A Study on the Competencies of Hotel Employees in Dindigul

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Abstract: Dindigul is one of the prominent towns in Tamilnadu, India. Hotels are developing at a rapid and exponential rate in Dindigul. This study aims in focusing the competencies of Hotel employees confined to Dindigul. A sample of 500 hotel employees was chosen for the study. The period of the study was two months ranging from February 2014 to March 2014. The data collected has been analyzed using Percentage Analysis, Reliability Analysis, Mann Whitney U Test & Friedman Test. Suitable results and conclusion has been obtained. The researcher hopes that this study would definitely provide an insight in knowing the required competencies and would also provide suitable suggestions as to develop the same.

*Keywords Competencies, listening skill, customer demands & expectations,
sound knowledge about Hotel business*

1) INTRODUCTION

Dindigul is one of the prominent towns in Tamilnadu, India. Hotels are developing at a rapid and exponential rate in Dindigul. Similarly, problems are also expanding in Hotel Industries. The primary reason is lack of competencies among employees in Hotels. This study aims in focusing the competencies of Hotel employees confined to Dindigul. The researcher hopes that this study would definitely provide an insight in knowing the required competencies and would also provide suitable suggestions as to develop the same.

2) DEFINITION OF COMPETENCIES

Boyatzis (1982) described competencies as underlying characteristic of an individual, which are causally (change in one variable cause change in another) related to effective job performance.

Kofi Annan (UN, 1999) describes competencies as the combination of skills, attributes, and behaviors that are directly related to successful performance on the job. UN further classifies three categories of competencies for its employees: **Core or generic competencies** for all staff (e.g., communication, teamwork) **Managerial competencies** (e.g., empowering others, decision-making) **Technical or specific competencies** related to specific jobs (e.g., one job entails the competence to "receive, identify, register, and distribute letters, documents and/or other objects.").

3) REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Philip Selznick (2011) clarifies that managers of private and public enterprises dare to imagine themselves as both statesmen and clinical psychologists. Managers become leaders, according to Selznick, when they foster, protect and develop such commitments. He speaks elaborately on commitment. Organizationally committed individuals thus will forsake opportunities for self-growth and development. If an organization's roles can be specified in advance, if the rote predominates, then, he argues, there is little need for leadership. It finds that leadership is necessary wherever roles evolve by experience. For the organization, then, commitment properly understood is not only a source of stability, but also a resource for dynamic adaptation. An institution is an organization that is "infused with value." An organizational leader integrates organizational purpose and individual commitment

Andries de Grip et al (2006) analyzed the effects of workers' competencies and job content on their overall, intrinsic, and extrinsic job satisfaction. Pharmacy assistants need both professional and customer-oriented competencies in their work. Assistants with more communicative competencies were more satisfied with their job, whereas assistants with more pharmaceutical competencies were less satisfied. Workers who performed tasks below their level of competence were more dissatisfied with their remuneration and career prospects, but not with the content of their job as such, than were other workers. If individuals become over-competent, they may get bored, start complaining, or try to find more demanding work (Clark & Oswald, 1996). This study focuses on the relationship between the competencies and job satisfaction of pharmacy assistants in the Netherlands. Vocational competencies – job related competencies. Assistants performing below/above their level of competence are less satisfied with their jobs. Highly satisfied with their jobs tend to have higher intrinsic job satisfaction.

Patricia K. Zingheim et al(1996) affirmed that firms are searching for a new logic to pay and

a new basis for salary structures that are better aligned with organizational strategies, structures, cultures and other HR practices. At this point, competency-based pay is the most promising base pay alternative to job-based pay. Pay systems designed to communicate strong messages of strategy and directions are necessary to generate organizational performance. On the other hand, pay systems that emphasize values such as bureaucracy, entitlement and internal equity may not be practical for organizations that must compete for business and talent.

David C.McClelland puts in plain words the contrast between competence and intelligence. Why should intelligence or aptitude tests have all this power? What justifies the use of such tests in selecting applicants for college entrance or jobs?. The key issue is obviously the validity & applicability of so called intelligence tests. He questions the Differential Aptitude Test of the Psychological Corporation developed by McNemar. He disproves it by testing its "validity coefficients".

Being a high school or college graduate gave one a credential that opened up certain higher level jobs, but the poorer students in high school or college did as well in life as the top students. He took the top eight students in a class in the late 1940s at Wesleyan University where he was teaching—all straight A students—and contrasted what they were doing in the early 1960s with what eight really poor students were doing—all of whom were getting barely passing averages in college (C— or below). To his great surprise, he could not distinguish the two lists of men 15-18 years later. There were lawyers, doctors, research scientists, and college and high school teachers in both groups. The only difference he noted was that those with better grades got into better law or medical schools, but even with this supposed advantage they did not have notably more successful careers as compared with the poorer students who had had to be satisfied with "second-rate" law and medical schools at the outset.

Berg (1970), in a book suggestively titled Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery, has summarized studies showing that neither amount of education nor grades in school are related to vocational success as a factory worker, bank teller, or air traffic controller. Even for highly intellectual jobs like scientific researcher, Taylor, Smith, and Ghiselin (1963) have shown that superior on-the job performance is related in no way to better grades in college.

One would think that the purpose of education is precisely to improve the performance of those who are not doing very well. So when psychologists predict on the basis of the Scholastic Aptitude Test who is most likely to do well in college, they are suggesting implicitly that these are the "best bets" to admit. Thorndike and Hagen (19S9), for instance, obtained 12,000 correlations between aptitude test scores and various measures of later occupational success on over 10,000 respondents and concluded that the number of significant correlations did not exceed what would be expected by chance. In other words, the tests were invalid.

4) HOTEL INDUSTRY IN INDIA

India is currently ranked 12th in the Asia Pacific region and 68th overall in the list of the world's attractive destinations, according to the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2011 by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The Indian Hotel Industry holds a huge potential due to the positive impact of demand-supply scenario, growth drivers, investments and government initiatives for tourism sector. To develop a better understanding of the industry, Cygnus has come out with a comprehensive Industry insight - Indian hotel industry, which brings out the past performance, trends and future prospects keeping in mind various factors .

Despite global economic woes, development of hotels in India has been one of the most lucrative investments. As per Cygnus estimates, total supply (number of hotel rooms) in India is expected to reach more than 180,000 within five years. Various domestic and international brands have made significant inroads into this space and more are expected to follow; around 40 international brands will enter the country in the next five years.

The year 2013 was a mixed bag for the hospitality industry in the country. Amidst adverse business climate in the overall economy, new hotels continued to open with alacrity across the country throughout 2013. Yes, of course, there were delays and deferments of hotel projects. But, supply continued to surge in all the key markets. The new supply of rooms into the market, at a time when market demand was at a low, had put pressure on room rates, and over all profitability of hotels. Added to this adversity was the mounting inflationary pressure, devaluation of rupee against dollar, etc. While costs of operations were increasing on a regular basis, revenue side continued to slide southwards.

The demand-supply dynamics across India changed rapidly in the last one year. The demand side did not grow as expected while supply kept on increasing sharply. In major metro markets, many micro markets emerged giving tough competitions to existing CBD properties. The luxury hotels which rely mainly on inbound market, had a tough time as travel sentiments in major source markets like the US and the Europe remained

lukewarm. The overall negative sentiments in the business world had its reflections on the travel and hospitality spending of the corporate customers, impacting the business hotels.

5) COMPETENCIES EXPECTED FROM HOTEL EMPLOYEES

Based on the data collected from previous researches, we may ascertain that the following competencies are expected from Hotel employees.

Basic knowledge	Emotional and Intellectual Skills
Knowledge regarding functions and operations of Hotel Business	Sensitive to events happening around customers
Aware of the Hotel's Vision, Mission, goals and strategies	Able to understand the feelings of customers
Knowledge regarding the Hotel's range of products and services	Ability to learn quickly
Awareness about my roles and expectations in this Hotel	Power to manage time effectively with customers
Knowledge about the competitors in Hotel Industry in Dindigul	Able to manage stress
Awareness about the Customer's demands and expectations	Ability to be proactive
	Creative in bringing out product innovations related to Hotel Business
Knowledge about the changing trends in Hotel Industry	Concern/ taking effective steps towards self development
	Have a sense of belongingness towards my Hotel
Interpersonal Skills	**Leadership Skills**
Ability to listen to the customers	Ability to judge the needs/wants of customers
Capacity to solve problems arising from customers, business	Ability to take decisions, whenever required
Ability to negotiate well with customers, management	Ability to persuade the customer under tough situations
Capacity to communicate effectively with customers	Ability to exert power appropriately
Ability to behave well with peers, customers	Ability to lead people
Power in resolving conflicts arising with customers	Ability to exert authority
Ability to work in a team	Ability to empower my subordinates
Personal qualities	
Ability to sell Hotel services to customers	Exhibit Organisational Citizenship Behavior whenever possible/ needed
Ability to deal with all types of customers	Ability to maintain the cleanliness and neatness of my Hotel
Ability to adapt in any situation	Due concern towards the ambience of the Hotel
Commitment towards work/ customer satisfaction	Aware of my own objective after 5 years in the Hotel Industry
Honest in whatever activity I do	Progress towards my objective in the Hotel Industry
Maintain integrity in my roles & responsibilities	

6) OVERVIEW OF DINDIGUL TOWN
6.1) History

Dindigul (*Tiṇṭukkal*) is a city in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is the administrative headquarters of the Dindigul district. Dindigul is located 420 km (260 mi) southwest of the state capital, Chennai and 100 km (62 mi) away from Tiruchirappalli.

Dindigul is believed to be an ancient settlement; it has been ruled at different times by the Early Pandyan Kingdom, the Medieval Cholas, Pallava dynasty, the later Pandyas, the Dindigul Sultanate, the Dindigul Sultanates, the Vijayanagara Empire, the Dindigul Nayak Dynasty, Chanda Sahib, the Carnatic kingdom and the British. Dindigul has a number of historical monuments, the Rock Fort being the most prominent.

6.2) Economy of Dindigul

Industries in Dindigul include lock making, leather, administrative services, agricultural trading, banking, agricultural machinery and educational services. Dindigul is administered by a municipality which will be upgraded to a municipal corporation. The city covers an area of 14.01 km^2 (5.41 sq mi) and had a population of 207,327 in 2011. Dindigul is well-connected by road and rail with the rest of Tamil Nadu. It is the 11th-largest urban agglomeration in the state and has a population of 292,132 according to Tamil Nadu's 2011 census. Dindigul has 200,000 hectares of cultivable land, and agriculture

continues to be the main occupation of its inhabitants. Located between the Palani and Sirumalai Hills, Dindigul has a reserved forest area of 85 hectares.

7) STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There has been a tremendous growth in Hotel Industry in Dindigul town over the past few years. The reason has been steady growth in the number of floating population and increase in the purchasing power of consumers. Hotels are also expanding year by year in terms of employees and units. Similarly, problems are also expanding. The primary reason is lack of competencies among employees in Hotels. Every business in order to survive relies solely on the potentiality and competencies of its employees. Hotel industry is not an exception. Customer's needs and wants are also changing at an exponential rate. There has been a drastic shift in their biographical and psychological characteristics which also demands suitable competencies from hotel employees. If in case, hotels fail to cater to the needs of the customers through the competencies of its employees, they would definitely be washed out in view of the growing competition.

8) RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- ➢ To identify the required competencies among hotel employees
- ➢ To find out the level of competencies
- ➢ To identify the deviations between expected and actual competency level
- ➢ To provide suitable suggestions as to improve their competencies

9) RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design has been used for the study. Dindigul town has ample number of hotels. A sample of 500 employees from selected hotels was chosen for the study. The period of the

study was two months ranging from February 2014 to March 2014. The primary data was collected using Structured Questionnaire adopting the method of Interview Schedule. Journals, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, books and internet support the collection of secondary data. The data collected has been analyzed using Percentage Analysis, Reliability Analysis, Mann Whitney U Test & Friedman Test.

10) RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
10.1 Percentage Analysis

Percentage analysis is a statistical tool, which is used to identify the percentage of responses the respondent has given. It is used in making comparison between two or more series of data. The percentage analysis can be calculated using the below formula

$$\text{Percentage} = \left[\frac{Number\ of\ respondents}{Total\ no.of\ samples}\right] * 100$$

Table No 10.1.1
Experience in Current Hotel

Experience	Frequency	Percent
Upto 3 yrs	402	85
3.01 - 6 yrs	52	11
6.01 - 9 yrs	10	2
9.01 - 12 yrs	4	1
Above 12 yrs	3	1
Total	**471**	**100**

From the above Table No 10.1.1, we find that in terms of experience in current hotel, 85% of the respondents have experience up to 3 years, 11% have experience up to 3.01 to 6 years, followed by 2%, 1%, 1% of the respondents having experience up to 6.01 to 9 years, 9.01 to 12 years, above 12 years respectively. This shows that a majority of the respondents have experience up to 3 years.
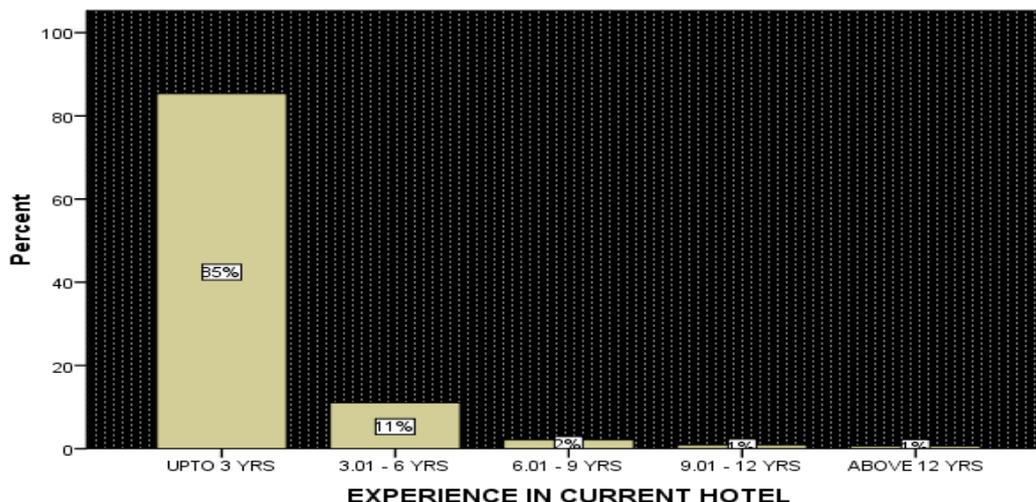
Figure No 10.1.1
**Experience in Current Hotel**

Table No 10.1.2
Reason for Choosing Hotel Industry

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Aim/ liking	129	27
Societal compulsion	72	15
Related to qualification	97	21
No other choice	173	37
Total	**471**	**100**

From the above Table No 10.1.2, we find that regarding reason for choosing hotel industry, 27 percent of the respondents have chosen it because of aim/ liking, followed by 15%, 21%, 37% choosing because of societal compulsion, related to educational qualification & because of no other choice respectively. This shows that a majority of the respondents have chosen to work in Hotels because of aim/ liking.

Figure No 10.1.2
Reason for Choosing Hotel Industry

REASON FOR CHOOSING HOTEL INDUSTRY
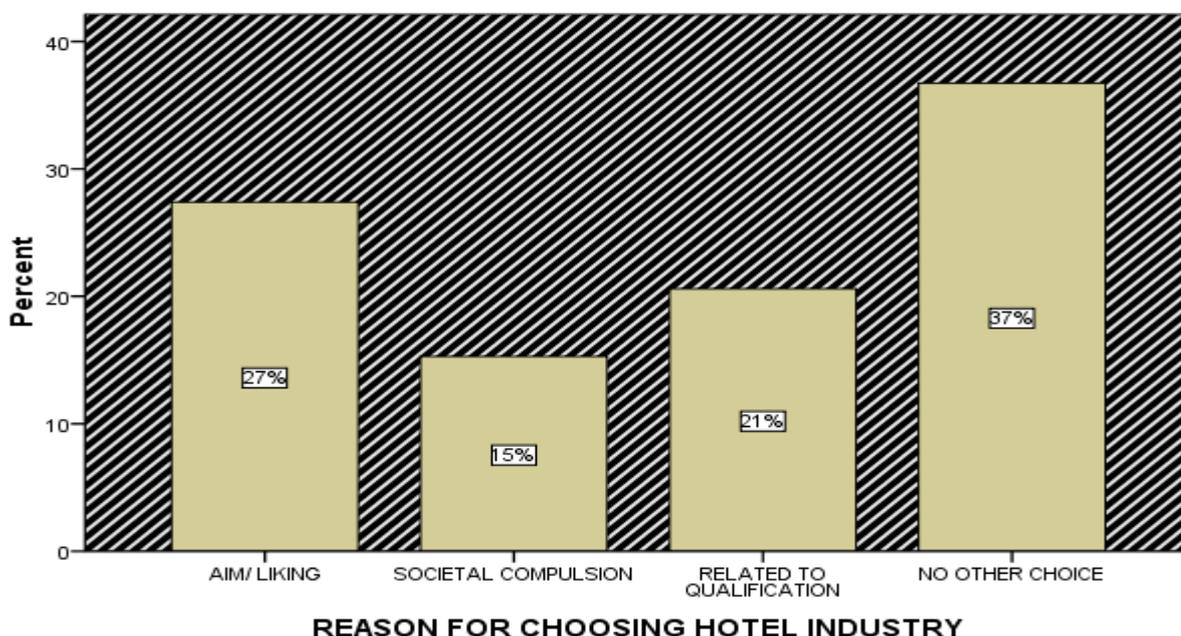
10.2 Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. A "high" value of alpha is often used as evidence that the items measure an underlying construct. However, a high alpha does not imply that the measure is unidimensional.

Formula

$$\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \bar{c}}{\bar{v} + (N-1) \cdot \bar{c}}$$

N = The number of items,
c-bar = The average inter-item covariance among the items.
v-bar = The average variance.
Ho: The scales are not reliable and cannot be used for further investigation
H1: The scales are reliable and can be used for further investigation

Table No 10.2.1

Case Processing Summary			N	%
Cases	Valid		500	100.0
	Excluded		0	.0
	Total		500	100.0

Source: Primary data

Table No 10.2.2

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.903	22

Source: Primary data

From the above Table No 10.2.2, we come to know that the Cronbach's alpha score is .903. As the calculated value is more than the desired value of 0.7, we accept the alternative hypothesis and conclude that the scales are reliable and can be used for further investigation. The whole set of 22 items were considered for this analysis. This provides a green signal for proceeding further in

the study and confirms the authenticity of the instrument being used.

10.3 Mann Whitney U test

In underlined statistics, the Mann–Whitney U test is a non-parametric test of the null hypothesis that two populations are the same against an alternative hypothesis, especially that a particular population tends to have larger values than the other. It has greater efficiency than the t-test on non-normal distributions, such as a mixture of normal distributions, and it is nearly as efficient as the t-test on normal distribution.

Mann Whitney test formula

U= N1*N2+N1 (N1+1)/2-R1

Ho : There is no impact of gender towards listening skill

H1 : There is an impact of gender towards listening skill

Table No 10.3.1

Ranks				
	Gender	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Listening Skill	Male	417	231.29	96446.50
	Female	54	272.40	14709.50
	Total	471		

Table No 10.3.2

Test Statistics	
	Listening Skill
Mann-Whitney U	9293.500
Wilcoxon W	96446.500
Z	-2.219
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.026

From the above Table No 10.3.1, we find that the mean ranks of male and female are 231.29 and 272.40 respectively. This shows that male employees have better listening skill compared to female.

From the above Table 10.3.2, we find that the Mann Whitney U value is 9293.500 and the corresponding significant value is .026. As the calculated significant value is less than 0.5, we accept the alternative hypothesis at 5% level of significance and conclude that there is an impact of gender towards listening skill.

10.4) Friedman test

The Friedman test is a non-parametric statistical test developed by the U.S. economist Milton Friedman. Similar to the parametric repeated measures ANOVA, it is used to detect differences in treatments across multiple test attempts. The procedure involves ranking each row (or *block*) together, then considering the values of ranks by columns. Applicable to complete block designs, it is thus a special case of the Durbin test.

Formula:

FM=12bk(k+1)∑i=1k(R⁻i−(k+12))2

Hypothesis 1

Ho: There is no association between listening skill, awareness of customer's demands & expectations, commitment & sound knowledge about hotel business

H1: There is an association between listening skill, awareness of customer's demands & expectations, commitment & sound knowledge about hotel business

Table No 10.4.1

Ranks	
	Mean Rank
Listening skill	2.67
Awareness - customer's demands & expectations	2.36
Commitment	2.39
Sound knowledge - hotel business	2.58

Table No 10.4.2

Test Statistics	
N	471
Chi-Square	29.588
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

From the above Table No 10.4.1, we find that the mean rank of listening skill, awareness of customer's demands & expectations, commitment & sound knowledge about hotel business are 2.67, 2.36, 2.39 & 2.58 respectively. This shows that the hotel employees in Dindugul are better in knowing about the customer's demands and expectations and need to improve their listening skill.

From the above Table No 10.4.2, we find that the Chi-Square value is 29.588 and the corresponding significant value is **. As the calculated significant value is less than 0.01, we accept the alternative hypothesis at 1% level of significance and conclude that there is an association between listening skill, awareness of customer's demands & expectations, commitment & sound knowledge about hotel business.

11) CONCLUSION

Still, there remains a demand for hotels in any city or town. Of course, each and every family would have visited at least one hotel of their choice in their life time. Hence, everybody is a customer for a Hotel Industry. There has been a drastic change in the life style, consumption pattern & per capita income of customers. This reflects in their demands

and expectations towards hotels. Hotel employees need to identify, understand and cater to the changing demands and expectations of customers. Hence, they need a set of competencies for achieving it. The researcher hopes that this study would definitely provide a general framework for identifying and analyzing the competencies of hotel employees.

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