

Women stargazing at The Old Boys' Network - A Review paper highlighting the bravado of women overcoming Unsaid Unseen Barriers in Hospitality Industry

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Abstract: The research paper titled “Women stargazing at The Old Boys' Network - A review of the bravado of women as they overcome Unsaid Unseen Barriers in Hospitality Industry” is based on the scholarly articles, papers, books in hard and soft copies, one to one interviews from women and men in hospitality industry published in form of literature available between 1990s to present year. The article draws upon various notions and ideas expressed by distinguished scholars on the prevalence, existence and perceptions of the Old Boys' Network on several hoteliers, entrepreneurs and colleagues, existing and former, of the hospitality industry. Women's reluctance to publicise their achievements or actively seek promotion appeared to be a further career penalty. It was evident that the managers who were unable to transfer geographically for promotion every two to three years were considered less suitable for promotions in the hospitality industry. This had a bigger impact on women's promotions due to various factors (societal, cultural and patriarchal) vis a vis men with spouses whose principal role was homemaker, actively pursued career building transfer opportunities. The network often secluded working women in a gender discriminatory manner, causing women in five star hotels who are keen to ascend to leadership positions and they expect organisations to realise the promise of diversity to facilitate their career ambitions. They adjust their feelings of satisfaction and develop career strategies to reduce dissonance with their lack of ability to attain executive positions. This old boys' network was often said to have been one of the causes contributing to the existing gender role segregation which maybe constraining equal opportunities for women at the workplace in hotels and on the other hand provides, shelters and aids more than flexibility or promotion-friendly policies for men.

The hospitality industry must be an equal playfield but this shall take multiple decades to realise, and to speculate on the future of hospitality gender research and women's employment prospects in the industry. There have been discussions on definitions and prevalence of Old Boys' Network, the notions on the acceptance of such networks, formal and informal in the hospitality industry. Since Old Boys' Network was not very uncommon and unclear, it rather was the first choice for writing this review paper based on this informal blessing network that helped to focus on ways in which it could be applied to benefit males over females in the hospitality workplace. Male executives described how their wives organized the domestic logistics of their transfers, leaving their own jobs and settling children in new schools, whereas women in dual career families were less likely to have partners as trailing spouses. Women who demonstrated unwillingness to be mobile restricted their promotional opportunities and were positioned as unambitious in the eyes of their superiors. Yet, ambitious women who transferred without their families did not have the same support system enjoyed by privileged male peers, which eased transition into a new environment or culture. A number of industries are influenced by this well flourishing Old Boys' Network which by large benefits male employees over female employees. At first glance the promotions, incentives, new assignments, perks, growth opportunities seem fairly open and available in a fair and ungendered manner, sadly these often

systematically slip off from the female employees due to lack of similar networks. Various authors have been writing about such unsaid unclear disadvantages faced by women in the hospitality industry.

However studies have shown that despite the challenges and disadvantages to women of the old boys' network, interesting is the growth and interest that have been nurtured by women in this male chauvinist enterprising arena. It must be stressed on the fact how the continued missed opportunities of neglecting female talent and calls on female and male leaders to shape a gender-just future in hospitality study and practice by mentoring and holding these management and old boys' network affected hierarchies to account. Women appeared unwilling to push themselves forward for higher positions, as illustrated by multiple authors in their research papers on why a succession of younger and less experienced male managers moved ahead to become General Managers. It fills us up with pride to see so many women battling and juggling their way up the hierarchy as hospitality employees and even entrepreneurs who are running successful organisations but little is the count in hospitality sector.

At macro level, as part of the tourism sector, hotels share common characteristics which affect career opportunities. They are vulnerable to global threats, suffering unpredictable as well as seasonal fluctuations in revenue and return on investment (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2016). At first glance, a hotel management career appears conducive to ambitious individuals regardless of their sex or ethnicity, and hotel career studies generally consider these to be mere demographic descriptors (Wang, 2013). However, in western countries women, often belonging to ethnic minority groups, continue to dominate the lowest-quality positions, with poorest job security, pay, working conditions and developmental opportunities in the hospitality sector (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015). For instance, in the United States (US), horizontal and vertical occupational sex segregation remains entrenched in the sector's career structures (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015)(Clevenger & Singh, 2013) and sexual harassment and discrimination is common in hotel workplaces (Santero-Sanchez et al., 2015).

Both genders contribute equally in the hospitality sector however, male employees have an upper hand due to various reasons, gender stereotyping, old boys' network occupying prominent positions in the list. Distinguished author, Kanter (1977) in his research has highlighted how individuals who are one of a kind, are treated like two, with bias based on gender, prejudice and negative stereotypes. Women have been suffering due to such bias at professional level. With boom in tourism, the opportunities at work may have increased and can be seen as it may have opened doors to women, there are lingering problematic gendering processes which stay the same as earlier. It is interesting to note how women's criticism of gendered structures in the tourism sector is combined with an essentialist view of women. Some writers have shown in their research that organisations and the managerial roles are often gendered and gendered to an extent that they can be understood from a distance as having masculine values and ethics affecting the managerial dream jobs of many deserving and aspiring women employees irrespective of their talent, skills and behaviour. This seems to provide evidence of the strength of the prevailing gender prejudices and stereotypes (e.g., women as mothers), which are reified and ingrained to such an extent in organizations and in the society at large, that they become "invisible." (Inês Carvalho, 2018). There exist an intangible barrier which is fostered by the Old Boys' Network making it as unseen as a glass because it is invisible but tough and impactful. The association and push and pull works as a lubricant for male employees climbing up the job cycle vis a vis the same association serves its purpose well by obstructing women from entering into top management positions in the hospitality industry. For a long time, the presence of such a glass ceiling was denied but with the tireless efforts by researchers this barrier was recognised. Social norms also create barriers like "Think Manager Think Male" stereotype and discriminatory corporate policies. The workplaces were designed by men and for men, so this makes the inequality in terms of gender a traditional practice.

Women often face hard time juggling the delicate balance between work-family balance and has notable negative consequences, there must be proposed a series of measure for reducing the clash between work and family lives ((Peter)Kim, 2011)). This balance is delicate and often quoted as a hindrance towards the inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels in hospitality industry. The scenario of gendering in the hospitality hierarchy comes naturally in hospitality industry. The bottom line is it's still a man's world which stands true even today. The lack of gender equality in management positions is a global phenomenon and the barriers women face when accessing leadership positions are proven by research (Villamil López & Alonso Almeida, 2013). Gendered roles caused many women to remain in lower positions, unable or unwilling to sacrifice the privilege of work/life balance for the penalty of being available to the demands of a 24/7 business. At lower management levels duties were unpredictable, often forced upon juniors by their seniors. The societal norms and practical restrictions on women's time results in lower endorsement rates for these items compared to men, and thus underestimates their workaholicism(Beiler-May et al., 2017).

Despite the increased gender parity in the workforce today, few women attain top management positions in America's largest corporations. Instead, an increasing number of women are achieving CEO status as entrepreneurs. In-depth interviews with women who have lived in both worlds – that of the stable company and one launched and run on their own – give some insight as to the nature of the problems and perceptions faced by women as managers and entrepreneurs. Issues such as gender-role bias and work/life balance are concerns for women with and without children (Winn, 2004)Many authors have found that apart from old boys network, other allied forces also come into play that act as hindrances to the upward ascent of women in the hospitality hierarchy. Brownell, work-family issues can have a negative impact on organizations, but for her this can be in part counteracted by measures that support work-family balance. However, she underlines that there are key concerns regarding the bottom line impact of such measures, particularly if there is no accompanying change in the management philosophy or no involvement at the management level (Brownell, 2008) Judi Brownell proposes a partnership between educators and hospitality leaders. A change process towards flexibility, open-mindedness, and an improved work-family balance might add a competitive edge to the organization and boost its performance (Brownell, 1998). Magnini in 2009 and 2010 (Magnini, 2009)carried a literature review on the consequences of work-family conflict in hospitality firms. For married women with children the route into hotel management seems to be later in their lives and through their husbands. Kanter (Kanter, 2014)(I9771). This paper studied various author's work upon how women are taking control and gradually, persistently shattering the glass ceiling by creating a niche for themselves in the entrepreneurial arena by being proactive in leadership and professional development, making sacrifices, developing support systems and being willing to make changes including moving to new locations and zones. There are authors who have found out that industrial and vertical segregation , to a lesser extent establishment segregation increase the wage differential. In Occupational segregation , women predominate in the worst paid jobs but their wages drop less than men's earnings. (Russen et al., 2021) (Campos-Soria et al., 2015)The paper revealed that the perception of glass ceiling barriers faced by women differed with where they were in their career cycle. Long hours ; the old boys network ; hiring practices and geographical mobility were the barriers(Mooney et al., 2017; Mooney & Ryan, 2009; Ryan & Mooney, 2020)

As per Insight Report : Women working in Tourism & Hospitality Sector, published in October 2017 - People 1st magazine of UK,(UK - www.people1st.co.uk) intended to study the Pay differentials for men and women, the structural challenges preventing more women into senior roles found out the career trajectory. This report indicates the career trajectory of men and women is similar until the age of 22, there is a steep decline in the number of women at the age of 33. It also explores the organisational barriers preventing more women from progressing into these roles, the structural barriers across the industry and the pay differentials

between men and women. This is not restricted to the women of just UK but women all over the world face the same music.

As stereotypical as it can get, the managerial jobs have conventionally been understood as male and thus as not being directly suitable for women. The point of departure of this discourse is that women and men are different and that there is congruence between men and managerial jobs. On the basis of a qualitative study of women managers, I argue that there is a need for more sophisticated ways of appreciating the experiences of (many) women in relation to management. Variation, complexity and contradictions may be lost when holding onto essentialist understandings such as the male norm (Billing, 2011). According to the reports published by ILO (2016) in Asia, for example, 30% of business leaders surveyed mentioned that most of the mid-career or senior women who left their jobs voluntarily did so due to family commitments. If we focus on Japan, despite anti-discrimination legislation, only 43% of women who tried to rejoin the workforce after childbirth found jobs, suggesting this is a major cause for the leaky talent pipeline. The study also shows that two-thirds of senior women from companies and professional firms across Europe have highlighted the stereotypes and preconceptions of women's roles and skills as the most important barrier to their career progression. Many studies have had results showing that it is still very difficult for women to reach top managerial jobs and those who do are very much in the minority. The Old Boys Network cushions the glass ceiling making it appear to be still intact although women are gaining some middle ground. Posits that "think manager – think male" should become "think manager – think qualified person!" (Schein & Lituchy, 1996) Usually, a segregating organizational culture also determines imbalances and limitations by Huete et al., 2016 (Daniela Freund Gilda Hernandez-Maskivker, 2021)) when it comes to being promoted to high positions, (Cristina Figueroa-Domecq (School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 2020) Flecha Barrio, & Palomo, 2018 ([1], [2], [2], & University)). According to the theory of human capital, smaller investment in human capital is one of the factors that complicates women's job promotion. This theory claims that individuals succeed in increasing their production capacity by investing in themselves, and that the main sources of investment are education, training, and work experience. This approach suggests that many women, lack time outside working hours to invest in training, and as a result are excluded from promotion opportunities. Recent studies have begun paying attention to self-imposed barriers in the hotels across the world that can hold women back from advancing to top ranks. The most commonly cited fall into two major areas. First, there is the often dramatic "push and pull" between family-personal issues and the time of life during which promotions to higher ranks typically take place as stated by Reddy in her thesis report in the year 2007. The age also plays an important determining role with respect to promotions, transfers and wage hikes for male and female managers.

Several results from recent research have shown that significant promotions typically take place for women when they are in their forties. At this time in their lives, many women must weigh their career advancement against family-related issues. Second, as we indicated above, self-established barriers interfere with advancement, such as unwillingness to relocate, concessions made within a spousal partnership, and traditional gender roles (Fischlmayr, 2002). When women perceive barriers to their career advancement, they tend to either exit, voice concern, or rationalize remaining on a plateau (Hamel, 2009). Some studies suggest that the lack of self-confidence relates to the fact that the majority of women choose to quietly exit the company rather than voicing discontent about discrimination. Furthermore, gender stereotypes seem to be well-ingrained into the minds of managers, employees, and students who are about to enter the workforce (Geyer-Semple, 2011). However, research on the internal struggles of confidence and esteem for women is still inconclusive. Some studies have found no empirical link between career advancement and self-esteem ((Soufi et al., 2011)

To define the hospitality sector and tourism, is an uphill task, not because there is no definition, but because there are so many of them (Stabler & Goodali, 1997). As other writers have pointed out (Wheeler, 1993)), that there are so many interpretations of the term has meant that each individual has been able to claim that his or her use of the phrase is appropriate. Women have come a long way though. one result has been that the wide acceptance of the term noted above in many cases is simply acceptance of the phrase but not its implications. As found out by the (Rosen)). women entering management must be prepared to clarify their career goals, to resolve dual career conflicts, to cope with possible discrimination on the job, and to project an image of confidence and assertiveness. Mostly it was acknowledge that it isn't easy and the price of a managerial career is high. Forewarned is forearmed. Thus this stands true specially in regards with the women career in hospitality sector. Old boys network can also be understood in a lay man's language as an informal system through which men influence the selection, recruitment, promotion and liaison in the hospitality sector. Women can be seen as the ones being on the losing side due to this influential network prevalent in the workplace.

Hotel industry is the top rising business segment in our country as well the World . According to 'WTTC i.e. World Travel and Tourism Council' the tourism sector and travel industry is expanded 3.5% in growth, which outpace the World's economy of 2.5% successfully for the nine years consecutively. This sector is producing employment tremendously. In the past five years, one in four new jobs is generated by tourism sector. To add more the "Travel and Tourism Competitiveness" report by "World Economic Forum" on tourism industry and hospitality has raked India on the 6th place. Among top 10 contributor sectors in "FDI i.e. Foreign Direct Investment" is from hotel trade and hospitality business. Clearly, when men and women work hand in hand to make tourism a lucrative and magnetic industry for potential travellers then the opportunities, promotions and networking vouching for both genders in the hospitality sector must be fair, unbiased, non-discriminatory, free from gender bias and equal.

Conclusion

Barriers to women's advancement in the public sector continue to be very real. Debate has shifted from concern about equal employment opportunity and access to entry- and middle-level leadership positions to an examination of the glass ceiling phenomenon, which prevents many women from reaching upper level management positions(Newman, 1993)There is yet a great deal that has been written on the topic over the last few decades by renowned authors. The status of women in India and abroad has long been paradoxical. The women have been setting benchmarks in various fields and professions such as they have been working in hotels, medicine, teaching, aeronautics and politics and have the right to own property. Among some social classes, women have been seen as being extremely powerful. We have seen how women scientists have contributed in the success of the Chandrayaan mission as well. Yet, there is a long history of women being oppressed by men which cannot be ignored. Women in hotels have not been different from this reality of having faced male chauvinism as they have often been delegated to playing subordinate roles. Though India's workforce is changing, we still have a long way to go towards securing equality. The cultural, social values, family responsibilities and more women joining the workforce has increased the global focus on women's issues might be able to throw some light on the how these factors are impacting the career progression of women. However, adding further , many examinations by different authors have suggested that some discussion could be of great help on the meaning of the term – The Old Boys' Network, atleast in the context of tourism and hospitality sector. It has been found as suggested in the research papers, there lies an unsaid interconnectivity between age, gender and occupational class assumptions in the recruitment of a manager highly influenced by the networking which works in favour of males. The study also found out that both women and male prefer male supervisors. Male managers also prefer male subordinates It is not found as an

uncommon indication of having a replacement of a female manager with another female manager but it is common to have a male employee being replaced with a male, probably a younger version of the outgoing male employee. So it is seen how male staff are replaced vis a vis female staff are not. The gender stereotypes about the ability to handle pressure, take quick decisions are permanently set in the mindsets of the professionals in hospitality industry, such gossips are fuelled by the constant bundling up stereotyped notions oozing out of the old boys' network which in turn strengthens the glass ceiling against the women going up in the managerial hierarchy. Women are taking control and gradually, persistently shattering the gender stereotypes created by the old boys' network glass ceiling by creating a niche for themselves in the entrepreneurial arena by being proactive in leadership and professional development, making sacrifices, developing support systems and being willing to make changes including moving to new locations and zones.

Thus there is definite need to understand and underline the causes, consequences that lead to the piling up of disadvantages towards the women staff and managers caused by the usage of advantages towards the male staff due to the said network in hospitality industry. As quoted by researcher, Zhong in 2011 in his article that the underrepresentation of women in top management positions is an important concern in the hospitality industry, in spite of the increasing number of women employees. (Zhong, 2011). It has been pointed out by researchers that the influence of old boys network, the self-imposed barriers, gender roles, problems associated with work-life conciliation and issues related to gendered organisation and the main factors that hinder achieving gender equality in hospitality sector.

Limitations and Further Research

This study reviewed a limited number of research papers pertaining to the old boys' network in the hospitality industry. The study on the widespread old boys network was appropriate and necessary, but the limited papers that were reviewed do limit its findings. In order to obtain a clearer picture as to when women shall be accepted as equal at workplace and paid in an ungendered manner, time, patience and acceptance of this old boys network is an absolutely essential in the hospitality industry. Only when men shall be choosing to accept the existence of such intangible but impactful barriers and association of networks which pull women down in the managerial hierarchy due to the factors mentioned in the study shall and hospitality industry, additional studies are necessary. As found out by researcher, Zhong in 2011 in his article that the underrepresentation of women in top management positions is an important concern in the hospitality industry, in spite of the increasing number of women employees. (Zhong, 2011). To determine if these results are genuine or typical, future research could include a comprehensive study of region wise research articles in a particular time frame which could be of a decade or even of the same year. The roots of the network are deep so reviewing the papers of the employees who have quit their jobs owing to several reasons and not be limited to only in service employees of the hotels could be thought of as an enriching source. The old and new trends in the old boys' networks affecting the professional realities could be administered.

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