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Workforce Demographics and Behavioral Competencies in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

Background: The hospitality industry is fundamentally reliant on its human capital, where the competencies and qualifications of both staff and management are critical determinants of service quality, guest satisfaction, and organizational success. These competencies encompass a blend of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors, which have been further reshaped by globalization, digital transformation, and the heightened expectations post-COVID-19. Formal education and vocational certifications are essential for aligning employee capabilities with rigorous industry standards.

Objective: This study aimed to assess the competencies and qualifications of staff and management within the hospitality sector, focusing on demographic profiles, professional development experiences, and key behavioral competencies.

Methods: A quantitative, cross-sectional survey was conducted among 200 employees and managers from selected five-star hotels in the Kathmandu Valley. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire using both online and paper-based formats. Analysis was performed using descriptive statistics to generate frequencies and percentages.

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Findings: The findings revealed a predominantly young workforce (70% aged 21-29) with a balanced gender distribution. A majority held a Bachelor's degree (58%) and had previous hospitality experience (84.5%). Most respondents found their roles beneficial for professional growth (80%) and felt recognized for their contributions (64.5%). The primary reason for considering quitting was interpersonal issues with colleagues (28.5%), not low salary. High levels of self-reported competency were observed across key areas: ethical conduct (65.5% agree/strongly agree), time management (80.5%), customer-centric decision making (85%), and effective communication skills such as listening (90%) and encouraging others (88.5%).
Conclusion: The study concludes that the workforce in five-star hotels in Kathmandu is well-educated, experienced, and possesses strong self-reported competencies crucial for hospitality roles. However, the young age profile suggests potential challenges with retention and career longevity. Job satisfaction appears to be influenced more by workplace relationships and role satisfaction than by financial compensation.
Implication: The implications for hotel management are twofold. Firstly, there is a need to develop strategies that enhance team cohesion and interpersonal relationships to reduce attrition. Secondly, investing in continuous training and clear career progression pathways is essential to retain young talent and ensure the longevity of careers within the industry.
Keywords: Hospitality Management, Employee Competencies, Staff Qualifications, Workforce Demographics, Job Satisfaction, Nepal

Introduction

The hospitality sector relies on the skills of its workforce, which ranges from frontline staff to senior management. Scholars agree that both staff competencies and management qualifications directly affect service quality, guest satisfaction, and the overall success of organizations (Devkota et al., 2025; Sharma et al., 2025; Shrestha et al., 2025; Pandit et al., 2025; Papademetriou, Anastasiadou, & Papalexandris, 2023). Employees' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors form the foundation of experiences and are integral to any service-focused business.

The performance of hotels, restaurants, resorts, and other hospitality organizations is intrinsically tied to the competencies and qualifications of both frontline staff and senior management. In a competitive service environment, customer satisfaction hinges on employee behavior, communication, decision-making, and responsiveness.

Rapid globalization, digital transformation, and increased customer expectations have significantly reshaped the competencies required by the industry (Giacomel & Raveleau, 2020). These attributes are vital in providing personalized guest experiences and maintaining brand loyalty.

Furthermore, the qualifications of staff including formal education, vocational certifications, and on-the-job training play a key role in aligning employee capabilities with industry standards (Giousmpasoglou & Marinakou, 2024)

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The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the importance of resilient and agile competencies. Staff were expected to quickly adjust to new hygiene protocols, contactless service technologies, and fluctuating guest demands. (Ahuchogu, Sanyaolu, & Adeleke, 2024) The hospitality industry is a cornerstone of the global service sector, encompassing a wide array of businesses such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, cruise lines, and event management companies. At its heart, hospitality is a people-oriented industry, where the delivery of exceptional customer experiences depends almost entirely on the capabilities of its workforce. In this context, the competencies and qualifications of both staff and management play a pivotal role in determining service quality, operational efficiency, guest satisfaction, and long-term organizational success.

The concept of competency in hospitality extends beyond mere technical know-how. It refers to a combination of knowledge, practical skills, behaviors, attitudes, and personal attributes that enable individuals to perform effectively in their roles. Competent staff are those who cannot only execute routine tasks but also respond flexibly to guest needs, communicate professionally, manage time efficiently, resolve conflicts amicably, and uphold ethical standards. (Wooten & James, 2008)

(Olowoyo, Ramaila, & Mavuru, 2020). Educational degrees, such as a Bachelor's in Hotel Management or Tourism Studies, offer theoretical foundations in subjects like hospitality operations, marketing, and business ethics. Vocational certifications such as Certified Hotel Administrator (CHA), Certified Hospitality Supervisor (CHS), and certifications in front office, food and beverage, or housekeeping operations provide practical, industry-aligned training. These qualifications are essential not only for building credibility but also for standardizing skills across various roles and locations.

Objective of the Study

To access the Competencies and Qualification of Staff and Management in Hospitality

Research Methodology

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was used to examine the demographic characteristics, professional growth, and behavioral competencies of hospitality employees. The study targeted all staff and managers working in five-star hotels within the Kathmandu Valley, providing insights into workforce trends and workplace behaviors in the sector. The population consisted of hospitality staff and managers from selected five-star hotels in the Kathmandu Valley. A total of 200 respondents participated in the study, ensuring representation across various departments and job levels to capture a comprehensive workforce profile. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered in both online and paper-based formats to maximize accessibility. The survey period spanned four to six weeks, with reminder communications sent after two weeks to improve response rates. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to present demographic information and response distributions, allowing clear interpretation of the findings. Ethical standards were strictly upheld. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before the survey. Data were anonymized to

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maintain confidentiality, and no personally identifiable information was recorded or disclosed. That covered. A Likert scale to measure the frequency of stress-related experiences.

Results

This section shows the findings of the survey conducted in the hospitality sector.

Table 1 Gender

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Female	105	52.5%	52.5%	52.5%
Male	95	47.5%	47.5%	100.0%

The gender distribution among participants reveals a nearly even split, with 52.5% female and 47.5% male respondents. This indicates a balanced gender representation in the hospitality sector, demonstrating inclusivity and suggesting that gender does not pose a significant barrier to employment in this field. The slight female majority could reflect the nurturing and service-oriented nature of hospitality roles, which often attract more women.

Table 2: Age

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
18–20	37	18.5%	18.5%	18.5%
21–29	140	70.0%	70.0%	88.5%
30–39	14	7.0%	7.0%	95.5%
40–49	9	4.5%	4.5%	100.0%

A large majority of respondents (70%) fall within the 21–29 age group, with smaller segments in the 18–20 (18.5%) and 30–39 (7%) brackets, and only 4.5% aged 40–49. This suggests that the hospitality workforce is predominantly young, which could imply high turnover rates or a preference for hiring younger staff due to physical demands and adaptability. The lower presence of older age groups may indicate limited career longevity or upward mobility.

Table 3: What department do you work?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Food and beverage	67	33.5%	33.5%	33.5%
Account and finance	57	28.5%	28.5%	62.0%
Marketing	32	16.0%	16.0%	78.0%
Front office operation	27	13.5%	13.5%	91.5%
Housekeeping	17	8.5%	8.5%	100.0%

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Most respondents work in food and beverage (33.5%) and accounts and finance (28.5%), with others in marketing (16%), front office (13.5%), and housekeeping (8.5%). The higher numbers in food & beverage and finance may reflect operational focus areas in hotels or greater staff requirements in those departments. The lower representation in housekeeping could point to outsourcing trends or lower response rates from the staff.

Table 4: What is your educational qualification?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Bachelor's degree	116	58.0%	58.0%	58.0%
Master's degree	48	24.0%	24.0%	82.0%
Tourism and hospitality management	24	12.0%	12.0%	94.0%
Other	12	6.0%	6.0%	100.0%

A majority (58%) hold Bachelor's degrees, followed by Master's (24%), and 12% specialized in tourism and hospitality management. This suggests that while many employees have higher education, relatively few possess industry-specific academic backgrounds, indicating potential gaps between general education and practical hospitality needs. The 6% under "other" may include vocational certifications or non-traditional qualifications.

Table 5: Did you have previous experience in the tourism hospitality industry?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Yes	169	84.5%	84.5%	84.5%
No	31	15.5%	15.5%	100.0%

An overwhelming 84.5% of participants reported prior experience in the hospitality sector. This implies that employers value experience or that the industry has a high re-entry rate, with professionals moving between roles or properties. It also suggests that training needs may differ between experienced and new staff.

Table 6: If yes, where did you previously work?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Hotel	90	45.0%	45.0%	45.0%
Restaurant	43	21.5%	21.5%	66.5%

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Hostel	28	14.0%	14.0%	80.5%
Other (please specify)	26	13.0%	13.0%	93.5%
Bar	13	6.5%	6.5%	100.0%

Of those with experience, 45% had worked in hotels, 21.5% in restaurants, and others in hostels (14%), bars (6.5%), and other settings (13%). This diverse background highlights varied exposure levels, and the predominance of hotel experience suggests a relevant talent pool for current roles. Different work environments might contribute to varied skillsets and adaptability.

Table 7: How helpful is your position in stimulating your professional growth?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Extremely helpful	100	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Quiet helpful	60	30.0%	30.0%	80.0%
Moderately helpful	30	15.0%	15.0%	95.0%
Not at all helpful	10	5.0%	5.0%	100.0%

About 80% of respondents feel their current position helps them grow professionally, with 50% rating it "extremely helpful." This reflects a positive outlook on career development and may encourage longer employee tenure. Conversely, the 5% who found it unhelpful may feel underutilized or unsupported, pointing to areas where organizational development strategies can be strengthened.

Table 8: How often did you feel your contribution and opinion were recognized?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Always	70	35.0%	35.0%	35.0%
Often	59	29.5%	29.5%	64.5%
Sometimes	43	21.5%	21.5%	86.0%
Rarely	22	11.0%	11.0%	97.0%
Never	6	3.0%	3.0%	100.0%

Approximately 64.5% felt their opinions and contributions were recognized, showing good employee engagement and communication. However, the 14% who felt "rarely" or "never" recognized might feel undervalued, potentially affecting morale and performance. Ensuring recognition practices are consistent can improve motivation and retention.

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Table 9: What would be the main reason to quit?

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
You don't like your colleagues	57	28.5%	28.5%	28.5%
You don't like your position	39	19.5%	19.5%	48.0%
Low salary	38	19.0%	19.0%	67.0%
You don't like your supervisor	35	17.5%	17.5%	84.5%

The top-cited reasons for wanting to quit were not liking colleagues (28.5%), disliking the position (19.5%), and low salary (19%). Interpersonal relationships appear to be a leading factor in job dissatisfaction. Addressing team dynamics and role satisfaction could significantly reduce attrition rates. Surprisingly, salary, though important, was not the top concern.

Table 10: Act in an ethical manner

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	113	56.5%	56.5%	56.5%
Strongly Agree	18	9.0%	9.0%	65.5%
Neutral	58	29.0%	29.0%	94.5%
Strongly Disagree	7	3.5%	3.5%	98.0%
Disagree	4	2.0%	2.0%	100.0%

Nearly 66% agreed or strongly agreed that they act ethically, with only 5.5% disagreeing. This suggests a strong ethical culture. However, the 29% who were neutral may reflect uncertainty or inconsistency in ethical standards enforcement, indicating a need for clearer ethical guidelines or training.

Table 11: Manage time to ensure productivity

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	84	42.0%	42.0%	42.0%
Strongly Agree	77	38.5%	38.5%	80.5%
Neutral	29	14.5%	14.5%	95.0%
Disagree	5	2.5%	2.5%	97.5%
Strongly Disagree	5	2.5%	2.5%	100.0%

A combined 80.5% of staff believe they manage time effectively. This is a critical competency in hospitality, where punctuality and efficiency directly affect service delivery. It also suggests

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well-structured workflow systems. The small percentage who disagreed may require personal productivity coaching.

Table 12: Consider customer needs when making decisions

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	125	62.5%	62.5%	62.5%
Strongly Agree	45	22.5%	22.5%	85.0%
Neutral	24	12.0%	12.0%	97.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	98.5%
Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	100.0%

85% of respondents reported that they consider customer needs when making decisions, reinforcing the guest-centered culture of the industry. The small fraction who do not reflect areas where employee orientation or training may be lacking. This customer-focused approach is vital for maintaining high service standards.

Table 13: Promote the quality of the company's goods and services

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Strongly Agree	89	44.5%	44.5%	44.5%
Agree	86	43.0%	43.0%	87.5%
Neutral	19	9.5%	9.5%	97.0%
Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	98.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	100.0%

With 87.5% agreeing they promote the company's service quality, employees appear committed to upholding standards. A small number of neutral or disagreeing responses suggest there might be differences in what "quality" means across departments or roles, or perhaps gaps in understanding brand values

Table 14: Know the strengths and weaknesses of competitors

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	105	52.5%	52.5%	52.5%
Strongly Agree	74	37.0%	37.0%	89.5%
Neutral	17	8.5%	8.5%	98.0%
Strongly Disagree	4	2.0%	2.0%	100.0%

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Approximately 89.5% of staff are aware of their competitors' strengths and weaknesses. This competitive insight is important for strategic positioning. It shows that staff are not only focused on internal processes but also external benchmarks, which helps drive innovation and service improvement.

Table 15: Present ideas in a convincing manner

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	111	55.5%	55.5%	55.5%
Strongly Agree	62	31.0%	31.0%	86.5%
Neutral	21	10.5%	10.5%	97.0%
Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	98.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	100.0%

A strong 86.5% affirmed their ability to present ideas effectively, reflecting strong communication competencies. This supports the industry's need for persuasive interactions with both guests and team members. The small minority who struggle with this skill may benefit from confidence-building workshops or presentation training

Table 16: Encourage others to express their views and opinions

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	95	47.5%	47.5%	47.5%
Strongly Agree	82	41.0%	41.0%	88.5%
Neutral	18	9.0%	9.0%	97.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	99.0%
Disagree	2	1.0%	1.0%	100.0%

An encouraging 88.5% of respondents claim they support others in expressing their views, indicating a healthy team culture and psychological safety. This is important for creativity and collaboration. Leadership can further foster this by modeling open dialogue and inclusive decision-making.

Table 17: Listen carefully to others

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	103	51.5%	51.5%	51.5%
Strongly Agree	77	38.5%	38.5%	90.0%
Neutral	14	7.0%	7.0%	97.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	98.5%
Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	100.0%

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90% agreed or strongly agreed that they listen carefully to others. This highlights strong interpersonal awareness, which is essential in hospitality roles where empathy and understanding can make or break guest experiences and internal teamwork

Table 18: Address and work through conflict

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	91	45.5%	45.5%	45.5%
Strongly Agree	65	32.5%	32.5%	78.0%
Neutral	21	10.5%	10.5%	88.5%
Disagree	20	10.0%	10.0%	98.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	100.0%

About 78% actively work through conflict, indicating good conflict resolution mechanisms are in place. However, the 12.5% who disagree or are neutral may reflect underlying issues such as passive avoidance or lack of training in resolving disputes constructively.

Table 19: Promote respect among employees

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Agree	110	55.0%	55.0%	55.0%
Strongly Agree	69	34.5%	34.5%	89.5%
Neutral	17	8.5%	8.5%	98.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	1.5%	1.5%	99.5%
Disagree	1	0.5%	0.5%	100.0%

A notable 89.5% reported promoting respect among coworkers. Respectful environments are key to job satisfaction, reduced conflict, and overall team cohesion. The few who did not feel this way may work in less supportive sub-teams or experience inequities that should be addressed.

Conclusion

The findings highlight a young, well-educated, and experienced workforce driving Kathmandu Valley's five-star hospitality sector. A balanced gender distribution underscores inclusivity, while the dominance of the 21–29 age group reflects a dynamic yet potentially high-turnover workforce. Most respondents hold Bachelor's degrees, though relatively few possess specialized hospitality qualifications, indicating a gap between academic preparation and industry-specific needs. The high proportion of staff with prior experience emphasizes the sector's reliance on practical exposure. Employees reported strong professional growth

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opportunities, effective communication, and a commitment to ethical practices, time management, and customer-centric decision-making. High levels of respect, teamwork, and conflict resolution skills further underscore a positive organizational culture. However, dissatisfaction with colleagues and role fit emerged as leading reasons for potential attrition, highlighting the importance of fostering interpersonal harmony and aligning roles with employee strengths. Overall, the sector demonstrates strong competencies and qualifications but requires targeted training and retention strategies to sustain growth.

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