Mean	93.56	94.5
Median	93.5	93



The mean of undergraduate students is 93.56 which is lower as compared to that of professional which is 94.5. The following results express that the social intelligence is higher in case of hospitality professionals as compared to the undergraduate students. There could be many reasons for the higher values of social intelligence amongst hospitality professionals, it may be due to the higher exposure to guest engagement and situational handling along with work experience, also since the respondents were of mixed age groups there have been many who have been in this industry for a long amount of time and they have developed social intelligence due to the exposure and the time they have spent in this people oriented industry which is lacking in the undergraduate students, though there is not a large gap between the two values of social intelligence probably due to low sample size.

In order to statistically compare the social intelligence levels amongst the two groups, a simple paired t test was conducted on the total of the two groups to find out whether the mean difference between the two groups is zero or more.

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total	185.420	50	648.4514	91.7049
Pair 1 VAR00023	94.5000	50	13.59959	1.92327

Paired Samples Correlations

	N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1 Total & VAR00023	50	-.260	.069

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Total - VAR00023	90.92000	652.11329	92.22275	-94.40855	276.24855	.986	49	.329

The result of the t test was less than 0.05 which indicates that there is no significant difference between the social intelligence of the two groups.

Components of social intelligence :

Social intelligence is comprised of three other components including: social skills(SS), social awareness(SA) and social processing(SP). The following adds up to create social intelligence. These sub components were calculated separately for the two groups and then they were compared with each other to find out differences if any and analyse the reasons why.

	Hospitality undergraduates	Hospitality professionals
Social skills (SS)	1533	1568
Social awareness (SA)	1489	1469
Social processing (SP)	1656	1709
TOTAL :	4678	4725

Social skills:

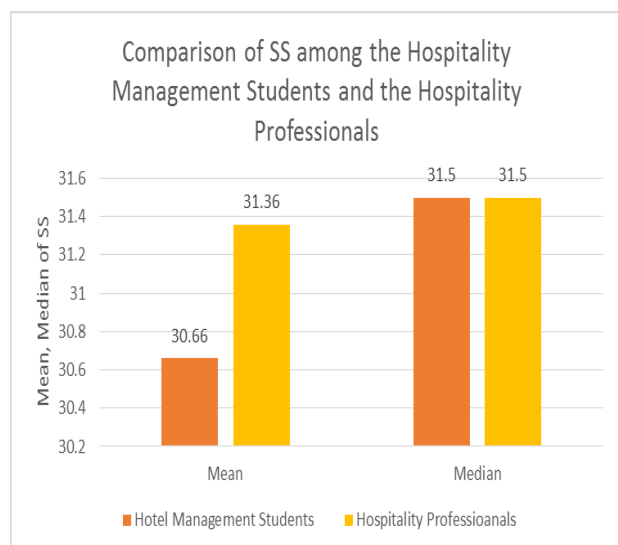
Social skills as a part of social intelligence are the skills a person possesses which are used for communication and interaction and it could include both verbal and non-verbal cues and interpersonal skills are an integral part of the same. Human beings are social creatures and they have developed ways to communicate with each other. It has developed over a period of time and it is refined as the person grows according to the environment. Social skills vary from culture to culture. This discrepancy occurs due to the nature of the person and the upbringing.

The hospitality industry is known for being welcoming and people friendly and it is the responsibility of the employees to ensure the same throughout and that needs a fair amount of right social skills and this includes body language and verbal cues.

Hospitality students are preparing to enter the industry and need to be socially apt and aware to do the same as they are about to enter the industry so there is polishing of social skills required in order to be fully prepared to enter the industry and carry on their duties as a hospitality professionals.

Social skills:

Component	Hotel Management Students	Hospitality Professionals
Total	1533	1568
Mean	30.66	31.36
Median	31.5	31.5



The analysis of the social skills data depicts that the social skills in a professional is higher than that of undergraduate students which could be explained by the fact that these professionals have been in the industry for a longer period of time and have developed their skills through training and experience and even hotel have helped them do so. In the context of students their environment and exposure is limited to university and that's why their social skills is limited at this point of time. There is a negative correlation between the two groups of social skills that is -0.070.

Social processing (SP):

Social processing is the skills by which information is processed and analyzed. It is the method by which human beings organize knowledge over a period of time.

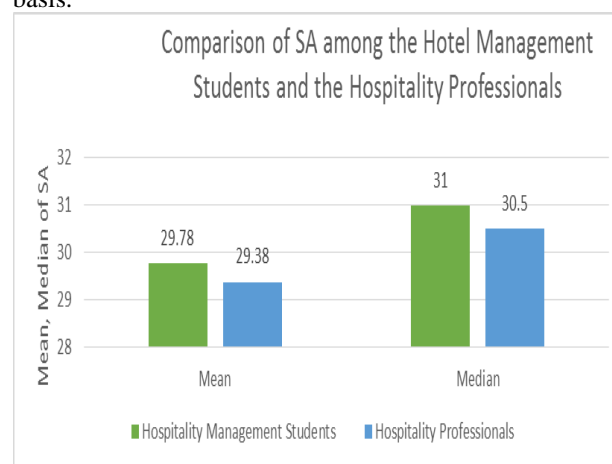
Component	Hotel Management Students	Hospitality Professionals
Total	1656	1709
Mean	33.12	34.18
Median	33	34



The social processing skills is higher in hospitality professionals as compared to that of the students.

Social awareness:

Social awareness means when one is able to understand correctly the needs of others and respond to those needs in a appropriate manner. It is a very important trait to develop in the hospitality industry because it is about understanding the needs of the customer and guests and providing them with the services they would want. Social awareness also includes being aware of the different situations and problems that a society and the people in a society face from day to day basis.



The social awareness is higher in case of that of hospitality undergraduates than that of hospitality professionals. The higher Social awareness skills in the students is due to the fact that in a social setting like university they are faced with issue not just with the co peers but with also other departments and the management. This prepares them for the future ahead and are able to handle it in a better way. There is more awareness of social issues as students than as professionals because of the time limitation associated with the latter part.

Findings

The hypothesis of the study has been proved null with the findings which indicated that there was no significant differences in the social intelligence levels of hospitality undergraduate students and hospitality professionals. The physical environment thus clearly not affecting the way the social intelligence is developed and therefore it is dependent on the individual person. Earlier studies which was done by Bennett in 2015 showcased the fact that the learning environment didn't affect the social intelligence levels, thus emphasizing on the fact that the social setting wouldn't affect the social intelligence. Since the data was taken by the final year students who are ready to enter the professional world, their social intelligence skills have been polished over the past three years of being exposed in a setting like that of a university wherein there is more scope to manage different relationships with different kind of people. This finding can be a positive statement as the undergraduates now would go on to become future leaders and it is very much necessary for them to have social intelligence, it being one of the most important trait in a successful leader and having a motivated workforce. The various components of the social intelligence consist of SA, SS and SP. When the

mean of these components were compared amongst the two social groups, it was found that the professionals had a higher average of social skills and social processing. This might be due to the fact that professionals have a higher level of interactions in a exposed and open environment with guests and co workers, meanwhile the students are in an enclosed social setting of university or college and thus the difference. The social awareness though was higher in the case of the undergraduate students, the reason being that undergraduate students are in a developing age wherein they have more energy and time to be sensitive towards issues in the society as well as the issues with their friends and family. The professionals have limited time and sources to get involved in any of the social issues and even if they do it is from the organizational side.

Conclusion:

One of the objectives and hypothesis was to see if there was a difference in the social intelligence of two groups namely hospitality undergraduates and professionals and it can be concluded by the findings that there was no difference in the social intelligence of both the groups and therefore the physical environment, age or gender playing no role in the social intelligence of a person.

Limitations Of The Study:

1. The participants of the study were from a limited and concentrated geographical area.
2. The study was solely done on hospitality students and professionals and therefore cannot be applied to any other industry.
3. The study concentrated on professionals and managers belonging to a hotel industry and couldn't include restaurants, even though the latter has been trending more in the recent ages.
4. The respondents of the study was only from the final two years and not from the first two years as they are closer to the graduation and about to enter the professional life and therefore the gap could be wider in case of latter.

Future Research :

1. Future research could be done on the social intelligence levels of the first two years of hospitality undergraduate students and their social intelligence levels and the gap between them and industry,
2. Future research can tap into how the technology is affecting the social intelligence of gen X and baby boomers as they are more involved in their tabs and smart phones rather than actually offline conversations.

Conflict Of Interest Statement

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request

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