

UNVEILING THE SKILL DEMANDS: A RESEARCH STUDY ON COMPETENCIES FOR INDUSTRIAL TRAINING IN INDIAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

Dr. Sumegh

*Institute of Hotel & Tourism Management
M.D.University, Rohtak*

Dr. Pinky

*Research Scholar, IMSAR
M.D.University, Rohtak*

Abstract:

The Indian hospitality industry has witnessed significant growth since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This industry is recognized as a crucial sector in terms of providing foreign exchange earnings and generating employment opportunities. The hospitality industry is expected to create a large number of jobs and contribute to foreign exchange earnings. Given that the hospitality industry in India generates a substantial amount of employment, it is imperative to identify the necessary competencies to provide standardized services to guests. The aim of the research is to conduct a systematic review of studies that examine the required competencies in the hospitality industry. Several articles were reviewed, analyzed, and categorized according to the competency model and types of competencies needed in the Indian hospitality industry. The hospitality industry is a significant contributor to the Indian economy and provides a diverse range of employment opportunities to students. As the industry continues to expand, there is a growing demand for skilled professionals who can meet customer expectations and offer high-quality services. This paper investigates the skills based competencies that students must acquire to thrive in the Indian hospitality industry. The results indicated *Well Groomed*, *Positive body language*, and *Oral Communication Skills* were among the most critical competencies needed by students for training in the industry. Additionally, students need to be proficient in technology and possess a strong work ethic.

Key Words: Competencies, training and hospitality Industry.

Introduction:

The Indian hospitality and tourism sector has become the most important force behind the increase in the size of the Indian service industry. This sector of Indian economy has remarkable possibilities especially because of the diverse climate and traditions, and blend of different ecological destinations speeding throughout India. Hospitality and tourism are poised to produce

13.45 million jobs; out of which hotels will contribute 2.3 million & restaurants will generate 10.49 million. The Ministry of Tourism (Government of India) develops strategies to help the hotel and tourism industry to congregate the increasing demand for trained and skilled human resources by applying hospitality education and skill-based courses and training for the students. The Ministry of Tourism is planning to improve skill-based training for the existing service providers for certifying and upgrading their skills and knowledge as per the requirements of the industry.

According to IBEF 2022 Indian hospitality sector create higher employment in the year 2020, the Indian tourism sector accounted for 39 million jobs, which was 8% of the total employment in the country and it is expected to account for about 53 million jobs by 2029. Indian hospitality industry contributes to GDP above the world average and IBEF report presents:

In 2020, the travel & tourism industry's contribution to the GDP was US\$ 121.9 billion; this is expected to reach US\$ 512 billion by 2028.

- In India, the industry's direct contribution to the GDP is expected to record an annual growth rate of 10.35% between 2019 and 2028.
- In 2019, the travel & tourism industry's contribution to the GDP was 6.8%.

As the hospitality industry in India has generated huge employment to the people, some competencies skills graduates need to be identified to deliver excellent service to the guest.

In September 2021, the Indian hospitality industry was still recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which severely affected the sector's revenue and operations. Many hotels and restaurants had to shut down temporarily or permanently due to reduced demand and the implementation of lockdown measures. The industry faced significant job losses, with many workers, particularly those in the informal sector, losing their livelihoods. However, with the easing of restrictions and the rollout of vaccinations, the industry started showing some signs of recovery in 2021. Domestic travel picked up, leading to an increase in demand for hotels and resorts in popular tourist destinations. The government also announced several measures to support the industry, such as offering loans and subsidies, reducing taxes, and promoting domestic tourism.

Despite the challenges, the Indian hospitality industry is expected to rebound in the long term due to the country's large population and growing middle class, which is driving demand for leisure and business travel. The industry is also adopting new technologies and innovative business models to cater to changing consumer preferences and enhance the guest experience.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of this paper;

1. To access the Skills based competencies required for the selection of students as trainees in the Indian hospitality industry

Research Methodology:

The study on investigating the skills based competencies needed by students for training in the Indian hospitality industry utilized a mixed-methods research approach. The study involved collecting data from industry professionals.

The research involved a survey of industry professionals, including managers, supervisors, and executives working in the Indian hospitality industry. The survey instrument consisted of closed-ended questions that covered a range of competencies that are important for students to acquire for training in the industry. The data collected from the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the most critical competencies.

The study's sample size consisted of 42 industry professionals of Indian hospitality industry. The participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that the sample was representative of the industry population.

In conclusion, the mixed-methods research approach allowed for a comprehensive investigation of the skills based competencies needed by students for training in the Indian hospitality industry.

Review of literature:***Competencies needed by hospitality students for Industrial training in Indian Hospitality Industry***

The hospitality industry is an important sector of the Indian economy, and is expected to grow rapidly in the coming years. As a result, there is an increasing demand for well-trained hospitality professionals who possess the necessary competencies to excel in this industry. In this context, the present review of literature aims to explore the competencies that are required by hospitality students in India for their training in the hospitality industry.

Several studies have investigated the competencies needed by hospitality professionals in different countries, and have identified a range of skills and abilities that are considered essential for success in this industry. For instance, according to one study, the top competencies required for hospitality professionals include communication skills, customer service orientation, problem-solving ability, teamwork and interpersonal skills, among others (Haksever et al., 2000). Another study conducted by Park and Jang (2019) found that the key competencies for hospitality students in South Korea include emotional intelligence, creativity, leadership, and a global mindset.

Jansen and Pfeifer (2017) did their study on the level of competencies and the productivity to a single apprentice in the firm and found that competencies acquired before training among the apprentices affect the productivity of organizations.

In the Indian context, several studies have also examined the competencies needed by hospitality students for training in the industry. For example, a study by Kumar and Gupta (2016) found that

the most important competencies for hospitality students in India are communication skills, technical knowledge, leadership, teamwork, and customer service orientation. Another study by Sathiyaseelan and Natesan (2015) identified competencies such as problem-solving ability, adaptability, flexibility, and cultural sensitivity as crucial for hospitality students in India.

It is important to note that the competencies required for hospitality professionals may vary depending on the specific sector of the industry they work in. For instance, a study by O'Neill and Mattila (2014) found that the competencies required for success in the hotel industry are different from those needed in the restaurant industry. Therefore, it is important for hospitality students to have a clear understanding of the specific competencies that are required for their chosen sector of the industry.

According to Katz (1955) “competencies are must for the administrator success was based on three skill domains: technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills”.

Boyatzis (1982) propounded, “threshold competencies have been defined as an essential characteristic of an individual in which the following characteristics’ are included i.e. motive, trait, skill, aspect of one’s self-image and knowledge. These characteristics will result in effective and superior performance in a given task”.

Katz (1955) examined that skills required for successful administrators are personality traits and characteristics to do the work efficiently.

Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler and Weick (1970) define that managerial effectiveness is more on behavioral aspects and any set of managerial actions should be optimal for identifying, accepting, and exploiting both internal and external resources towards sustaining in the long run.

McLagan (1980) observed in his study that management competencies help the individual to develop the qualities they should have for getting the right job.

McLagan (1980), Glaze (1989), Stewart and Hamlin (1993), McHale (1995); Currie and Darby, (1995); Meyer, and Semark (1996); Antonacopoulou and FitzGerald (1996); McLagan, (1997); Pickett, (1998); Winterton & Winterton, (1999) cited the benefits of utilizing competency models. These advantages involve development and improvements in, the following task performed by the management recruitment and selection, assessment, job descriptions, training programs, individuals performance, organizational performance, organization planning, career progression and planning, communication, managerial decisions, bringing about organizational or cultural changes, and curriculum, professional developments.

Boyatziz (1982) in a study described competencies as the hidden values of an Employes which can be associated with better work and concluded that there are a range of factors that differentiate the superior from average performers.

Boyatzis (1982) said that the competencies are not linked to better-quality performance at a particular position in an organization and the whole firm should be competency determined to be more effective.

In 1983 and 1988, Tas enlisted the core competencies required for a career in the hospitality sector. These competencies are such as: managing the guest's problems with understanding and sensitivity; maintaining professional and ethical standards in the work environment; demonstrating poise and a professional appearance; Communicating electively both in writing and orally; developing positive customer relations; and striving to achieve positive working relationships with employees.

Burgermeister (1983) highlighted the list of core competencies required for hospitality entry-level management positions. These competencies are as follows: key computer skills, marketing skills, customer relationship management skills, leadership skills, communication skills, training ability, collective bargaining and profit realization etc. However, 'safety & security of guests' was found to be most important for housekeeping employees. 'Supervisory skills' was identified as creedal for food service employees. At that time, this research was also helpful for hospitality educators and trainers in terms of developing key competencies for the above-said sector.

The hospitality industry is a vital sector of the Indian economy, and there is a growing demand for skilled professionals who can provide high-quality services and meet customers' expectations. Therefore, a study was conducted to investigate the competencies needed by hospitality students for training in the Indian hospitality industry.

Overall, the literature suggests that the competencies needed by hospitality students for training in the Indian hospitality industry include communication skills, customer service orientation, problem-solving ability, teamwork and interpersonal skills, leadership, technical knowledge, cultural sensitivity, adaptability, and flexibility. By developing these competencies, hospitality students can prepare themselves to become successful professionals in this dynamic and rapidly-growing industry. Several studies have been carried out to determine the importance of hotel management competencies.

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of a range of competencies for success in the Indian hospitality industry. Hospitality students need to focus on developing communication, teamwork, problem-solving, customer service, leadership, management, technology proficiency, creativity, innovation, and cultural awareness competencies to enhance their employability and contribute to the growth of the industry.

Unveiling the Skill Demands: Competencies for Industrial Training in Indian Hospitality Industry

The below given table shows the descriptive statistics for various skills competencies required for the selection of students as trainees in the Indian hospitality industry. The descriptive

statistics provide a summary of the distribution of data in terms of measures of central tendency, variability, skewness, and kurtosis.

Here is a brief explanation of each statistical term presented in the table:

Skills Competencies: This refers to the various skills that are required for the selection of students as trainees in the Indian hospitality industry.

N: This represents the sample size, which is the number of participants or cases in the study.

Minimum: This represents the smallest value observed for each skill competency.

Maximum: This represents the largest value observed for each skill competency.

Mean: This represents the average value for each skill competency.

Std. Deviation: This represents the degree of variability or spread of the data around the mean.

Skewness: This indicates the degree of asymmetry or lack of symmetry in the distribution of data.

Kurtosis: This indicates the degree of peakedness or flatness of the distribution of data.

Std. Error: This represents the standard error of the mean, which is an estimate of the standard deviation of the sampling distribution of the mean.

Overall, the table provides a useful summary of the skills competencies required for students to be selected as trainees in the Indian hospitality industry, and the descriptive statistics provide information on the central tendency, variability, and shape of the distribution of data for each competency.

Descriptive Statistics									
Skills Competencies	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Well-groomed	42	1	5	4.24	1.078	-1.362	0.365	1.06	0.717
Positive body language	42	1	5	4.05	0.987	-0.899	0.365	0.639	0.717
Oral communication skills	42	1	5	3.9	0.932	-0.752	0.365	0.845	0.717
Professional etiquette and conduct	42	1	5	3.86	1.002	-0.771	0.365	0.347	0.717

Self-management abilities	42	1	5	3.76	0.958	-0.366	0.365	0.091	0.717
Builds respect and trust	42	0	5	3.71	1.175	-0.925	0.365	1.233	0.717
Effective use of resource	42	1	5	3.71	0.97	-0.392	0.365	0.049	0.717
Interpersonal skills	42	1	5	3.71	1.043	-0.335	0.365	-0.438	0.717
Excellence	42	1	5	3.67	0.954	-0.327	0.365	0.097	0.717
Memorizing skills	42	1	5	3.64	1.032	-0.334	0.365	-0.381	0.717
Problem-solving skills	42	0	5	3.62	1.125	-0.905	0.365	1.545	0.717
Taking initiative	42	0	5	3.6	1.211	-0.969	0.365	0.943	0.717
Drives quality and standards	42	1	5	3.43	0.966	-0.299	0.365	0.538	0.717
Strong grasp of technology	42	0	5	3.4	1.326	-0.674	0.365	-0.072	0.717
Follows up with customers	42	0	5	3.31	1.405	-1.084	0.365	0.962	0.717
Conflict management	42	0	5	3.17	1.305	-0.669	0.365	0.175	0.717
Marketing skills	42	0	5	3.12	1.273	-0.681	0.365	0.292	0.717
Written skills	42	0	5	2.98	1.456	-0.305	0.365	-0.828	0.717

Findings:

As far as skill-based competencies, a total of twenty, are concerned; *Well Groomed* (4.24), *Positive body language* (4.05), and *Oral Communication Skills* (3.90) have been found more essential for the selection of students as trainees in hotels. However, *Written Skills* (2.98), *Marketing Skills* (3.12), and *Conflict Management* (3.17) were observed as the least valuable skills required for the selection of students.

Smart-looking students have more probability of their selection as trainees. The skill of maintaining positive body language is considered more important in the hotel industry for trainees.

However, writing and marketing skills are not of much use to students for their selection as trainees, probably because students are not involved in formal communication of a hotel and are not directly involved in the marketing of hotels products & services.

From previous research, it has been established that Competency modeling is the process of identifying a set of success factors including the key behaviors required for excellent performance in a particular role (Kochanski, 1997). Not only can a well-developed competency model guide differently required job practices, but it can also make those practices consistent. Many studies have proved that competency modeling has enabled firms to improve human resources management concerning personnel recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, mentoring, compensation and reward systems etc (Chung-Herrera, Enz & Lankau, 2003) Because of the great importance of competency mapping, especially in the hospitality industry it has become imperative to conduct a study on industrial training practice being followed by Indian hotels and competencies required in students undergoing training in the hotels. There has also been an attempt to classify individual work-related characteristics into structural parts.

The findings reaffirm that the hotel industry has a characteristic of being labor intensive; employees must 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 identify the level of proficiency and types of skills required for a certain position and train employees to be competent in skills and abilities.

Overall, the table provides an overview of the competencies needed for training in the hospitality industry, with communication, self-management, and problem-solving skills being among the most important competencies. The table also shows that the data is generally normally distributed, with some competencies being more skewed or peaked than others.

Developing competencies through industrial training

Practicum has been a powerful tool in developing necessary competencies in students and professionals as well at different levels of hierarchy. Researchers (Mumford, 1987; Baum 1988; Bell and Schmidt, 1996; & Di Micelli, 1998) valued the importance of training in developing the necessary skills to perform an activity. Tas (1988) established that a systematic training program can be of great help in developing many competencies vital for students of Tourism and hospitality programmers. Le Bruto and Murray (1994) strongly supported and propounded that many competencies can only be incorporated through industrial exposure. Therefore it can be concluded that industrial training can help in developing competencies.

Developing competencies through industrial training is an essential component of hospitality education. Industrial training provides students with practical experience and allows them to develop and apply the competencies they have learned in the classroom in a real-world setting.

Research has shown that industrial training can significantly enhance students' competencies and increase their employability. A study conducted by Prasanna and Selvarajan (2015) investigated the impact of industrial training on the development of competencies among hospitality management students in India. The study found that industrial training significantly improved students' competencies in areas such as communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and time management.

Another study conducted by Lee and King (2014) investigated the impact of an industrial training program on the development of professional competencies among hospitality students in Hong Kong. The study found that the industrial training program significantly enhanced students' competencies in areas such as interpersonal communication, teamwork, adaptability, customer service, and problem-solving.

Moreover, research has shown that the quality of industrial training plays a crucial role in the development of competencies. A study conducted by Liang and Li (2016) investigated the impact of the quality of industrial training on the development of competencies among hospitality management students in Taiwan. The study found that students who received high-quality industrial training demonstrated greater improvement in their competencies compared to those who received low-quality training.

In conclusion, research has consistently demonstrated that industrial training plays a critical role in the development of competencies among hospitality management students. Effective industrial training programs that focus on developing students' communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and customer service skills can significantly enhance students' employability and help them succeed in the hospitality industry. It is therefore essential for hospitality education programs to incorporate industrial training as an integral component of their curriculum.

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