Competency Mapping in Hotels with Reference to Jammu Kashmir

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Abstract

The concept of competency is becoming more and more important in human resource management in many industries. The hotel industry follows the footsteps in the use of competencies in human resource management, as this industry is people focused and labor intensive. Thus, people with the level of proficiency and types of skills are highly required for a successful business. The study attempted to explore the competency of the employees in hotel industry as well as qualifications according to hotel divisions: General Management; Marketing & Sales; Rooms Division; F&B; and Cooking. The findings will help hoteliers in the future to understand the job requirements for each department in a hotel.

The study aims in identifying the deficiencies in required competencies of the employees working in the hotel industry and providing suitable suggestions to enhance the same in Jammu and Kashmir. The area of the study includes the hotels in Jammu and Kashmir region only. The sample size is 545, which would be the product of 25 employees selected from the 20 hotels in the state involving ten from Kashmir valley and ten from Jammu region. The rest of the respondents (45) are from the agents who are associated with the hotels indirectly which includes brokers, tour and travel agents and online booking agents. Multistage sampling has been used in the study. The analysis tools used are" t" test and percentage analysis. A suitable model has also been suggested. The study aims at highlighting the competencies for the hotel Industry, which will help in sharpening the competencies of their employees. The study will help both the hotel industry in the state to offer better services to its customers and also the state economy leveraging greater benefits.

Keywords: Competencies, hospitality sector, hotel employees, competency mapping

Introduction

Hospitality and tourism in India is a booming industry. Tourism contributes 6.23 percent to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India. The Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2010 were 5.58 million with estimated foreign exchange earnings at US$ 14.19 billion. Despite the recession, the hospitality and tourism industry has shown impressive growth in the number of foreign tourist arrivals. India is 42nd in the world rankings as per foreign tourism arrivals in the country.(Ministry of tourism, Govt Of India 2010).

As far as hospitality and tourism industry is concerned the state of Jammu and Kashmir throws many opportunities. Jammu & Kashmir state with its changed and diversified geographic, agro-climate and topographic features attracts many tourists both at national and at international level. Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) of J&K state during 2012-13 (at current prices) has increased to Rs. 75574.31 crores (quick estimates) from Rs. 65758.52 crores (quick estimates) of 2011- 12 registering a

growth of 14.93% during 2012-13(Economic Survey of Jammu and Kashmir 2014). Jammu and Kashmir State being a politically disputed state lacks on the development front. Though the state has enormous potential of being the leading tourist attractive state of the country yet the infrastructure and development in the hospitality sector is far behind on many fronts. There are very few star hotels in the entire state. Though the number of hotels are large but they are not offering the services demanded by the customers which creates a lacunae for earning the revenues and for generating employment Hotels are classified after evaluating several factors affecting the overall standards, for example, standard of cleanliness, manner of storing, preparing and serving food and the quality of food (Laws of Kenya, 1986). The classification is in such a way that the higher the stars, the better the quality of service expectations, standards and overall structure and amenities (Baum, 2002). Hence, the employer requires employees with requisite skills and high competences. In connection with the training harmonization, the tourism education should be a step ahead of the industry with new technology, innovation and development. The industry should learn from the educators and vice versa. In India and in particular the state of Jammu and Kashmir the industry is yet to develop full- fledged research department, which can research and disseminate information.

There are several empirical studies done on employees' competences but very little research has been documented in Jammu and Kashmir State despite that relevantly trained workforce is critical in enhancing destination competitiveness. Several government and non-governmental agencies) had recommended that a competence research be conducted star hotels. The present study aims at bridging this gap by studying the hospitality Industry on the factors of employers' expectations and on employees' competences and skills.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the competencies in the hotel employees
2. To study the importance of competency mapping in hotel Industry
3. To examine the impact of demographic characteristic (age and gender only) on the employee perceptions toward the organizational behavior in the hotels in Jammu and Kashmir
4. To ascertain the level of deficiency in competencies and suggest various measures to overcome the deficiencies in competencies

Hypothesis Tested

H_0:- Employees demographic characteristics (age and gender) do not have an impact on the hotel employee perceptions toward the organizational behavior in the hotels in Jammu and Kashmir.

H_a: Employees demographic characteristics (age and gender) have an impact on the hotel employee perceptions toward the organizational behavior in the hotels in Jammu and Kashmir.

Review of Literature

(Chapmann & Loveall, 2006) opine that a hotel should identify the level of proficiency and types of skills required for a certain position and train employees to be competent in skills and abilities on that front. Hotel industry is labor-intensive industry, thus demanding employees to be well qualified to handle customers' needs and wants. That is, the success of hotels depends heavily on how to enhance human resources management in an organization. Above all, a hotel should recognize the level of proficiency and   skill set required for a certain position and train employees to be competent in skills and abilities accordingly .e.g. service staff in fast food restaurants have to have different proficiencies or skills compared to those who work in fine dining restaurants. Employees in fast food restaurants only need to be competent in taking orders quickly without any mistakes, while those who are in fine dining restaurants should be more courteous and attentive to customers' needs. Likewise, hotel employees who offer face-to-face services at the front desk, restaurants or bars are required to have completely different competencies or qualifications for performance compared to those who are working in the back of the house in a hotel including human resources, marketing & sales, and planning departments. Therefore, the level of proficiency or different types of skills, which have considerable influence over service providers' performance, should be regarded.

Christou & Karamanidis, Walo (1999, 2000):- The authors are of the belief that tourism and hospitality industries are regarded as 'people industries' and effective human resource management is of utmost importance. The authors and along with many others unanimously believe that tourism and hospitality industry requires 'soft' human relation skills including oral and written communication and interpersonal communication as essential for graduates and trainees to possess.

Wood and Payne (1998) proposed twelve items as basic criteria for competency-based recruitment and selection: communication, flexibility, achievement orientation, developing others, customer orientation, problem solving, teamwork, analytical thinking, leadership, relationship building, planning skills and organizational skills.

Katz (1999) while studying competency mapping grouped competencies under three categories including Technical, Managerial and Behavioral (Human).

Solomon (2013) explored the level of Competency prevailing among the executives of public sector. The results of the study show that nearly half of the respondents have moderate level of managerial HR and general competencies.

Bergenhene Gouwen (2010) explains the application of a competence-based HRM system in the petro-chemicals industry illustrates the task of linking an organization's core competences to the personal competences of employees by making use of HRM instruments. The author concludes with a summary of the challenges HRM professionals face in competence-based organizations.

Miller, et. al. (2010) opines that competence can be defined in two senses. The first is competence equating to performance, which is the ability to perform nursing tasks, and the second is competence as a 'psychological construct.

Verma (2008) mentions that competencies in education create an environment that fosters empowerment, accountability and performance evaluation, which is

consistent and equitable. The acquisition of competencies can be through talent, experience, or training.

(Farah 2009) is of the opinion that the performance of companies depends mostly on the quality of their human resource. For obvious economic and business reasons, organizations have always been concerned about the competence of its people.

Hoffmann (1999) based on past literature summarized three key points in defining a competency: (a) underlying qualification and attributes of a person, (b) observable behaviors, and (c) standard of individual performance outcomes.

Smita Nigam, Poonam Pandey, Dhruv Kumar Pandey (2009) in their research paper entitled'Competence Mapping: An Innovative Management Practice Tool', expounds that employee competency mapping is an innovative practice that is widely being used by organizations today. Competency mapping is about assessing the value of human capital and its development. Care needs to be taken to ensure the involvement of the entire organization. The need to map and monitor the competence is perceived by most organizations as a tool to add value to their key resource areas as observed by the authors.

Tracey and Nathan (2003) have showed that the total amount of time spent on employees' job training to improve skills for restaurant services leads to a low turnover as well as increased sales revenue.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research method is used in the research. The areas of the study are the hotels in Jammu region and Kashmir valley. Hotels having more than forty employees, with proper departmentalization and sectioning, boarding & lodging facilities are selected for the study. The population for this research would be the total number of employees in 20 selected hotels in the state and 45 respondents indirectly associated with the hotel industry, which sums the sample size to 545. Multi Stage Sampling has been used for carrying the research. This involved segregating the entire population into different clusters. The first stage cluster involved grouping hotels having more than forty employees with proper departmentalization, boarding & lodging facilities. Twenty hotels out of these were randomly selected using simple random sampling. The second stage cluster consisted of selecting 25 employees from these 20 hotels using stratified sampling, who were then administered questionnaires. The last stage involved administering the questionnaires to the 45 respondents indirectly associated with the hotel industry constituting the sample size to 545 respondents.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data sources were used for the study.

Primary data

545 questionnaires were collected from the respondents. The research methodology was done by survey method using questionnaires.

The researcher distributed questionnaires to the target sample. Additionally, to maximize the response rate, face-to-face interview were conducted with the other hotel employees at the hotel bus stops in the respective areas.

Secondary data

The researcher collected further information from the following:

1. Jammu and Kashmir Tourism department corporation (JKTDC)
2. Journals
3. Books related to the study
4. Newspapers
5. Websites

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic information of the respondents is shown in table below (table1). There were 194 (35.59%) male and 351 (64.40%) female respondents. In terms of the age of respondents, 14.3% respondents were below 25 years old, 62.6% were between 25-34 years old, and 23.2% were 35 years or older.

Table 1- Respondents' Demographic Characteristics Profile

Respondent's demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	194	35.6
Female	351	64.4
Total	**545**	**100.0**
Age		
Less than 25 years	78	14.3
25-34 years	341	62.6
35 years or older	126	23.2
Total	**545**	**100.0**

Organizational Behavior

As shown in tables 3 and 4 below the majority of the respondents perceived that they were expected to question their boss when in disagreement (Mean = 3.91), job requirements and instruction were specified in detail so the respondents knew what they were expected to do (Mean = 3.85)**.** People in the positions of power try to decrease their social distance from less powerful people (Mean = 3.84). They were encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance (Mean = 3.79), and people in their unit were generally concerned about others (Mean = 3.78). In terms of the norm, most of the respondents perceived that managers encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer (Mean = 3.75). The respondents felt loyal to their hotels (Mean = 3.75). However, they were not sure whether they could talk about the disagreements to anyone that they want to tell (Mean = 3.68).

Table 3:- Descriptive statistics of organizational behavior

Factors	Level of agreement					Mean	SD	Agreement level
	Strongly Disagree %	**Disagree %**	**Neutral**	**Agree %**	**Strongly Agree%**			
Subordinate are expected to question their boss when in disagreement	4.2	6.2	18.3	36.5	34.7	3.91	1.07	Agree
Job requirements and instruction are spelled out in detail so I know what I am expected to do.	1.8	5.9	23.3	43.9	25.1	3.85	0.929	Agree
People in the positions of power try to decrease their social distance from less powerful people.	5.0	5.0	22.0	36.9	31.2	3.84	1.074	Agree
Employees are encouraged to strive for continuously increased performance.	2.4	6.2	22.9	46.8	21.7	3.79	0.932	Agree
In your unit, people are generally concerned about others.	4.4	7.3	17.6	47.5	23.1	3.78	1.024	Agree
Managers encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer.	5.3	6.4	20.0	44.2	24.0	3.75	1.057	Agree
I feel loyalty to the hotel.	3.3	4.6	28.4	41.1	22.6	3.75	0.96	Agree
When people in this hotel have a serious disagreement with each other, they talk about the disagreements to anyone they want to tell.	3.5	5.0	37.1	28.8	25.7	3.68	1.020	Agree

Agreement ranking is based on the mean scores measured on the Likert-scale from 1 to 5(1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree)

Independent Sample t-test on the Impact of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics and the Organizational Behavior.

Based on the independent sample t-test, the results in table 4 (below) show that there was statistically significant difference between male and female perception regarding the factor "Subordinates are expected to question their boss when in disagreement". The perceptions of female employees were stronger than male employees.

Table 4: Independent Sample t-test on Impact of Gender on the Organizational Behavior

	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Managers encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer. Male Female	3.63 3.82	1.085 1.037	-1.947	0.052
In your unit, people are generally concerned about others Male Female	3.66 3.84	1.021 1.022	-1.889	0.059
Subordinates are expected to question their boss when in disagreement Male Female	3.78 3.99	1.032 1.091	-2.165	**0.031***
Employees are encouraged to strive for continuously improved performance Male Female	3.72 3.83	0.948 0.921	-1.386	0.166

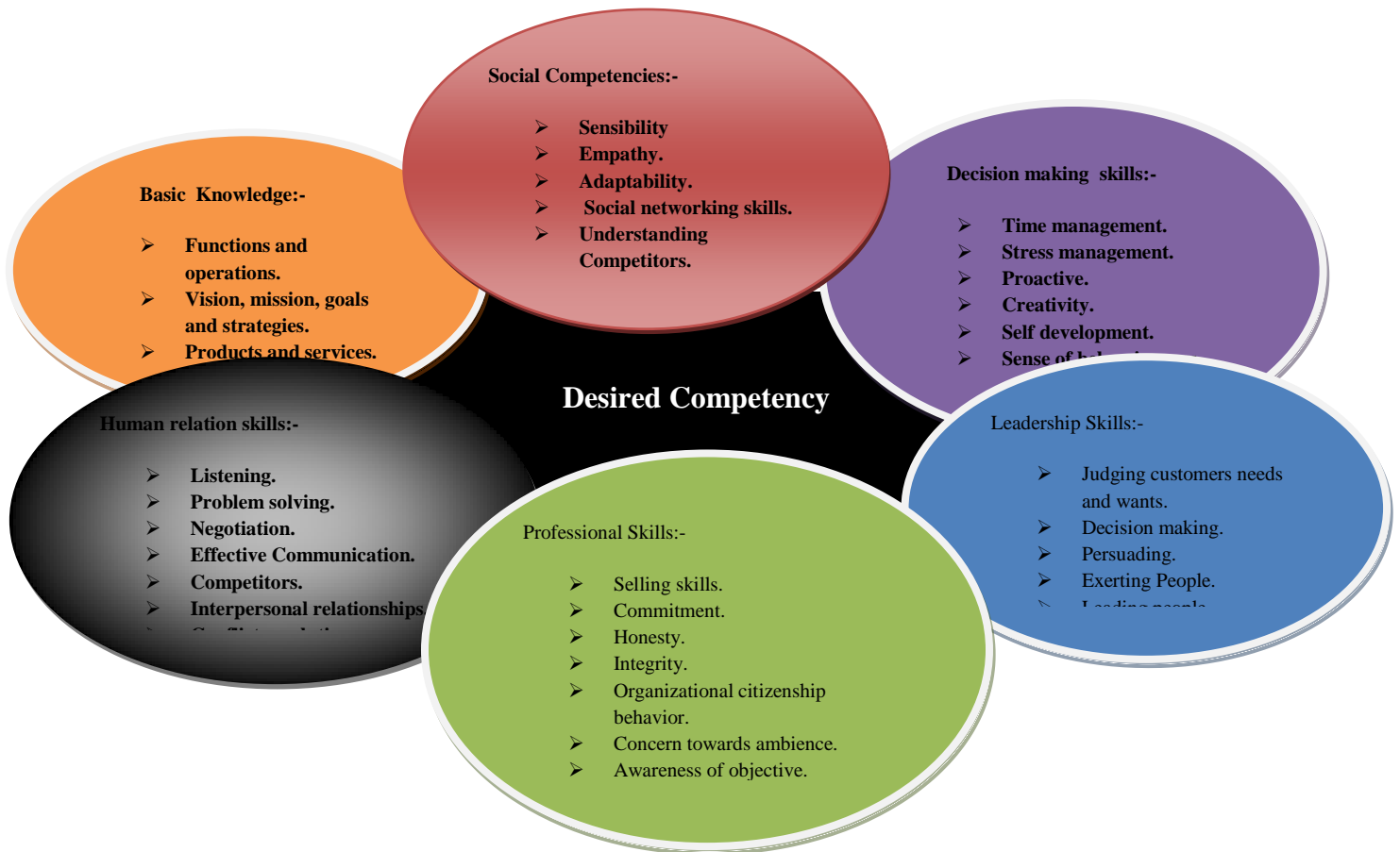|				
I feel loyalty to the hotel Male Female	3.67 3.79	0.957 0.967	-1.447	0.148
Job requirements and instruction are spelled out in detail so I know what I am expected to do Male Female	3.75 3.90	0.940 0.919	-1.844	0.066
People in the positions of the power try to decrease their social distance from less powerful people Male Female	3.78 3.88	1.084 1.069	-0.978	0.329
When people in this hotel have serious disagreement with each other, they tell about the disagreements to anyone they want to tell. Male Female	3.68 3.68	0.977 1.045	-0.037	0.971

t-test two tailed probability < 0.05, * indicates statically significant of differences between groups, N = 545

By analyzing the P-values, it can be very well seen that the factor "Subordinates are expected to question their boss when in disagreement" has a P value less than 0.05. Thus it can be concluded that the results are rejected which is to say that there is a significant difference between the respondents' gender and the perceptions toward the organization behaviors.

Proposed Model

Based on the literature review and the conclusions of the respondents views from the board of management in hotels, there were certain specific traits,

which all the respondents and the authors who had done study so far unanimously believe should be reposed among the employees in the hotel industry. The researcher interviewed (on one to one basis) hotel executives of ten hotels, seven of which were from Jammu and three from Kashmir valley. Thus the inputs from the executives (hotel management board) and the previous work done, became the bas for the researcher to fine-tune and streamline the results in the form of a model given below. The traits mentioned are the necessary attributes which hotel employees should possess in order to attract the customers and retain them which will help in making great revenues for hotel industry and thus helping in pushing the economy forward of the state in the short run and of country in the long run.

Social Competencies:-

➢ **Sensibility**
➢ **Empathy.**
➢ **Adaptability.**
➢ **Social networking skills.**
➢ **Understanding Competitors.**

Basic Knowledge:-

➢ **Functions and operations.**
➢ **Vision, mission, goals and strategies.**
➢ **Products and services.**

Decision making skills:-

➢ **Time management.**
➢ **Stress management.**
➢ **Proactive.**
➢ **Creativity.**
➢ **Self development.**
➢ **Sense of b…**

Desired Competency

Human relation skills:-

➢ **Listening.**
➢ **Problem solving.**
➢ **Negotiation.**
➢ **Effective Communication.**
➢ **Competitors.**
➢ **Interpersonal relationships**

Leadership Skills:-

➢ Judging customers needs and wants.
➢ Decision making.
➢ Persuading.
➢ Exerting People.

Professional Skills:-

➢ Selling skills.
➢ Commitment.
➢ Honesty.
➢ Integrity.
➢ Organizational citizenship behavior.
➢ Concern towards ambience.
➢ Awareness of objective.

Conclusion

From the study, in terms of the organizational behavior in the hotels of Jammu and Kashmir it can be said that the majority of the hotels have an open door policy for their employees. Most of hotels throw the opportunities to their employees to express their opinions with their boss when in disagreement and the hotels spelled out in detail clearly about job requirements and instruction to their employees. The study showed that people in the organization were generally concerned about others. Most of the respondents perceived that managers encourage group loyalty even if individual goals suffer and employees felt loyalty to their hotels. However, employees were not sure whether they could tell about the disagreements to anyone that they want to tell.

Thus, it can be opined that the hotel operators should encourage and create the good norms or values in the organization, which will make organization (hotels) a better place to work thus increasing employee retention and thus boosting the industry. Moreover, hotel operators should improve the norm about the trust of their employees to let them know that they can tell every disagreement to everyone in their organization. The managers of resort operators should improve on the factor of listening skill from their subordinates when they are in disagreement and they should try to decrease their social distance from less powerful people. In addition, hotel operators should focus on extracurricular activities for example providing the sports competition every year in order to increase the good relationship among departments and between the people in the organization, which also encourages the loyalty of the employees.

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