

# A Study on Generic Human Resources Skills in Hotels in Coimbatore District

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## **Abstract:**

As generic skills are of great importance in the hospitality industry, the study's primary objective is to explore whether generic skills gap exists in the hospitality organizations selected for the study and the possibility of enhancing generic skills of employees on staff retention. The researcher wanted to assess whether training packages lack sufficient focus on attaining generic skills in hospitality. The researcher also wanted to identify the contemporary generic skills for human resources in hospitality. The researcher wanted to study the problems faced by select hospitality organizations about training human resources in generic skills development and explore the perception of human resource managers related to generic skills of human resources in hospitality.

**Keywords:** Generic Skill, Hospitality, Human Resources, Training, Hotel Industry

## **Introduction:**

The hotel industry in India has experienced rapid growth. This has led to an increase in hotels of all sizes and brands to open their doors to the customers. The room inventory has seen a sharp rise across numerous budgets, middle segment and luxury hotels. This has increased the human resource requirement in the hotels. Human resources are the bloodline of the hospitality industry. Although recent technological advances have changed the way things are done, human contact in the service sector cannot be eliminated. It is, thus, a challenge to the hospitality industry to recruit qualified and efficient staff. The hospitality industry is known to offer the highest standards of service to guests. For this, the processes and procedures are standardized to the global requirement. A vast pressure exists on maintaining these global service standards and getting repeat business. Jobs in the hospitality industry are challenging and physically and mentally demanding. It damages the physical and mental health of employees. Therefore, employees must be supported by management to cope with pressure at work, which could be done significantly through well-planned training sessions on generic skills. The hospitality industry faces problems of attrition, shortage of staff, lack of skill sets and poor performance of employees, besides challenges faced due to government regulations and unruly, obnoxious and skipper guests. In order to overcome these and achieve the desired business goals, there is a need to attend to these problems, which are intricately linked with each other. Enhancing the generic skill sets of employees through focused employee training programs might bring about the desired change, leading to improved performance and job satisfaction, thereby decreasing attrition. With this concept in mind and also through the findings of various studies undertaken

which states that generic skills gap exists in the hospitality industry, it is appropriate to research whether there have been any efforts made to bridge this gap over the years in the hospitality industry and whether enhancing generic skills of employees would reduce attrition. The topic and related literature were researched in journals, books, thesis, dissertations, government reports on district wise skill gap analysis, magazines and newspapers. Professionals from the hospitality Industry suggested that the selected topic be researched in Coimbatore. According to their information, sufficient research has not been done on the selected topic in the hospitality industry in Coimbatore.

### **Skill Gap Analysis for Hospitality**

The National Skills Development Corporation of India, through its research, has highlighted the lack of soft skills in the hotel and tourism sector in Tamilnadu. The skills gaps presented suggest the need to develop more soft skills and build great relationships with clients. The study recommends offering skills improvement modules to employees to keep their skills market relevant. The primary workforce issues that need to be addressed in the hospitality industry are perceptions about the education, industry, skills, levels of workforce attrition, and competency development, the working environment and remuneration, opening up various opportunities for the workforce. Baum and Hai (2020) referred that there is a lack of high-quality human resources in the hospitality industry in China and that upgrading the skills of the office staff is essential. Soft skills are in demand. Unfortunately, these are the skills that are lacking today and that 21st-century employees must engage in soft skills. The study by Frantz and Misal (2016) found that soft skills such as communication skills, interpersonal skills, relevant strong work ethic and teamwork skills were deficient in hotels five stars in Harare, Zimbabwe. The skills gap was also identified by Kavita and Sharma, (2011) in the Indian setting and revealed significant differences in the existing skillset and desired skills among hotel management students who employ hotels. Phelan and Mills (2010), notes that the convention industry suffers from a lack of qualified professionals due to the growing demand for professionals. The skills shortage remains a significant threat to the hospitality industry. In the end, if the personality is not endearing enough, the guest will never be a judge, despite all the professional moments he has experienced.

### **Research Gap**

The researcher could find the research gap in the following areas while reviewing the literature and has summarized it as follows:

1. At the time of review of the thesis, the researcher has found that the quality of service/attitude is not as sufficient and that there is a need to upgrade the staff service and attitude through practical training in generic skills.
2. While reviewing the research papers, the researcher found that the hospitality industry suffers from a lack of qualified professionals and a shortfall of generic skills. The hospitality industry must understand the importance of training staff in generic skills and meeting the employees' emotional demands.
3. While going through the website review, the researcher found that the Indian tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as one of the critical drivers of growth among the services sector in India and faces challenges in workforce issues, the primary being attrition.
4. During magazine and newspaper surveys, the researcher found that soft skills are at the core of hospitality and have been recognized as the central aspect of creating an overall customer experience

and a significant driver for brand identification.

5. On reviewing books, the researcher noticed that very few books have focused on generic skills, especially for the hospitality industry.
6. While reviewing the NSDC report on district wise skill gap analysis, the researcher found that the critical skill gap was collectively studied in Tourism, Travel and Hospitality. The researcher wanted to focus on the study of the skill gap in hotels.

The gaps identified have formed the basis for the construction of the objectives and the working hypothesis.

## Research Questions

The following research questions will be addressed in this study.

1. What are the essential generic skills for Hospitality Industry?
2. Can training imparted to human resources in generic skills help the hospitality industry in reducing attrition?

## Hypotheses of the Study

The following Research hypotheses have been formulated for the study.

- $H_{01}$  Hospitality industry does not exhibit a gap in generic skills.
- $H_{11}$  Hospitality industry exhibits a gap in generic skills.

## Chi-square test

Chi-square is a statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with data that we expect to obtain according to a specific hypothesis. The p-value is the marginal significance level within a statistical hypothesis test representing the probability of a given event occurring. The p-value is used as an alternative to the rejection points to provide the lowest level of significance at which the null hypothesis would be rejected. As mentioned above, the chi-square test is applied to the relevant variables to test the hypothesis. The following description is presented with the help of tables to show the association between the different parameters used for hypothesis testing.

**Table1.1: Association between the independent variable parameters and work experience of the employees**

	Self-Management		Impression Management		Communication		Stress Management		Interpersonal Relations		Problem Solving		Computer Literacy		Customer Service Skills	
	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	High
Less than one year	82	138	14	206	32	188	68	152	37	183	24	196	74	100	29	191

	37. 30 %	62 .7 0 %	6.40 %	93. 60 %	14. 50 %	85 .5 0 %	30. 90 %	69. 10 %	16.8 0%	83. 20 %	10. 90 %	89 .1 0 %	33. 60 %	45 .5 0 %	13.2 0%	86. 80 %
1-10 Years	13 3	31 4	90	357	96	35 1	110	33 7	79	368	30	41 7	16 6	19 9	102	345
	29. 80 %	70 .2 0 %	20.1 0%	79. 90 %	21. 50 %	78 .5 0 %	24. 60 %	75. 40 %	17.7 0%	82. 30 %	6.7 0%	93 .3 0 %	37. 10 %	44 .5 0 %	22.8 0%	77. 20 %
11 years and above	39	44	19	64	32	51	24	59	25	58	11	72	29	24	29	54
	47. 00 %	53 .0 0 %	22.9 0%	77. 10 %	38. 60 %	61 .4 0 %	28. 90 %	71. 10 %	30.1 0%	69. 90 %	13. 30 %	86 .7 0 %	34. 90 %	28 .9 0 %	34.9 0%	65. 10 %
Total	25 4	49 6	123	627	0	59 0	202	54 8	141	609	65	68 5	26 9	32 3	160	590
	33. 90 %	66 .1 0 %	16.4 0%	83. 60 %	21. 30 %	78 .7 0 %	26. 90 %	73. 10 %	18.8 0%	81. 20 %	8.7 0%	91 .3 0 %	35. 90 %	43 .1 0 %	21.3 0%	78. 70 %

From the above table, it can be concluded that except stress management and problem-solving parameters, all other parameters show a positive relationship with the employees' work experience in the Coimbatore District Hotels Association member hotels. A massive gap in the generic skills of the employees can be seen as far as the work experience of the employees is concerned. It can also be seen that work experience wise there is no uniformity in the generic skills of the employees. Even a specific trend cannot be seen in the distribution of the employees. In some skills, the employees with less than one year of experience are showing high scores, whereas, in other skills, the employees having 1-10 years or more than ten years are showing high skills. Hence it can be inferred that work experience wise the employees show a gap in their generic skills.

**Table1.2: Chi Square Values and work experience of the employees**

S.No	Variable	Chi-Sq	p-Value
1	Self-management	10.896	0.004
2	Impression Management	23.261	0
3	Communication	20.712	0
4	Stress Management	3.16	0.206
5	Interpersonal Relations	7.905	0.001
6	Problem Solving Skills	5.762	0.056

7	Information Technology	15.427	0.004
8	Customer Service Skills	18.455	0
9	Time Management Skills	32.689	0

From the above table, it can be concluded that except stress management and problem-solving parameters, all other parameters show a positive relationship with the employees' work experience in the Coimbatore District Hotels Association member hotels in Coimbatore with a p-value < 0.005. In the case of stress management and problem-solving, the p-value is more than 0.005. A massive gap in the generic skills of the employees can be seen as far as the work experience of the employees is concerned. It can also be seen that work experience wise there is no uniformity in the generic skills of the employees. Even a specific trend cannot be seen in the distribution of the employees. In some skills, the employees with less than one year of experience are showing high scores, wherein in other skills, the employees have 1-10 years or more than ten years. Hence it can be inferred that work experience wise the employees shows a gap in their generic skills.

To explore whether generic skills gap exists in hospitality organizations, especially hotels.

***H<sub>01</sub> Hospitality industry does not exhibit a gap in generic skills.***

***H<sub>11</sub> Hospitality industry exhibits a gap in generic skills.***

From the data analysis and hypothesis testing, it can be inferred that the hospitality industry exhibits a gap in generic skills. From the data analysis and hypothesis testing, it can be inferred that training imparted to human resource in generic skills help the hospitality industry in reducing attrition.

From the data analysis and hypothesis testing, it can be inferred that hotels do emphasize training staff in generic skills.

With the help of data analysis, it can be inferred that generic skills form a part of the training package, but mostly it is integrated with technical training.

## Conclusions

1. Hospitality industry exhibits a gap in generic skills.
2. Hospitality industry exhibits work experience wise, department wise and educational qualifications gap in generic skills.

The research findings clearly state a generic skills gap exhibited by the Hospitality Industry as far as management of the hotel, departments, work experience, and qualification of human resources are concerned. It is hugely recommended to emphasize more on the training of generic skills. Generic skills form a part of the training module in hotels, but since it is integrated with the technical training and not specific, the employees do not bring about a massive change in the behaviour. Generic skills are life skills that are applied by individuals at the workplace and also otherwise. If they are taught in a more specific style in a classroom setup, it would primarily benefit the employees in their application as and when required, whether at work, home or during any interaction, which would be a part of the employee personality. It is also observed that employees with Hotel Management qualifications fall short on generic skills. Therefore, it is recommended that educational institutes emphasize teaching students' generic skills and technical skills. The subject of generic skills could form a compulsory part of the curriculum.

The hotels should also impart character building training as a value addition to human resources, which would favour the goodwill of the employees and benefit the hotel from the problem of attrition. Training alone may not solve the problem of attrition. Hence, employee engagement, wellness programs, perks/benefits should be revised, reconsidered, and at par with other industries. The research findings prove that if good opportunities are given and better perks, the employees will stay with the organization. Hotels should support and promote research activities that at present are in a nascent stage.

### **Areas of further research**

On identifying the research gap, there is a scope to research the following.

1. Soft skills for human resources in hospitality can be identified.
2. Challenges faced by the hospitality industry in training human resources in generic skills can be researched.
3. Research has shown a need to upgrade the staff service and attitude in Indian hotels through practical training. There is a scope to study the training packages in Coimbatore; hotels check whether training in generic skills is imparted to the employees.
4. Research has identified five pillars of human resource needs in the convention industry: notably; planning skills, professionalism, work ethic, personality traits and self-management. There is a scope to research whether training human resources in these skills create goodwill and be used for staff retention?
5. There is a scope to study the generic skills gap analysis in the hospitality sector in Coimbatore.

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