LODGING MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES; INDUSTRY, EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Lodging industry includes hotels, motels, resorts, camping grounds, and other alternative accommodations, while as food service industry includes: restaurants, coffee shops, fast food outlets, bars, etc. Both the tourism industry and the lodging sector are interdependent in terms of guest service and satisfaction. The current study investigated the role of Lodging Management Competencies required in the hospitality industry with the prism of Industry professionals, educators and students to determine what the requirements of industry are across the Kashmir division of Jammu and Kashmir, India. Mixed approach was adopted. The required competencies were crafted after the application Grounded theory method and then same competencies were used to develop a questionnaire and which was then administered to 220 students, faculty members and industry professionals for ranking these competencies based on the requirement of industry. The data were analyzed using Coding method of grounded theory and ordinal scale was used and other descriptive techniques were also adopted. The most important finding of this research is that among Human relation competencies the People skills and professional demeanor ranked number 1 in the perspective of Industry, Educators, and Students respectively as these competencies play a pivotal role in every sphere of the industry

Key words: Industry, Educators and Students, hotels, motels, resorts

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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2019), the tourist arrival recorded in 2019 was 1.5 billion. However, there was a 4% increase compared to the previous year, and the same growth was forecasted for 2020 as well, conforming tourism as a resilient and leading economic sector. Many scholars define tourism as "people who travel to and stay in a place outside their usual environment for a minimum period of 24 hours and not more than one consecutive year for the sole purpose of leisure, pleasure, business, and another purpose." UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization). When looking at tourism, it's important to consider the term hospitality. Hospitality refers to a relationship between a guest and a host in terms of being friendly, warm reception, kindness, smiling face, entertaining visitors in a great way. The hospitality industry can be empirically divided into two parts: lodging industry and Foodservice industry. Lodging industry includes hotels, motels, resorts, camping grounds, and other alternative accommodations, while as food service industry includes: restaurants, coffee shops, fast food outlets, bars, etc. Both the tourism industry and the lodging sector are interdependent. In case there is an increase in a number of tourists, automatically lodging industry holds up a higher position in the hospitality sector. As people travel, they need space for shelter and food along the routes they travel, whether by air, land, water, or air. This indicates that the lodging industry is one of the oldest trade endeavors in the world. However the lodging industry is more global, consolidated, and more cultural than ever before

The people who are employed in the lodging industry must meet the standards of the business in a particular position. The measures include the ability to communicate, professionalism, and pleasing personality, so the lodging professionals should be adequately tooled with required competencies to enable them to face the industry challenges.

(Monica Brophy, 2000) stated that the development of an individual required for performing a given task, activity, or role and meeting the job demands and organizational parameters with the desired outcome lies in enhancing the competency (Knowledge, behavior, Skill, Attitude) of that individual. Numerous researchers offer definitions and explanations of competencies. (TAS 1988) defined competencies as those essential skills and knowledge required performing the duties at a specific position in the industry. According to (Sahu, 2009) a competency refers to the essential skills, knowledge, and attitudes required performing a role effectively. It refers to a person's ability to perform a job appropriately. (Zydzianaite 2005) competency is a decision-making ability related to an individual professional performance. Further (Pacevicius & Kekte, 2008) defined competency as a combination of professional knowledge, skills, and skills. Also it is an ability to apply and follow them as per the requirements of the work environment.

According to (Yukl et al 1990), competencies comprises of planning, organizing, problem-solving, informing, clarifying, motivating, monitoring, consulting, recognizing, supporting, managing conflict and teambuilding, networking, delegating, mentoring, and rewarding; additional competencies address one's skills, knowledge, and attitude through observable and measurable behavior parameters and outcomes. Next to that, setting the competencies for every person working in an organization to the highest level which should be the primary goal of the hospitality human resource department

There has been considerable growth in hotel and hospitality management education and vocational degree programs at universities worldwide, especially in India, that aim to fulfill the industry requirements for competent future employees. The educators ensure that the graduates meet not only educational expectations but also industry expectations regarding the required competencies needed in the workplace. Students enrolling in hotel and hospitality management degree programs are motivated by anticipated vocational and career outcomes. Thus there is a

commonality of interest among educators, industry, and students in the currency of workplace skills. The study included opinions of industry practitioners, hospitality educators, and students since all three groups had a stake in the education process. Therefore, this study was designed firstly to rank the lodging management competency for hospitality practitioners/professionals. Secondly compare differences of opinion for these three groups, the results of the study were intended to be used in the development of lodging management courses in our hospitality management program by identifying the important sequence of Competencies required.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The term competency refers to the quality of being fit and able to perform any task. The operational definition, according to (Palan 2003) is the person's fitness concerning his /her job. (Parry 1998 and Lowry and Flohr 2005), competency is related knowledge, attitudes, and skills, a set of unified activities with performance and can be measured against standards, according to (Dalton 1997). A competency is defined as a descriptive tool that identifies the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavior needed to perform effectively in an organization, as shown in figure-I.

Figure 1 Concept of competency

(Campbell et al. 1993) defines competency as an ability of a person to apply knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and personal characteristics in a given role to perform successfully in critical work tasks. (Redman & wilkison, 2006) defined competencies as a cluster of all-work-related skills, knowledge, personal attributes, experience, values, and attitudes that a person draws on to perform their work well. Based on that, a study was conducted in U. K that revealed the hotel employers/ managers expect complaint handling, good communication skills, professional demeanor, customer relationship, and motivation from freshly graduated students who want to join the hotel industry. (Litchfield, Oakland, & Anderson, 2002) states that competence comprises of higher-level skills such as critical thinking, cooperative works, effective communication, and use of lifelong learning resources. Buergermeister (1983) identified the essential lodging-related skills essential for future hospitality managers. Within the hotel segment, the most critical competencies required for beginning managers are the promotion of the safety and security of guests. Herrera et al. (2003) identified the most crucial cluster of skills for lodging executives' includes flexibility, adaptability, industry knowledge, leadership, and interpersonal skills

Since the lodging industry is growing at a perfect pace and has continued to grow, higher education institutions have rushed to produce future employees for placement as lodging managers by introducing bachelor's degree programs during the past 30 years. There were several studies on graduates' competencies that looked from the industry's perspective.

(Zopiatis & Constanti, 2010), stated that to ensure the industry's success, the lodging management educators must understand the objective of the industry, also he identified the need to recognize the reality of the industry and adapt their curricula to this fast-changing environment. A study by Brownell and Chung, (2001), Kriegl (2000), and Tsai et al. (2006) suggested that lodging management graduates must have strong leadership skills and should practice flexibility when working in the industry.

Further review of the literature in the lodging industry, summarized in **Table I**, finds that numerous competencies have been identified as necessary for lodging industry professionals.

Table 1 Summary of Competency Studies in the Lodging Industry		
S.No	Authors	Key findings of the Study
1	Tas et al. (1996)	Interpersonal and leadership competencies were rated as most important, while technical competencies were rated as least important
2	Mayo and Thomas-Haysbert (2005)	Revenue management, communication, and change management
3	Raybould and Wilkins (2006)	Problem-solving, interpersonal skills, teamwork, and leadership were rated as top skills required by hospitality graduates.
4	Staton-Reynolds et al. (2009)	Identified Emotional intelligence, technical skillset, integrity, enthusiasm, and ability to learn as the most essential competencies
5	Suh et al. (2012)	Identified listening, significant guest interaction, and leadership as essential competencies
6	Tavitiyaman et al. (2014)	Team building, ethics, leadership, and communication skills
7	Shariff and Abidin (2015)	Communication skills, fundamental business skills, and interpersonal skills

The study is based on specific objectives like; to explore different types of Lodging Management competencies used in the hospitality industry and to rank the lodging management competencies for the hospitality industry, and compare the difference of opinion through the lens of Practitioners, Educators, and Students.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Considering the specific objectives of the study, the mixed approach of the research is applied based on the qualitative and quantitative approach. As per the philosophical perspective of research, the epistemology of constructivism is used, as it provides space for understanding the reality of management Competency practices adopted in the selected hotels of Srinagar Kashmir and helps to construct that reality. In the field of management research (Buchanan and Bryman, 2007) draw attention to the contextual issues surrounding the area of organizational study.

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Table 2

Research Design	Mixed Approach a) Qualitative b) Quantitative
Research Instrument	a) Check list(<i>Qualitative</i>) b) Self-structured Questionnaire (<i>Quantitative</i>)
Sample Size	For Qualitative: Theoretical Saturation For Quantitative: 100 Students 80 Faculty 40 Industry As per Krejcie and Morgan's 1970 sample size formula
Data Analysis	a) Grounded Theory b) Ranking

To meet the first objective of this study the data was collected through the interview checklist based on the literature scanning, the information has been collected from different hotel managers of Kashmir, which the hotel managers were interviewed as they possess actual knowledge of Management Competency practices adopted in the hotels after employing the purposive sampling. The interviews were recorded by using a high-tech audio recorder and a smartphone (with prior permission from the participants), and the recordings were later transcribed into English and used for analytical purposes. The transcribed data were subjected to the coding method, i.e., open, axial, and selective coding. Different themes were drawn and then explained with the help of inputs received during data collection.

The second objective of the study was met by adopting the quantitative method. The self-designed questionnaire was designed on the basis of literature scanning and data collected from the first objective.

The researcher distributed the questionnaire among 100 students, 80 faculty members, and 40 industry experts. The sample size determination is derivative from the sample size calculation formula (Krejcie and Morgan, 1970).

4. FINDINGS

The following section details the different elements found to contribute towards lodging management competencies and practices to be adopted in the lodging industry at Srinagar, along with suggestive comments and insights from the literature. A figure is also provided to help detail the nature of Lodging management competencies and practices.

4.1. Human Relation Competency

Among all the competencies in any sector, the fundamental competency that every employee must possess is Human relation competency because it is something which employees should compulsorily acquire to accomplish the job. Human relations competencies are essential home learned competencies and are further developed in academic and workplace environments. These are a personal attribute that enhances the ability of an individual and supports situational awareness to get a job done. (Hewitt Sean, 2008) states that Human relation competencies are non-technical intangible, personality-specific competencies that determine the strength of an individual as a leader, a good listener, negotiator, and a conflict mediator as well. (Chrysalis

Development, 2013) states that Human relation refers to making use of all the human resources at your disposal, i.e., skills, talents, time, and energy, which enables an individual to achieve both work and life goals. The careeronestep website offers a more detailed description of the (ETA) model's development (Careeronestep, 2017). According to which Personal effectiveness competencies are a cluster of attributes such as integrity, professionalism, interpersonal skills dependability, reliability, initiative, adaptability, flexibility, and lifelong learning. (Hodges and Burch ell, 2003) investigated the perceptions of employers towards the importance of different skills. It was found that eight out of top ten important competencies required were related to Human relation which included the ability or willingness to learn, cooperation, teamwork, energy, passion, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, Human relation according to (Dr. Hina Juneja 2018) involves personal improvement and initiative, goal setting, stress management, positive self-talk, time management, taking responsibility of ones work, achieving excellence and success and finally self-awareness and assessment. Human relations is an ability of individual to adapt skills, qualities and interpersonal style to achieve high quality results, further modifying behaviors to accommodate tasks, situations and individuals (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow).

The interviewees have mentioned that human relation competencies form the base of all other competencies, without it the employee can't perform especially in front of the area. These competencies are not only essential in professional life but also in personal life. Our industry demands these competencies as we have to deal with the guests. According to them Human relation skills include good behaviour, ethics, personal appearance, social responsibility, motivation, punctuality, obligations and lifelong learning.

4.2. On the Job Competencies

It is a description of a relevant skill, attribute or behavior for a specific job used to define and measure an individual's effectiveness in an organisation. According to (sharma, 2017) on the job are related skills and abilities that allow individuals to function in an organizational setting or at a job place which include teamwork, resource allocation and utilization, leadership, interpersonal skills, communication (written and oral), problem solving, creativity and innovation, technical expertise, planning and organizing, etc are the majorly accepted on the job to attain the organizational goals efficiently and effectively. The careeronestep website offers a more detailed description of the (ETA) model's development (Careeronestep, 2017). According to which on the job competencies consists of Team work, Customer focus, planning, organizing, Creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, Working with tools and technology, Business fundamentals, Scheduling, coordinating, and Inventory Management. On the job competency defined by Mansfield, Richard S. (1996) is a detailed and exact set of skills and attributes that employee's need to performer on their jobs.

The respondents defined on the job competencies as the skill, attitude, behaviour and knowledge of a personal at his/her workplace. These competencies enable an employee to work with his peers in a very efficient way. These include teamwork, customer services, idealistic, innovative, positive attitude, problem solving, and ethics towards business, leadership, communication and problem solving

4.3. Technical Competencies

These are defined as the specific technical/Hard workplace skills that allow an individual to perform at a workplace more accurately. Jon Zamboni (2018) defined technical competency as an area of knowledge or skill that can be used in the specific industry further, he added in order to become a skilled employee one must master these required technical competencies of a field and occupation. Technical competencies according to (Zopiatis, 2010) is ability of an individual

to use knowledge and techniques to accomplish a particular goals, it also includes working methods and work technologies, knowledge of equipment, further he added the technical competencies the skills and knowledge associated with the actual hospitality work. According to (Porter, 2005 and Cizel et al, 2007), the technical competencies in an organisation are concrete, primarily concerned thing required by are simply the greatest number of people in an organisation as it is performed by most of the employees. (Porter, 2005) further outlines that the technical domain involves knowledge and skills related to work processes and methods, machines, equipment, facilities and new technologies. It also includes monitoring, reporting and evaluating processes related to production output, quality, productivity and sales. (Bailly and Lene, 2013 and Weber, Crawford, Lee & Dennison, 2013) agree that requirement of technical skills at entry-level restaurant managers jobs are very important, for example, calculating food costs in a restaurant, menu development for a restaurant, culinary skills, and basic food serving methods and etiquette

The respondents mentioned technical competencies as hard skills and more part of these competencies are important for employees who actually perform the task or work at operational level I.e. entry level employees. The interviewees were from both front office and Housekeeping department and agreed on, on hand computer literacy, work on hotel software, equipment handling, health and safety skills, first aid and basic accounting are the technical competencies required at operational level

Table 3

	Competencies Identified	Industry Perspective	Faculty Perspective	Students Perspective
I Human Resource Competencies	People skills	People skills	Professional demeanor	Professional demeanor
	Integrity	Professional demeanor	People skills	Flexibleness
	Professional demeanor	Integrity	Lifelong learning	Resourcefulness
	Resourcefulness	Resourcefulness	Integrity	People skills
	Reliability	Flexibleness	Reliability	Lifelong learning
	Flexibleness	Reliability	Resourcefulness	Reliability
	Lifelong learning	Lifelong learning	Flexibleness	Integrity
On the Job Competencies	Team work	Positive attitude	Positive attitude	Team work
	Customer Centric	Team work	Team work	Working with tools and technology
	Idealistic	Working with tools and technology	Customer Centric	Stress Management
	Creative	Stress Management	Working with tools and technology	Positive attitude
	Positive attitude	Customer Centric	Stress Management	Creative
	Working with tools and technology	Inventory Management	Idealistic	Inventory Management
	Inventory Management	Idealistic	Inventory Management	Customer Centric
Technical Competencies	Stress Management	Creative	Creative	Idealistic
	Computer Literacy	Computer Literacy	Computer Literacy	Handling Equipments
	Handling Equipments	Handling Equipments	Room Maintenance procedures	Computer Literacy
	Implanting Organizational & Administrative Skills	Room Maintenance procedures	Health and safety skills	Room Maintenance procedures
	Health and safety skills	Health and safety skills	Handling Equipments	Implanting Organizational & Administrative Skills
	Managing Accounting and bookkeeping	Managing Accounting and bookkeeping	Managing Accounting and bookkeeping	First aid
	First aid	Implanting Organizational & Administrative Skills	Implanting Organizational & Administrative Skills	Managing Accounting and bookkeeping
	Room Maintenance procedures	First aid	First aid	Health and safety skills

4.4. Quantitative part

Table 4

Human Relation Competencies	Competencies	Industry Rank	Faculty Rank	Students Rank
	People skills	1	2	4
	Integrity	3	4	6
	Professional demeanor	2	1	1
	Resourcefulness	4	6	3
	Reliability	6	5	7
	Flexibleness	5	7	2
	Lifelong learning	7	3	5
On the Job Competencies	Competencies	Industry Rank	Faculty Rank	Students Rank
	Team work	2	2	1
	Customer Centric	5	3	7
	Idealistic	7	6	8
	Creative	8	8	5
	Positive attitude	1	1	4
	Working with tools and technology	3	4	2
	Inventory Management	6	7	6
	Stress Management	4	5	3
Technical Competencies	Competencies	Industry Rank	Faculty Rank	Students Rank
	Computer Literacy	1	1	2
	Handling Equipments	2	4	1
	Implanting Organizational & Administrative Skills	6	6	4
	Health and safety skills	4	3	7
	Managing Accounting and bookkeeping	5	5	6
	First aid	7	7	5
	Room Maintenance procedures	3	2	3

Table 5

S.No	Name of the Hotel	Name of the Institution
1	Taj by Vivanta Srinagar	Central University of Kashmir
2	Hotel Lalit Srinagar	Central University Jammu
3	Radisson Blu Jammu	Institute of Hotel Management Srinagar
4	County Inn Jammu	Food Craft Institute Jammu

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study was to explore different types of lodging management competencies used in hospitality industry and rank the lodging management competencies for lodging industry and compare the difference of opinion through the lenses of practitioners' educators and student. During the coding procedure it was found that there are three competency which are required in the industry for the smooth functioning, these are (a) Human relation competency (b) On the Job competency (c) Technical competency which are further composed as (a) Human relation competency includes People Skilled, Integrity, Professional demeanor, Resourcefulness, Reliability, Flexibilities: On the job competencies include Inventory management, Stress Management, Teamwork, Customer centric, Idealistic, Creativity, Positive attitude, Working with tools and technology (c) Technical competency administrative skills include Computer literacy Handling equipments, Implanting organizational and administrative skills, Health and safety skills, Managing accounts, Bookkeeping, First-aid and Room maintenance procedure

Fundamental to this research also understood of which competency in most influential in the industry based on the perspective of above stakeholders. One of the primaries and most important finding of this research is that among Human relation competencies the People skills and professional demeanor ranked number 1 in the perspective of Industry, Educators, and Students respectively as these competencies play a pivotal role in every sphere of the industry.

While as all the above stated three stakeholders also the ranked On the job competencies as; Knowledge of working with tools and technologies as the most influential competency required through the prism of industry, also Positive attitude and teamwork plays a paramount role in the industry through the perspective of educators and students respectively as these are ranked highest among all the competency of On the job competencies

Finally among the Technical Competencies it has been found that Computer literacy is ranking highest through the lenses of industry and faculty which illustrates whatever is taught to upgrade the skills of employees computer literacy is necessary as now a days it is considered as the corner stone of skill pyramid. This is because the competency as a multidimensional construct which lead to an entirely different pattern of relationship between the departments, compared to the time when only one of the few dimensions of prior knowledge is considered. However the knowledge of handling equipments ranked at number 1 by the students as this competency plays a paramount in the practicality of skill and has distinctive role of each knowledge type when it comes to a service or practical in hospitality industry. These findings support the view that subjective knowledge can be assumed as the strongest determinant of working employee working in lodging industry.

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