

Need for Training of Verbal Communication Skills in Hotel Management

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Abstract--- *In terms of communication skills, the pupils in the hospitality industry need to be introduced to actual workplace need. Despite its significance, it needs to be given more serious attention by human resource managers, academics and educators in the hospitality management sector, or by hotel practitioners. It is therefore necessary for both managers and potential employees to decide on what should be instilled in the learners as this would train them for the real reception activities of the hotel, which are, in fact, verbal communication skills. Communication skills requirement and the ability to write and speak effectively in English will be given prominence in this sector. It is therefore of great importance to analyse the language of hospitality that includes the verbal communication skills of hotel management practitioners. Hence this paper discusses the verbal communication abilities of the interns who are the hotel's future workers. More often than not, the future hotel-post holders have been criticised for missing this expertise despite the good technical knowledge that they may have had during their courses. Technical knowledge is central and therefore cannot be disputed about its significance as this forms the particular basis from which hoteliers work. Nonetheless, technical knowledge alone makes no distinction between the best graduate student and the rest.*

Keywords--- *Communicative activities, Expectations of Employers, Employee's needs, Hotel Management Professionals, Hospitality Management.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Many researchers have investigated the industry's perceptions on undergraduate tourism and students of Hotel Management as a career choice. Throughout their opinion, the hospitality industry and worldwide tourism is dealing with the problem of retaining and attracting high-quality employees which has culminated in a shortage of skilled staff and manpower. To this issue have resulted many different contributing factors. One of the challenges is that most communications between consumers or clients and hotel professionals are in the context of face-to-face exchanges and therefore the standard of service offered is of major concern due to exchanges made [1].

Several graduates of hospitality management and tourism are also stated to have declined to enter the industry after graduation. These shortcomings must therefore be explained and it is in this study's interest to actually look into what has caused the gap between potential candidates to hospitality and tourism and those players in industry. Is it because they were hindered by their poor communication skills from being working in this industry? This situation contributes to the evidence which might explain failing to meet the standards of the tourism and hospitality industry. There is a strong need

for effective communication skills in the hospitality sector [2].

While this conclusion is focused on a research carried out in the United States of America, it is safe to say that such training skills are important to Malaysian hotels. As a consequence, it is necessary for many Malaysian graduate students to develop appropriate "soft" skills, particularly communication skills (in English), which could make them quite employable, in addition to technical knowledge, as these skills are generally expected to be gained in institutions of higher education. Hence this paper concerns the verbal communication skills of the trainees who are the hotel's potential employees [3].

Technical knowledge is important and cannot be contested about its significance as this forms the basic foundation from which hoteliers function. Nevertheless, technical knowledge alone makes no distinction between the best graduate student and the others. Along with this, the Deputy Human Resources Minister states that it's lack of soft skills like communication skills, solving problems and collaborative work skills that are mainly responsible for the trouble facing by some 80,000 young people in finding employment in Malaysia [4].

This is particularly true for potential employees in the hospitality industry as the required qualities of being competent and being able to effectively execute verbal-related tasks will meet the needs of the business. Recent research on communication skills has shown good communication skills are the key to unlocking the doors to achievement, according to experts. Researchers suggested that good communication skills would be considered vital and an added benefit. Any organization of business will perceive professionals with a strong hold on communication skills as an asset (Fig 1).

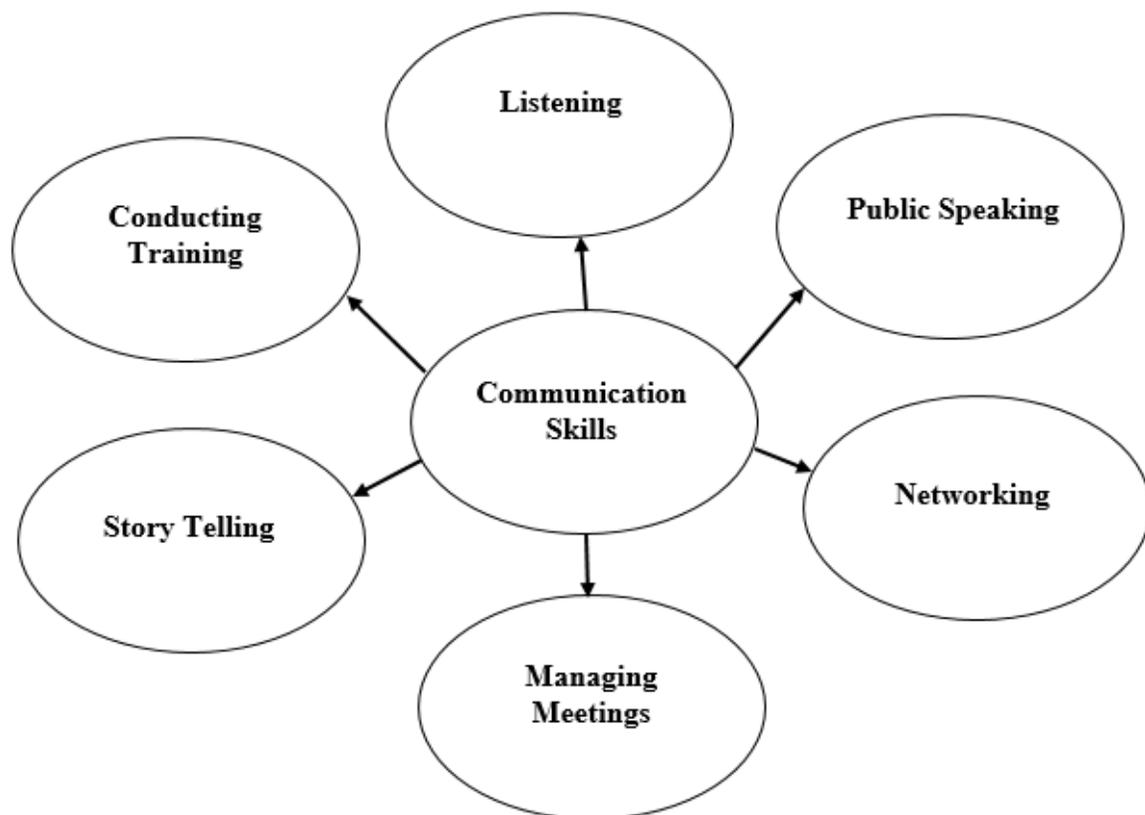


Fig. 1: Good Communication Skills

Much emphasis is placed on Analysis of needs for occupation-specific purposes recently. "English for Occupational Purposes" (EOP) could be defined as the part of the curriculum that prepares students for work gain from low-skilled to advanced technical jobs. EOP focuses on satisfying worker's demand by giving specific career training. Therefore, in order to gauge the importance of such capabilities, a study must be done not only on graduates but also on their potential employees. This type of research-propagated analysis emphasizes the significance of performing a "target-situation analysis" (TSA) apart from an analysis of the current scenario, since the combination of two analyses could provide a better understanding of the requirement of language of the students in relation to the directed situation, and also the level of skill of the students and their current language requirements [5].

Some would think that giving a narrower focus as referred to a broad one as an aspect focused on an ESP course results in the students being limited to functioning well in a narrow context. Nevertheless, it is important that they are able to use the vocabulary that is comfortable with their workplace environment and unique to their specialty because their success would only be influenced by lack of skill. In addition, in evaluating language requirements for a community of language learners, researchers agreed that reducing the reach of language material resulted when positive feedback from the learners themselves, as they are happy that their desires and expectations are met at the end [6].

In the age of development, researchers demonstrated the idea that is required for the analysis that focuses on the perceived needs and desires and realistic demands which is very essential to today's English lessons and as such, there have been bound to be mismatches of ideals and expectations among students, teachers, and stakeholders' desires [7]. This is further reinforced by other scholars who found out that workers in Human Resource are also responsible for delivering workforce training and development activities and are therefore required to be highly skilled in language to facilitate communication in and out of the workplace [8].

Indeed, it is of the primary importance that the students be involved in the overall process of language learning on the basis of a research conducted by researchers, they stated that the students' explanation of their needs or want of a certain language program includes the fact that their interests were hampered due to very few opportunities that they actually had to use English at work. In fact, they do not seem to realize what their business English requirements are at present or in the future, as the students themselves were not made aware of what comprises a business English course they had to take [9].

It is therefore important that the deficiency, needs and desires of the intern students in the field of communication skills are recognized because they need these skills to function effectively in their workplaces. The main objective of the study is the needs of communication skills for the assistants of front office on the basis of the perceptions of the intern students and the hotel managers who have been supervising them [10].

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The work is formulated through the application of the questionnaires. The questionnaire was in the shape of a sample of needs-analysis, and this was circulated to hotel managers where the interns were interned. In addition, the interns were also given a set of questionnaires in their future profession to gauge their shortcomings and requirement of verbal communication skills. The two sets of the respective questionnaire have been distributed to 11 managers and 28 interns

attached at the Penang hotels. These executives had represented the company for at least 7 or 9 years.

The questionnaire sets have been prepared in couple of sets intended for the interns (Set 1) and managers (Set 2). All sets consist of two parts where the first component is structured to gather certain knowledge about the respondents while the second portion is designed to obtain information about the interns' importance and ability to communicate orally. The things tried to define the importance of job related activities which are exemplified from the understanding of both supervisors and interns in the form of verbal communication skills of a front office assistant.

The managers of the hotel were asked in the questionnaire to evaluate the relevance of communication skills. They have been asked to rate on a four-Likert scale with the following adjectives: "Least Competent," "Slightly Competent," "Mostly Competent" and "Completely Competent" which the researchers conveniently categorized and labelled into two discrete levels of ability; the high and low ability for data presentation purposes. Besides this, the list of questions also sought to generate answers in the forms of apparent ideas of the communication skills of the interns themselves. The questionnaire also seeks to look for answers from hotel managers about the position and importance of communication skills in hotel management to obtain some insight through their views on this important problem. In fact, the managers were asked to rate the potential of the interns and the importance of the skills to the employees at the front desk. They were told to rate "Not Relevant," "Nothing Relevant," "Really Relevant" on a "Three-Likert scale" with the mentioned descriptors.

III. RESULTS

Managers' rate of intern's ability:

Referring to Table 1, the majority of managers, 90.5 percent stated interns showed low capacity in these 3 VCS arranging, entertaining VIP guests, informing transport arrangements for guests, and explaining hotel policies and procedures to guests. 68% of executive manager reported having tours of hotel services as a high efficiency for interns.

Managers' perception of the importance of communication:

Based on table 2, 74% to 82% of respondents regarded four skills as very important, reacting to consumer questions, describing work-to-manager difficulties / problems, exploring ways to improve customer service with supervisors, and addressing work-related issues. There exists at least eight skills that the respondent deems irrelevant the percentage of those with similar views is very low; whereas only 1 to 3 respondents indicated as such.

Table 1. Managers' Rate of Intern's Ability in Verbal Communication Skills

	LOW ABILITY		HIGH ABILITY		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Conduct tours of hotel facilities	4	33.3%	8	66.7%	12	(100.0%)
Arrange & Inform guests of transport arrangements	11	91.6 %	1	8.3%	12	(100.0%)
Entertain VIP guests	11	91.6%	1	8.3%	12	(100.0%)
Answer customer enquiries on room rates orally (in person or through the telephone)	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	12	(100.0%)
Answer customer enquiries on food or beverage orally (in person or through the telephone)	6	50%	6	50%	12	(100.0%)
Answer customer enquiries on hotel facilities orally (in person or through the telephone)	6	50%	6	50%	12	(100.0%)
Answer enquiries on fire escape route in the hotel	6	50%	6	50%	12	(100.0%)
Answer enquiries on local establishments like shops, tourist, attractions, banks etc	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	12	(100.0%)
Answer enquiries on local cultures	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	12	(100.0%)
Explain hotel procedures and hotel policies to guests	11	91.6%	1	8.3 %	12	(100.0%)
Present ideas at meetings with managers	8	66.7%	4	33.3%	12	(100.0%)
Discuss work –related matters with managers	8	66.7%	4	33.3%	12	(100.0%)
Give an oral report regarding work matters to employers	10	83.4%	2	16.6%	12	(100.0%)
Discuss ways to improve customer service with manager	7	58.3%	5	41.7%	12	(100.0%)
Discuss ways to improve work efficiency with manager	9	75%	3	25%	12	100.0%

Table 2. Managers' view of the importance of Verbal communication Skills for Hotel Front Office Assistants

	NOT RELEVANT		SOMEWHAT RELEVANT		VERY RELEVANT		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Conduct tours of hotel facilities			6	50%	6	50%	12	(100.0%)
Arrange & Inform guests of transport arrangements	1	8.3%	7	58.3%	4	33.3%	12	(100.0%)
Entertain VIP guests	1	8.3%	3	25%	8	66.7%	12	(100.0%)
Answer customer enquiries on room rates orally (in person or through the telephone)			6	50%	6	50%	12	(100.0%)
Answer customer enquiries on food or beverage orally (in person or through the telephone)	2	16.7%	5	41.7%	5	41.7%	12	(100.0%)
Answer customer enquiries on hotel facilities orally (in person or through the telephone)			3	25%	9	75%	12	(100.0%)
Answer enquiries on fire escape route in the hotel	4	33.3%	2	16.7%	6	50%	12	100.0%
Answer enquiries on local establishments like shops, tourist, attractions, banks etc	3	25%	6	50%	3	25%	12	100.0%
Answer enquiries on local cultures	2	16.7%	5	41.7%	5	41.7%	12	100.0%
Explain hotel procedures and hotel policies to guests			4	33.3%	8	66.7%	12	100.0%
Present ideas at meetings with managers			4	33.3%	8	66.7%	12	100.0%
Discuss work –related matters with managers			4	33.3%	8	66.7%	12	100.0%
Give an oral report regarding work matters to employers			6	50%	6	50%	12	100.0%
Discuss ways to improve customer service with manager	1	8.3%	1	8.3%	10	83.3%	12	100.0%
Discuss ways to improve work efficiency with manager			5	41.7%	7	58.3%	12	100.0%
Present ideas at meetings with managers			4	33.3%	8	66.7%	12	100.0%
Explain difficulties / problems arising from work to manager			3	25%	9	75%	12	100.0%
Describe graphs /charts at meetings			5	41.7%	7	58.3%	12	100.0%
Discuss work related matters	1	8.3%	1	8.3%	10	83.3%	12	100.0%

IV. CONCLUSION

It is observed that the discrepancies between the skills needed for the position and the interns' capacity. In at least five talents, the interns appear to see that they are of a higher ability, given the opinion of the hotel managers who seemed to believe differently. The interns' shortcomings and expectations have to be fulfilled to suit the criteria of the hospitality and tourism management industry. It is therefore important to include all classes, such as students, professors and university employees, and to determine their opinions while evaluating the instructional language needs of students, since each category may have different opinions.

There is a need to address the shortcomings and desires of these interns in the language courses provided by the university, thus integrating ESP and general English language abilities for students in order to ensure maximum success in training them for a successful workforce through studying to real-life situations. Those misconstrued perceptions must be corrected as such.

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