

Role and Importance of Leadership Skills in Hospitality Sector: An Exploratory Study of Hotels in Kumaon Region of Uttarakhand State

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ABSTRACT:

This paper intends to analyse the role and importance of Soft skills like leadership skills in the hospitality sector in Kumaon region of Uttarakhand state. The purpose is to explore the role of soft skills viz. leadership and team-building skills emphasized by the hospitality professionals.

The study is based on the respondents' inclination embarking upon the Leadership and team-building Skills in the hospitality sector for effective and efficient operations. To answer the research question, the study was carried out in the hotels of Kumaon region of Uttarakhand state during a two months period of December 2019 and January 2020. The responses were recorded in a questionnaire on a Likert scale of 5.

The results of the research indicated that the requirement of the leadership skills along with team-building skills, is significant for managers and to be and efficient leaders in all levels of management.

The findings can suggest the future implementation of the study can be helpful in operating the hotel as a unit in more effective and collaborative manner and hence contributing significantly towards the revenue generation.

Keywords: Leadership skills, team-building skills, hospitality sector, operations, revenue generation

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INTRODUCTION:

In the year 2000, Uttaranchal was originated as 27th state of India after being carved out of Uttar Pradesh. In 2007, the state was renamed Uttarakhand. Dehradun is the capital of Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand has been further bifurcated into 13 districts, Almora, Bageshwar, Champawat, Nainital, Pithoragarh, Udham Singh Nagar 06 districts are part of Kumaon region with popular centre of attraction in the region are Mussoorie, Auli, Khirsu, Gwaldham, Harsil, Haridwar, Rishikesh, Tehri Dam, Chamba, Devprayag, Dhanaulti, Kanatal, Nag Tibba,

Shivling Trek, Deoria Tal, Chopta, Lansdowne, Surkanda Devi Temple, Khatling Glacier, Chakrata, Rajaji National Park.. While Garhwal region comprises of 07 districts- Dehradun, Haridwar, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Pauri and Rudraprayag with popular centre of attraction in the region are Nainital, Ranikhet, Mukteshwar, Almora, Champawat, Pithoragarh, Munsiyari, Abbott Mount, Kausani, Lohaghat, Bhimtal, Jim Corbett National Park, Sattal.

Total geographical area of Uttarakhand is 53,367 sq km that constitutes about 1.7 per cent of India's total geographical area. With a wide variety of

Flora and Fauna, Himalayas, glaciers, rivers, rare wildlife, exquisite flowers, and multi-cultural people are an add-on to its diversity. In the year 2013-14, Uttarakhand constituted about 1.6 per cent of total GDP. In 2001-11, Uttarakhand has grown at an average growth rate of 12.4 per cent, and corresponding rate of growth of the country is 10.0 per cent. In 2013-14, growth rate of Uttarakhand and India is 8.7 per cent & 4.7 per cent respectively.

Leadership is an influential phenomenon having both direct and indirect impact on the team members and their performance. Common goals, objectives and purposes can be achieved through formal approach and personal attributes as well. Pressure of performance, job-stress and exhaustion can be minimized through transactional leadership which believes in compassion, communication and increasing the employees' morale for increased performance. **(Blayney, C. and Blotnick, K., 2010)**^[1]

The modern managers are innovatively focusing on guest preference, their likes and dislikes with the updated technologies to remain competitive. They believe that innovation is of utmost importance for redesigning service modules and products as distinguished products lead to guest satisfaction and retention. There should be a scope of innovation and leaders are taking risks and initiatives to have some competitive advantage. **(Gunjan, M.S and Bandyopadhyay, R., 2016)**^[2]

Motivation of employees, level of services, satisfaction of the guests, individual performance of employees all are dependent on the managerial practices that are implemented by the managers. Managers' efficiency in people skills, understanding and managing attitudes and behaviours and creating and operating a cohesive team all are directly connected to their performance and guest satisfaction too. **(Ispas, A., 2010)**^[3]

Leadership is distinguished into emotional and servant leadership. The former is dependent on the emotional abilities of the managers to understand his/her sub-ordinates' needs and requirements due to which the connection between the employees and the superiors form naturally. While, the latter is mainly concerned with employees' expressions, need for growth, promoting innovation and initiative all in the regard to job as well as guest satisfaction. **(Kwan, L.Y., Hee, C.D., 2016)**^[4]

Innovation is the implementation of new ideas, procedures, products or services successfully with the intent and provision to improvement, change and adaptation. It has been observed that cost of operations and control over quality can be the strategic implementation towards the economic development of the organizations. Innovation can be technical, organizational and human capital in nature. **(Meira, J.V., 2018)**^[5]

To build a better team, the managers need to have strong ethical standards. They have to be highly motivated, aspiring to achieve, should be ambitious and must have people and team building skills. They must remain confident, open to innovation and must initiate, adapt with different people and circumstances. **(Petkovski, K., 2012)**^[6]

Leadership is an interactive process where a mutual conversation is of great importance among the group members. The leader must act and channel out the team members towards the defined organizational goals. A leader in hospitality industry must be able to motivate, encourage, inspire and develop strive to continuous development in the team members. This can be achieved through proper guiding and training. **(Sousa, M.J., 2019)**^[7]

In order to get competitive advantage, hotels must emphasize on the leadership development. In order increase the performance of the employees, proper implementation of the correct leadership skills in a changing environment can prove out to be really helpful. The manpower comes with diversified backgrounds, attitudes, behaviours, mindsets and attitudes that can be implied for fulfilment of common objectives through effective leadership. **(Yamak, Ö.U. and Eyüpoğlu Ş.Z., 2018)**^[8]

RESEARCH PROBLEM:

The success of an organization is directly dependent on the managerial skills and abilities to plan, organize, staff, direct and control. In order to motivate, encourage and lead the employees, specific skills like leadership skills, team-building skills, people skills, initiating skills, innovation skills etc. are required. Such skills are of paramount importance in understanding the employees' needs and requirements which leads to the good performance of the employees and the organization as well. Managers, employees and businesses can get benefitted by acquiring these skills and practicing them during daily operations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To identify the Managerial skills required in hospitality industry.
2. To analyse relationship between the leadership skills in managers' and their team performance.
3. To analyse relationship between the team-building skills in managers' and their team performance.
4. To analyse relationship between the people skills in managers' and their team performance.
5. To analyse relationship between the initiating skills managers' and their team performance.
6. To analyse relationship between the innovation skills in managers' and their team performance.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The paper is a case analysis to understand the impact of managerial skills on team members and their performance. The study aims the hotels to understand the managerial skills required. The study will help in better understanding about the concept and would help the managers to imply the findings in practice.

Differences in terms of practices, lingual barriers, individual background, difference in lifestyles, demographic and geographical differences, behaviour and habits, can cause a hindrance in effective service delivery. Managerial skills like leadership skills, team-building skills, people skills, initiating skills, innovation skills etc. helps in building an empathy which can play a decisive role in the scenario where managerial skills are considered of paramount importance.

DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESES:

On the basis of the above mentioned objectives, the hypothesis is as follows:

H0₁ There is a significant relationship between leadership skills in managers' and their team performance.

H1₁ There is no significant relationship between leadership skills in managers' and their team performance.

H0₂ There is a significant relationship between the team-building skills in managers' and their team performance.

H1₂ There is no significant relationship between the team-building skills in managers' and their team performance.

H0₃ There is a significant relationship between the people skills in managers' and their team performance.

H1₃ There is no significant relationship between the people building skills in managers' and their team performance.

H0₄ There is a significant relationship between the initiating building skills in managers' and their team performance.

H1₄ There is no significant relationship between the initiating building skills in managers' and their team performance.

H0₅ There is a significant relationship between the innovation building skills in managers' and their team performance.

H1₅ There is no significant relationship between the innovation building skills in managers' and their team performance.

STUDY AREA:

Kumaon region of Uttarakhand state as a tourist place enjoys tourist visits for leisure and recreational purposes and equipped with the number of hotel properties including the hotel units of internationally recognized branded hotel chains including Radisson, Ginger by Taj, The Manu Maharani, Club Mahindra etc. These properties are mostly vacation hotels that are influenced by the seasonality of tourism especially in summers where the guests come to get rid of the scorching heat of summers. The main areas of study was the star categorised hotels of Mussoorie recognized by the FHRAI (Federation of Hotels and Restaurants Association of India) and HRACC (Hotels and Restaurants Approval Classification committee) governed by the Department of Tourism, India.

The population of the study is composed of 118 employees (both male and female) hailing from different levels of management from 18 hotels (not less than three stars) of the region. A structured questionnaire as a survey instrument is developed to measure the responses. In order to obtain detailed information, semi-structured interviews are carried out in two months period of December 2019 and January 2020. In the questionnaire, the first section of the questionnaire includes questions on demographics (age, gender, education, current

position and work experience). The second section includes the managerial skills required and rated by the respondents on the Likert scale of 5.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the research is exploratory and descriptive in nature. It is aimed to find out the required managerial skills in effective and efficient tourist handling and service delivery.

BASIS OF SAMPLE SELECTION:

Population: It is composed of 118 employees (both male and female) hailing from different levels of management from 18 hospitality organizations of the region.

Sample design:

1. Sample frame: employees from different levels of management.

2. Sample size: Sample size consists of 118 respondents from 18 hotels for the proposed study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

3. Sample technique: Sample is selected on the basis of convenient sampling.

Ethical considerations:

It implies issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy and the confidentiality of data that will be recognized. Academic objective of the study is communicated to the respondents. Individual names, address, food outlet's name are not be used in the study.

TYPES OF INSTRUMENTS AND METHODS USED FOR RESEARCH:

- 1) Data collection through Questionnaires is done where respondents' core and functional competencies regarding managerial skill sets are recorded in questionnaire.

Data Analysis Tools:

- 1) Development of Hypothesis
- 2) For analysis of data, descriptive statistics is used.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics		No of Respondents	%
Age	21-30 years	53	44.91
	31-40 years	51	43.22
	41 and above	14	11.86
Gender	Male	92	77.96
	Female	26	22.03
Education	Post graduate	28	23.72
	Graduate (HM)	46	38.98
	Graduate	31	26.27
	Others	13	11.01
Experience	< 5 years	42	35.59
	5-10 years	61	51.69
	10-15 years	12	10.16
	> 15 years	03	2.54
Total Number of Respondents		118	100%
Number of food hotels		18	

Table 1, shows the demographical characteristics of respondents. 53 (44.91%) of respondents were from age group of 21-30 years and 51 (43.22%) were from age group of 31-40 years while, 14 (11.86%) were above 41 years of age. This shows that there is a balance of young and aged respondents among the population. The percentage of the male as respondents is 77.96% while rest of

22.03% constitutes by the females. The highest number of the respondents 46 (38.98%) were Hotel management graduates while; 31 (26.27%) indicated they had an education up to graduation. 28 (23.72%) had done post graduation. Only 13 (11.01%) of all respondents had educational qualification under other category (senior secondary and below).

61 (51.69%) respondents had working experience of 5-10 years; 12 (10.161%) respondents had 10-15 years working experience in this field. There is a considerable number of respondents 42 (35.59%) working experience less than five years, which

depicts the trend of youngsters in hotels. The table also indicates there is a balance between samples which are relatively young and experienced. 03(2.54%) of the respondents were having experience of more than 15 years.

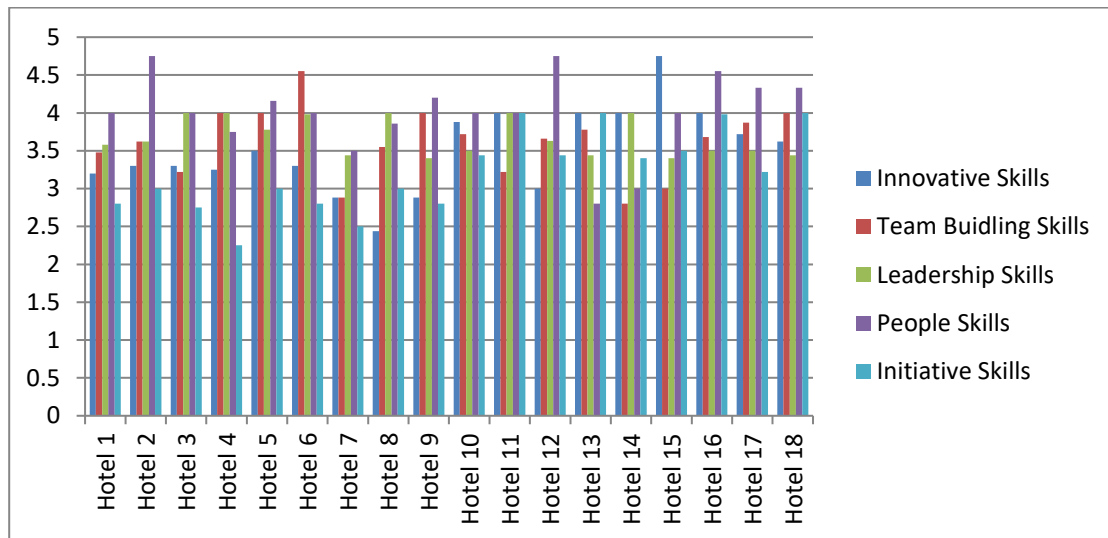


Figure no. 1: Composite Graph for Soft Skill Sets

Table 2: Key Communication and Soft Skills (Composite Mean Value)

Hotels	Innovative Skills	Team Building Skills	Leadership Skills	People Skills	Initiative Skills
Hotel 1	3.2	3.48	3.58	4	2.8
Hotel 2	3.3	3.62	3.62	4.75	3
Hotel 3	3.3	3.22	4	4	2.75
Hotel 4	3.25	4	4	3.75	2.25
Hotel 5	3.5	4	3.78	4.16	3
Hotel 6	3.3	4.55	3.98	4	2.8
Hotel 7	2.88	2.88	3.44	3.5	2.5
Hotel 8	2.44	3.55	4	3.86	3
Hotel 9	2.88	4	3.4	4.2	2.8
Hotel 10	3.88	3.72	3.5	4	3.44
Hotel 11	4	3.22	4	4	4
Hotel 12	3	3.66	3.63	4.75	3.44
Hotel 13	4	3.78	3.44	2.8	4
Hotel 14	4	2.8	4	3	3.4
Hotel 15	4.75	3	3.4	4	3.5
Hotel 16	4	3.68	3.5	4.55	3.98
Hotel 17	3.72	3.87	3.5	4.33	3.22
Hotel 18	3.62	4	3.44	4.33	4
SD	0.552245564	0.453338019	0.249098374	0.513521738	0.540405319
RANK	5	2	1	3	4

Abbreviation: SD: Standard Deviation

FINDINGS AND RESULTS:

The composite mean scores of the competencies rated by employees are presented in Table 2. Employees ranked Leadership Skills 1st and rated it with a composite mean score from 4 down to 3.4 which clearly affirm the fact that such skills has always been considered as an important trait of a manager. Supporting the fact, the Standard deviation was found to be 0.24 which depict the less of difference between the mindsets of the respondents from the different hotels.

Employees ranked Team building skills 2nd and rated it with a composite mean score from 4.55 down to 2.8 which show the uniformity in the ratings. As this factor plays a dominant role especially in hotel industry by ensuring an efficient team working as a unit. Supporting the fact, the Standard deviation was found to be 0.45 which depict the less of difference between the mindsets of the respondents from the different hotels.

Employees ranked People skills 3rd and rated it with a composite mean score from 4.75 down to 2.8 which play an important role in getting into the mindset of the employees and take decisions accordingly. Supporting the fact, the Standard deviation was found to be 0.51 which shows that there is no as such disparity among the perception of employees while rating.

Respondents ranked 4th another important factor in managerial skills i.e. Initiative skills and rated it with a composite mean score from 4 down to 2.75. Such skills can help in setting the example in front of staff members. A manager should always be a role model. The Standard deviation was found to be 0.54 which depict the less of difference between the mindsets of the respondents.

Respondents ranked 5th and rated Innovative skills with a composite mean score from 4.75 down to 2.88 which once again show the similarity between the rating trends. As most of the respondents believe that some innovation should be there in the workplace. The Standard deviation was found to be 0.552 which depict the less of differences between the mindsets of the respondents.

DISCUSSION

The positive value of the Standard Deviation shows that the perspective of the respondents seems to be in relevance with each other. The study affirm, supports and establishes the hypotheses null as there is a significant relationship between Managerial skills like

leadership skills, team-building skills, people skills, initiating skills, innovation skills and team performance.

Organizational goals can be achieved when the employees are channelled through planned processes and good initiatives taken by effective leaders. This requires lots of strength and abilities which is acquired when managerial practices are applied properly. Decision making is enabled to achieve organizational mission and goals. It requires numerous decisions taken on using the resources, delegation of authorities, using manpower properly and communicating properly. A leader has to be honest, confident, committed and a fore seeker.

Group or team cohesion is a major contributing factor in organizational success. A group of individual will work effectively and efficiently when they work collectively. A group of people performing various tasks with proper co-operation and co-ordination can easily accomplish the organizational goals.

People skills are required to interact and communication with individuals as well as in groups. Behavioural skills help people to interact and express effectively. Employees' ability to work well with others, making collective efforts coupled with listening, speaking and mutually understanding each other for a better co-ordination.

Interpersonal skills range from communication and listening to attitude and deportment are the behaviours and tactics a person uses to interact with others effectively. In the business world, the term refers to an employee's ability to work well with others. Interpersonal skills range from communication and listening to attitude and deportment.

USP (unique sales preposition) is the biggest asset for the organizations. Novelty, uniqueness helps to create a different image of the business with the innovative and fresh ideas implemented by the managers. Bold changes, improving existing products and services, innovation to operations and thinking in a different and innovative manner is an essential component for an organization to prosper and foster.

It is also evident that these skills made the meticulous tasks easy, less time-consuming but at the same time, it also helps in communicating and understanding well between the managers and the

employees. A blend of the above mentioned skills that we have taken as variables can prove out to be really helpful in building better understanding between the employees and their managers. Hence, delivering the products, services effectively and efficiently along with creating and maintaining the image of the destination will be much easier in an effective and efficient manner.

CONCLUSION:

Regarding the first objective of this study, the managerial skills are rated by the respondents. Managerial skills like leadership skills, team-building skills, people skills, initiating skills, innovation skills and team performance respectively. The above study thus signifies that the variables which stood overwhelmingly positive while rating and ranking by the respondents, affirms and fulfils the objective to identify the all the skills are required better team management. A manager equipped with these skills can really prove out to be a true leader leading to earn revenues and getting profit to the organization.

SUGGESTIONS

This study contributes to academic research because it upgrades information regarding the identification of managerial skills required in the hospitality industry that have a strong potential to create and operate an effective team in order to fulfil organization goals and objectives.

This study's results are also relevant since they focus on the perceptions of respondents related to such skills, providing a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon. The proper implementation can contribute significantly towards the vertical growth of the organization by better team performance through proper leadership.

The organization must emphasize on designing, implementing some training program enabling the employees with these managerial skills to hone up future managers. With the provision of innovation, the employees must be encouraged to take initiative, implement their innovation, with team building abilities like people skills help to build a cohesive team.

LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

The industry population surveyed represents only the entrepreneurs/locals, people associated with hotels of the Kumaon region of the Uttarakhand

state only; therefore it is not appropriate for this study to make the claim that the findings are applicable to the food service industry as a whole. However, it is hoped that the study can be reproduced to test the extent of the applicability of the findings.

On the other hand, this limitation may provide an opportunity for future research on such skills. The future research could use a larger sample enable a test for managerial skills required required by the hospitality industry and cause-and-effect relationships between the respondents' perspective and the impact of them on team's performance.

Due to the fact that it being the busiest industry, the employees remain occupied with their operations which was a limiting factor for accepting an interview. Therefore, the method that was employed to obtain the primary data was the questionnaire survey.

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