
AN ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEE COMPETENCIES AMONG HOTEL MANAGERS IN NAINITAL - A HILL TOURISM DESTINATION

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Abstract

The hotel sector is a dynamic service-based industry that provides several services. Hotel managers must be able to comprehend and respond to guests' demands to deliver exceptional service. Many scholars have studied the competencies required for managers and have established competency models demonstrating managerial competencies. These managerial skills vary by industry. The purpose of this study is to identify the key competencies required for hotel managers in Nainital Lake City, Uttarakhand, a popular hill region from the employee's perspectives. A developed questionnaire was circulated to 260 employees of the 12-star hotels' operational departments out of which only 250 questionnaires were found appropriate for the study having a feedback response of 96.15%. The questionnaire was developed following Katz's Three-Skill Approach (1955) and Sandwith's Competency Domain Model (1993). Respondents were asked to measure six managerial abilities: 1) administrative human abilities, 2) decision-making skills, and 3) technical capabilities. 4) Interpersonal communication on the 5.0 Likert scale ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The Standard Deviation and Composite Mean values were calculated to assess if hotel managers' required competencies are

effectively developed and are ranked highly. Secondary data sources included journals, articles, and the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board. The results showed that hotel managers in Nainital have good managing skills except for interpersonal skills. From the employee's perspective, the present study also shows that Administrative Human Abilities are vital for hotel managers.

Keywords: Hotel, managers, competencies, hill region, administrative human abilities

Introduction

Since ancient times, India has been renowned for its spectacular natural and man-made attractions, which have drawn visitors from all over the world. Its language, culture, caste and creed, value, tradition, folklore, dances, and music entice visitors from all over the world to come and experience it. Uttarakhand State, also known as Devbhoomi (the territory noted for its relationship with Hindu Gods and Goddesses), is located in the country's northern part and is regarded as the "Land of the Gods." Naturalism, adventure, wildlife, culture, heritage, pilgrimages, yoga, and meditation, all of which combine to provide a cocktail of opportunities for unlimited experiences, are the state's greatest assets. Many pilgrims, mountaineers, trekkers, and environment enthusiasts have been drawn to the region by its rich culture, heritage, and way of life, which has attracted a large number of visitors who have come to admire the breathtaking beauty of the region. In the Indian state of Uttarakhand, there is a world-renowned hill station Nainital, where tourists from all over the world and country come to experience the beauty and tranquillity of the Naini lake surrounded by mountains, which not only generates revenue for the state government but also provides employment to a large number of people. The accommodation sector in this city generates a significant amount of revenue and serves as the backbone of the tourism economy. The mountains in and surrounding Nainital lake city are fragile and have been the site of severe landslides in the past. Landslides continue to occur often with heavy rainfall, resulting in the loss of human

life and infrastructure. Numerous measures have been implemented by the government to ensure the survival of the floral and fauna of the Nainital Lake City, which is subjected to huge ecological pressure during the peak season, resulting in environmental damage. It is the most popular destination for individuals who live in nearby cities and want to visit the area throughout the summer, on weekends, and during snowfall in the winter. Additionally, the High Court of Uttarakhand is located in this city, which draws a large number of visitors to the city all year long. In and around the city of Nainital, there are 165 small and major hotels and resorts to accommodate the needs of the visitors. As a result, as more affluent people arrive in these places, the demand for outstanding hotels in and around Nainital City has increased significantly. Following a review of the overall situation of lodging properties in India, it appears that the current research region is saturated with a variety of modest hotels to a few large resorts. Therefore, to meet the different needs of tourists, hotel and resort managers need to possess managerial competencies. When developing competencies managers should keep in mind not only the delivery of guest services but also the fragility and emergencies that may arise organically as a result of the city's geographical location. In the hotel sector, there has been widespread consensus that human resource-related skills have emerged as the most critical component of success for the industry to remain competitive in the market. Accessing the abilities required in the hospitality industry has been an issue for many years, and it continues to be so today (Millar et al. 2010). Employers must be aware of the skills and abilities required for a specific position before they may recruit new personnel (Siu, 1998). Even though previous research has revealed a variety of competency models or methodologies from various perspectives, including those of hospitality professionals, instructors, and graduates,

Statement of the problem

The success of the hospitality industry depends on the managers' competencies to run the hotels and how efficiently they handle the business. In every study

conducted in the past, all the researchers focused that the managers should contain the required competencies. In addition to fundamental skills, managers should possess managerial abilities that promote business expansion. Every organization's success depends on effective managers. (Bulog, Jukić and Kruzic, 2016) their studies indicated that managers should have the planning, delegating, and motivating skills for the success of any firm. Determining the various managerial competencies is a key subject of interest for researchers. Much historical research has taken place and many competencies have been established however these capabilities differ from organization to organization and place to place. Competencies necessary for the managers working in downtown hotels or transit hotels located in an urban city may differ from competencies required by the managers of the small hill tourism destination due to several reasons such as manpower, hospitality education, types of tourists, geographical location, government regulations, and many more. The needs of leisure visitors to Nainital Lake City's hotels differ from those of business travelers to the city's downtown hotels. These visitors are typically traveling with family and friends. As the tourist season in Nainital Lake City spans from March to July and then from October to November, as well as the city's geographic location, which is subject to natural disasters like landslides and soil erosion, different skill sets are needed among hotel managers to cater to the needs of the tourists. This makes the competencies a vital component for the hotel managers so that they not only get the services delivered but also increase the revenue for the establishment.

Objective and scope of the study

This exploratory study is being conducted to assess the managerial abilities required by hotel and resort managers in Nainital Lake city, a sustainable hill base tourist attraction, as perceived by their staff. When selecting managers for hotels or resorts, the competencies identified by this study will be valuable to the stakeholders in any sustainable tourism destination, especially hill stations. In addition, it will aid industry practitioners in providing their employees with the proper training to

obtain the necessary managerial skills. This research will also assist educators in structuring the curriculum so that hospitality graduates get the necessary skills. In addition, this study can serve as the basis for future research in the hill-based tourist destination city. These are the research objectives that have been established.

- a. To analyze the managerial skills of hotel managers from the perspective of their employees.
- b. To determine which competency the employee ranks highest.

Research question

Nainital located in Uttarakhand State is a world-famous hill station where a tourist from around the globe and country travels to experience the beauty of Nainital which not only offers revenue to the state government but also provides employment to many people. According to the Uttarakhand Board of Tourism Development 165 hotels are registered in Nainital Lake city to cater to the needs of the tourist. The hotel sector here represents substantial business as it dominates the tourism industry hence it is vital to have managerial competencies among the hotel managers to satisfy the diverse need of the visitor keeping in mind the ecological imbalance and sustainable development of the city. The research question for the study produced is as follows:

R.Q 1- *Do employees think that managerial skills among the hotel managers in Nainital Lake City are well developed?*

R.Q 2- *Which competency is ranked important by the employees for the hotel managers in the Nainital lake region?*

Review of literature

Organizations all around the world are evolving constantly, and the hospitality business is no exception. Technology, new market trends, and competition have compelled the hospitality industry to modify the pattern of their day-to-day

operations, as well as their overall business strategy, and to keep up with these advancements, hotel managers must learn new skills. Katz (1955) presented the initial competency model, which was then followed by Sandwith's (1959). Katz's three skills model (1955) distinguishes Technical, Conceptual, and Human abilities, whereas Sandwith's (1959) categorizes competencies into five domains: Conceptual, leadership, interpersonal, administrative, and technical. Numerous academics updated and reconstructed these capabilities because management competencies vary from organization to organization. In his study, Huttunen (2018) noted that managers should exert greater effort to create a more collaborative, transparent, and trustworthy workplace in which everyone leads and collaborates. According to Müller-Stevens (2019), managers can take on the coordinating and integrating activities, which aid in many parts of the overall strategy process, such as the cultural background, planning, and approach styles. With the aid of managers, it is easier to boost client and organization engagement.

Understanding an employee's capacity to assume increased responsibilities is essential for a manager. In addition, it assists managers in making decisions. Zhuo (2019). According to a study by Perkov.D (2016), enhancing consumer satisfaction also largely depends on employee engagement. In their study, Meler and Cerovi (2003) stated that hotel managers should be creative, patient and calm, affluent, and possess entrepreneurial abilities, as opposed to managers in other industries or other organizations. Kala.D and Bagri (2014) have attempted to touch the human resource development element of the hotel sector in Uttarakhand state to some level. A study conducted by Li-Ti Yang et al. (2016) identified six generics and seven technical dimensions for hotel managers in India, while a study conducted by Galicia and Imuni (2006) emphasized that hotel managers should not only be adaptable and aware of the most recent market trends and developments but also be able to apply these trends and developments effectively in their respective workplace. Effective skill, according to Vander Velden and Bijlsma (2019), is a multiplicative function of

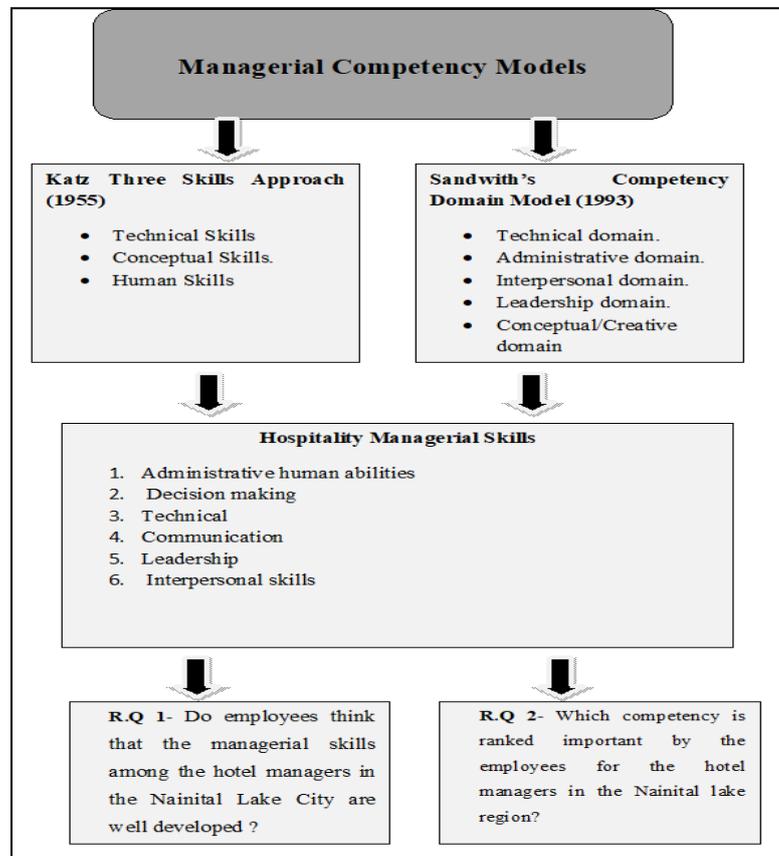
skill proficiency and skill use. According to Zawar et al(2019) .'s application of Katz's skill categories to determine the skill development needs in Tabriz, the development of technical needs was determined to be the highest priority and the development of human skills to be the lowest. whereas Abbasi et al. (2018) listed managerial competencies according to their importance for different levels of management: problem-solving, teamwork, and technology use for top managers; learning, communication, and technology use for middle managers; and learning, communication, and technology use for front-line managers. Baradaran et al. (2020) developed a qualitative model of managerial talents that encompassed both organizational and personal skills (such as general skills, self-awareness, social skills, and psychological capacities) (human resource development, employee empowerment).

Asad et al. identified the dimensions and constituents of management skills (2020). These comprised personal skills (self-awareness, stress management, problem-solving effectiveness), interpersonal skills (communication, motivation, influence, conflict management), and group skills (delegation, team building, leading positive change, technology use, and performing managerial requirements).

The conceptual framework for the study

As a basis for examining the general competencies of quality management practitioners, this study relies primarily on Katz's skills approach construct (1955) and Sandwith's Competency Domain Model (1993), from which the six managerial skills have been identified as 1)Administrative human abilities, 2) Decision making, 3) Technical, 4) Communication, 5) Leadership, and 6) Interpersonal skills. This study's examination of competence in usage is guided by a compilation of six conceptual competence components derived from theory.

Fig 1- Conceptual Framework Developed By The Researcher



Source: Framed by the author

Methodology

The present study is exploratory and makes use of both primary and secondary data. A questionnaire survey was developed and distributed to 30 people for the pilot study, including hotel managers, employees, and educators; feedback was incorporated, and a final drafted questionnaire was distributed to employees working in various operational departments of the 12-star category hotels. Employees who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the study. Secondary data sources included journals, publications, and newspapers, as well as information from the Kumaun Mandal Vikas Nigam and the Uttarakhand Tourism Development Board, all of which are government entities.

Development of questionnaire

According to the Uttarakhand Board of Tourism Development, there are 165 small and big hotels registered in and around Nainital Lake city which not only employ the locals and people from a nearby area directly and indirectly but also a major source of revenue to the local administration. Among these 165 hotels, more than eight hundred employees are working as per the Municipality Board, Nainital. The sample size determined for the study was 260 with a margin of error of 0.5 and a level of confidence of 95%. The sample size was determined adequate as per Krejcie and Morgan,(1970). 260 surveys were circulated among the hotel staff of various operational departments of the 12-star category hotels (more than three stars), out of which 250 respondents' feedback was appropriate and used as the rest 10 respondent's data were found inappropriate. The feedback response rate was 96.15 % which is appropriate for the study. The data recorded in Ms. Excel,2016 is cross-verified by the researcher to avoid any error. The questionnaire survey developed for this study was divided into two parts - General Information (having the basic information about the employees such as age, gender, work experience, and educational qualification) and the Hotel managerial Skill/Competency listing six managerial skills such as 1) Administrative human abilities 2) Decision making 3) Technical 4) Communication 5) Leadership skills and 6) Interpersonal skills. Employees were asked to respond to the questions on a 5.0 Likert scale, with 1 being "Strongly disagree " and 5 being "Strongly agree," to determine whether or not the hotel managers at their establishment possessed these managerial abilities and are important. To calculate the minimum and maximum range of the five-point Likert-type scale, the range is computed as $(5 - 1 = 4)$ and then divided by five because the scale's largest value is $(4 / 5 = 0.80)$. Following that, the number one, which is the lowest value on the scale, was added to denote the greatest value in this cell. The cell length is determined as follows:

- 1 to 1.80 denotes (strongly disagree/strongly not important).
- 1.81 to 2.60 denotes (do not agree/ doesn't important).
- 2.61 to 3.40 denotes (true to some extent/ importance).
- 3:41 to 4:20 denotes (agree/ important).
- 4:21 to 5:00 denotes. (strongly agree/strongly important).

Data analysis

Table no 1 summarises the demographic profile of the respondents to the current study. 47.20 percent of respondents are between the ages of 21 and 30, 34.40 percent are between the ages of 31 and 40, 16 percent are between the ages of 41 and 50, and 2.40 percent are over 51. This demonstrates that the hotel sector's staff in three, and four-star hotels and two five-star resort in Nainital are predominantly young, with 81.6 percent being under the age of 40. Additionally, the hotel industry is dominated by men, with 78.4 percent of males employed and only 21.60 percent of females employed. Concerning educational attainment 36 percent of respondents have a one-year certification or certificate in hotel management, 28.80 percent possessed a professional bachelor's degree in hotel management, 23.60 percent possessed a graduate degree, 7.2 % have a post-graduation degree and just 4% possessed additional qualifications. The result indicates that 40.80 respondents have less than five years of experience, 28 percent have between five and ten years of experience, 14 percent have between eleven and fifteen years of experience, 14.80 percent have between sixteen and twenty years of experience, and only 2.80 respondents have more than twenty years of experience.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Profile		Respondents	Percentage
Age	21-30 years	118	47.20
	31-40 years		

	41-50 years	86	34.40
	51 and above	40	16.00
		06	2.40
Gender	Male	196	78.40
	Female	54	21.60
	Others	00	00
Education	Graduate	59	23.60
	Graduate (BHM)	72	28.80
	Postgraduate	18	7.200
	1 Year	90	36.00
	Diploma/Certificate (HM)	11	4.40
	Others		
Experience	< 5 years	102	40.80
	5-10 years	70	28.00
	11-15 years	35	14.00
	16-20 years	36	14.40
	>20 years	07	2.80
Total Number of Respondents		N=250	100
Number of Hotels Surveyed		12	

Table 2: Composite Mean Value and Standard Deviation of the Key Competencies Required In the Hospitality Industry

Hotels	Hot el 01	Hot el 02	Hot el 03	Hot el 04	Hot el 05	Res ort0 6	Hot el 07	Reso rt 08	Hot el 09	Hot el 10	Hote l 11	Hotel 12	Standar d Deviation	Rank
Star Categor y	3	3	3	4	4	5	3	5	3	4	3	4		
Adminis trative Human Abilities	3.83	3.87	3.89	3.86	3.88	3.94	3.86	3.81	3.85	3.74	3.83	3.85	0.048328	1
Technic al Skills	3.24	3.34	3.26	3.32	3.36	3.21	3.34	3.33	3.31	3.25	3.38	3.31	0.052477	3
Decision Making Skills	3.52	3.55	3.58	3.64	3.59	3.67	3.55	3.67	3.62	3.57	3.74	3.66	0.064432	2
Leaders hip Skills	3.11	3.12	3.08	3.12	3.06	3.07	3.12	3.07	3.09	3.04	3.09	3.06	0.027122	5
Commu nication Skills	3.12	3.14	3.17	3.28	3.25	3.15	3.17	3.19	3.29	3.18	3.13	3.16	0.057122	4
Interper sonal Skills	2.12	2.08	2.14	2.08	2.19	2.17	2.15	2.07	2.11	2.14	2.05	2.04	0.048021	6

Findings and discussion

Calculating the composite mean value and standard deviation of the competencies was presented in table no.2. employees rated administrative human skills the highest at 3.94 and the lowest at 3.75, the technical skill the highest at 3.38 and the lowest at 3.21, decision-making skills the highest at 3.74 and the lowest at 3.52, leadership skills the highest at 3.12 and the lowest at 3.04, and interpersonal skill the highest at 2.19 and the lowest at 2.04. Employee viewpoints from different hotels had the least amount of variance, as indicated by positive standard deviations. The findings of the study provide an answer to the first research question, which shows that, except for interpersonal skills, the competencies of hotel managers are developed among the hotel managers in Nainital lake city

The answer to Research Question 2 demonstrates that the mean scores for the importance of the skills required of hotel managers ranged from a low of 3.52 to 3.94,

indicating that the following managerial competencies are regarded as important by hotel employees:

- Decision Making Skills
- Administrative Human Abilities

Findings show that Administrative human abilities are judged to be the important competencies necessary for hotel managers in the Nainital lake city area. The hotel industry is dynamic and to cope with the changes that occurred it is of utmost importance that hotel managers should have the desired managerial competencies. The results show that hotel managers have the desired competencies but need to develop interpersonal skills as this skill is very much required in the hotel industry.

Conclusion

This study examines the six managerial skills that hotel managers in the city of Nainital must possess to be successful in their positions. Based on the research of 250 hotel employees working at 12-star hotels, it has been determined that hotel managers have well-developed managerial capabilities, except for interpersonal skills. Therefore, hotel managers should strive to enhance their interpersonal abilities. According to the findings of the current study, administrative human talents are deemed to be the most essential competencies for hotel managers in Nainital Lake City to possess, followed by decision-making capabilities. The findings of this study can be used by other researchers to conduct in-depth investigations into the competencies required in other hill base tourist destinations or urban hotels, as these competencies will assist hotel managers in maintaining a competitive edge, increasing guest satisfaction, and attracting more tourists.

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