

## How Acquired Technical Skills Surpass Cognitive Personality Traits of PR Employees: A Case Study of Economy Hotels in Egypt

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*The hotel industry is one of the world's oldest commercial industries (Bovin 2019). The industry is rapidly expanding, necessitating the assignment of tasks to skilled staff that will ensure client satisfaction. Hotel investment activities in African countries have lately increased (Ernst & Young 2013), and new hotel developments have become the fastest rising economic activity not just in Sub-Saharan Africa but also globally (Ernst & Young 2013). Human resource allocation in hotels refers to the assignment of hotel workers to service tasks, where staff can only be engaged for a certain amount of time due to labor laws. Human resource allocation requirements differ depending on the application area (Kayoko et al. 2011). The system's success is frequently ascribed to how well it manages human resources. It is a critical issue in order to improve performance. When a task requires certain abilities, such as accounting skills, a human resource that handles the activity should have those skills in order to complete the assignment efficiently (Ernst et al. 2014). On the other hand, the impact of personality traits on employee job performance is undeniable, and many businesses take use of this effect. One of the most important psychological aspects influencing human behavior is personality. It is said to be crucial in the workplace. Personality qualities have an essential influence in improving an employee's job performance's efficiency and are probably much weighted than technical ones. Personality traits are favorably connected with job success, and conscientiousness has attributes that directly correspond to job performance of employees with the highest weights, according to previous researches. It is the main objective of this paper to find out whether personalities traits from one side outweighs employees' skills from the other side taking PR employees of economy hotels in Cairo as a sample for application and how could this contribute to the performance of the hotel.*

**Keywords:** attitudes, skills, cognitive personality traits, PR department, economy hotels, reputation and performance

### Introduction

Employee performance has been discussed in the literature in two dimensions: extra-role performance and in-role performance (Brief and Motowidlo 1986, Williams and Anderson 1991). Extra-role performance refers to employee activities

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that occur outside of the formal job based on their interests, whereas in-role performance refers to activities that occur within the formal job defined as the employee's actions to achieve the formal job requirements (Williams and Anderson 1991). Katz and Kahn (1978) considered the in-role performance as a score-task performance for the first time and defined it as individual tasks that affected the organizations' salary systems, which was shared by Chah et al. (2012), and Katz and Kahn (1978). According to Katz (2010), the effective behaviors leading to the organization's success can be divided into three categories including retaining unique employees, which refers to the employees' achieving or surpassing their responsibilities interdependently. However, according to Katz, the organizations' third type of behavior is a very fragile social system, which is based only on appropriate behaviors in job descriptions. In general, every factory, enterprise, and social organization is organized on cooperation, mutual aid, and suggestions, which are defined as "citizenship behavior" in academic fields. Another term proposed by Katz (1964) was "extra-role behaviors" and was characterized as the organizational citizenship in the 1980s (Zhu 2013). Extra-role performance of employees refers to the operation and organization improving efficiency throughout the organizational resources transformation and is categorized into "individual-oriented and organization-oriented organizational citizenship behavior". The "individual-oriented and organizational citizenship behavior" indicates the individual behavior that benefits the individual and in consequence the organization and marked as altruism in the organization.

For example, the interpersonal assists or helps absent colleagues complete their work, as in "when I cannot go to work, I will request leave in advance" and "adhere to the informal rules that aim to maintain work orders" (Zhu 2013). According to Sosik et al. (2011), organizational citizenship behavior can be defined as mutual compliance or agreement. Despite the fact that extra-role behavior is well known for improving organizational efficiency, it is mostly ignored or never used in assessments.

The role theory, on the other hand, is a significant social psychology theory that proposes a theoretical foundation to describe differences and consistency in individual behavior (Mead 1934).

However, certain cognitive ability, personality traits, and experience (such as training and education) were also proposed to describe the person's ability (Dobre et al. 2012, Fernández-Breis et al. 2009, Kao and Hung 2007, Zeffane and Al Zarooni 2008).

Extra-role performance and in-role performance are two different though related concepts. In many operations the in-role performance outweighs that of extra role. This is due to the managerial ideas that praise much cognitive traits and relevant attitudes. It is the aim of this paper to assess which set of skills are more important, i.e., cognitive or technical in regards to performance. This paper focuses on the PR department "where both sets of skills are highly required" to check the validity of this theory.

This paper gives a background on the importance of both cognitive and technical skills and explores the literature review relevant to both. In its methodology part this paper adopts descriptive analytical approach using

questionnaire tool that was distributed over PR managers, employees as well as economy hotel guests. The results and discussion part of this paper sheds the light over the findings of the research. This paper concludes with a final part of conclusions and implications to display the findings and set future research implications based on them.

### **Background of the Study**

The hotel industry is one of the world's oldest commercial activities. People needed to be accommodated while on the road or away from their homes. Hotel investment activities in African countries have recently increased (Ernst & Young 2013), and new hotel developments have become the fastest growing economic activity not only in Sub-Saharan Africa, but also globally (Ernst & Young 2013). The hotel industry, as an integral part of the larger travel and tourism enterprise, provides a wide range of travel and related services, such as accommodation, restaurants, entertainment, clubs and bars, recreational activities, and other services required by modern-day travelers (Tewari 2010, CFR 2012).

Human resource allocation in hotels entails assigning hotel staff to service tasks, where staff can only be used for a limited time due to labor standard laws. Hotels in the hospitality and tourism industries that use human resources must consider appropriate and effective resource allocation to task because the hotel's success is dependent on its human resources (Kayoko et al. 2011). The needs for human resource allocation differ depending on the application area. The system's success is usually attributed to how it handles human resource management. It is a critical issue in increasing the system's satisfaction and profit. A task's skill requirements represent some special skills required to perform that task, such as accounting skills. When a task requires some skills, a human resource who deals with the task should have the skills in order to perform the task efficiently (Ernst et al. 2014). When a task is properly assigned to a human resource, the human resource's performance level on the task improves. Human resource management is critical in the hospitality and tourism industries for assisting hotels in maintaining or improving their position in the service environment. The one question that is still unanswered here is whether attitudes surpass in importance technical skills. Many human resources managers argue that attitude is the key element here and that every other skill can be inducted. This paper is devoted to debunking this myth.

### **Factors Determining Employee Performance**

#### *Professional Skills*

The number of professional talents related to the hotel sector that a certain employee possessed and used was used to calculate the score for this variable.

Communication, human resource, food and beverage, front office, and customer service skills were recognized as part of this characteristic.

#### *Technical Skills*

Technical skill scores were calculated based on the number of skills had by each responder. Basic computer abilities, problem solving skills, self-management skills, initiative skills, and multilingual skills are the five skills listed under this independent variable

#### *Work Experience*

The number of years a person has worked in the hotel sector was used to calculate the work experience score.

#### *Academic Qualification*

Employee competences were assessed based on academic qualifications. The weighted scores of these attributes were used to measure individual's competence level under this predictor.

### **Relationship between Professional Skills and Work Allocation**

Allocating human resources to tasks is referred to as human resource allocation. Many industries, including transportation, health care, hospitality, and tourism, have realized the necessity of human resource allocation (Ernst et al. 2014).

The effectiveness of human resource allocation is related to how to deal with human resource management, which is a critical issue for increasing employee happiness and profits.

Task allocation between different people members is significantly dependent on their skills, according to Adriana et al. (2011). According to Kayoko et al. (2011), in the hotel sector, where efficiency and customer satisfaction are the top priorities, proper human resource allocation is critical. Traditionally, human resource allocation decisions have been determined based on the institutional manager's experience. The technique of duties and human resource skills must be examined and taken into account combined, which is a significant and difficult issue. The resource that has special skills required by the task should be assigned as examined by Kayoko et al. (2011). They continue that among the service industry, in tourism and hospitality management, the allocation of hotel staff is one of the most encountered problems, the staff that has the right skills to deal with the task should be allocated without overwork.

## **Openness to Experience and Individual Performance**

Aesthetic sensitivity, active imagination, independence, attention to inner feelings, and intellectual curiosity all contribute to openness to experience. Individuals with high openness to experience are curious, creative, question specialists, unconventional, and ready to entertain new ethical, social, and political ideas (Dong 2009, Donnelly et al. 2012, Kim et al. 2009), as well as artistically sensitive, whereas those with a low openness to experience are comfortable and conventional. Conventional people prefer the known to the unknown, and their emotional responses are muted. People are more interested in the outside and inside worlds, and they are more likely to entertain modern opinions, unconventional values, and experience positive and negative emotions than closed people. Originality, sensitivity, sophistication, artistic aptitude, curiosity, imagination, intelligence, and broad-mindedness are all associated with openness to experience (Costa and McCrae 1992). This dimension was defined by McCrae and Costa (1992) as independent judgments, absorption, intelligence, unusual thought processes, aesthetic interests, emotional sensitivity, the depth and intensity of care, and the scope of conscientiousness. Intellectual curiosity, a rich fantasy life, awareness of feelings, the need for a variety of actions, aesthetic sensitivity, and a liberal value system all influence openness to experience (Dyrenforth et al. 2010). The findings of the fundamental structure of opposite heterogeneity revealed that individuals with a high openness to experience are eager to learn, imaginative, open-minded, and value a world of beauty (Digman 1990).

According to a review of the literature, this factor is closely related to consulting jobs and education (Benita and Supriya 2016, Greengross and Miller 2009, Judge et al. 1999, Komarraju et al. 2011, Costa and McCrae 1992). Intelligence and cognitive ability are known to have a significant relationship with performance. Openness to new experiences can indicate creativity and originality, both of which have a direct impact on performance because they help to fulfil new responsibilities in order to improve personal and organizational productivity. As a result, a new method of performing duties has a direct impact on the overall performance of the organization (Shafiro 2004, Teng 2008, Zeffane et al. 2018).

## **Evaluation of Generic, Technical and Professionals Skills of Employees**

The hotel industry's nature of work need qualified people in order to compete in the global market. Some authors characterize "technical" abilities as those that entail an element of physical exertion or technical components of completing a job as "hard" in their reviews of the literature. Technical skills are easier to learn and assess than soft skills, according to the literature; nonetheless, there is an increasing realization that both skill types are complementary and important for individual success in the workplace (Rainsbury et al. 2002, Hodges and Burchell 2003).

As a result, hard and soft skill types are considered as essential results in the development of new professionals through higher education, particularly in terms

of preparing them for the workplace (Nilsson 2010). Indeed, according to Zagonari's (2009) analysis of education and training in the hotel industry, "policies on hospitality education and training should provide a balance between professional skills, basic knowledge, and thematic specialization: students should reach professional skills in order to meet the current qualitative need of firms." However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, what these professional abilities are in the context of hospitality and tourism has not been properly addressed to far, and this is an issue of further interest in the current study.

### *Generic Skills*

Employability skills, soft skills, and life skills are some of the terms used by researchers to describe general skills (Mohan et al. 2018). "Core skills," "key competencies," and "employability skills" are all terms used to describe generic skills (Raybould and Wilkins 2005).

Employability skills are those that are needed not just to get a job, but also to advance within a company in order to reach one's full potential and contribute successfully to the company's strategic goals (Australian National Training Authority 2003). Interpersonal skills, assistance skills, leadership skills, connection skills, information gathering skills, information analysis skills, initiative skills, behavior skills, and quantitative skills are all examples of general skills (Baum 2002).

These abilities are critical for students' advancement, particularly when they enter the workforce. They are particularly critical for employees in the hotel business, who must develop and improve their employability skills in order to comprehend and use the technical skills they learned in their undergraduate studies. Given generic abilities are more vital in establishing a person's character for the growth and development of the sector. According to Raybould and Wilkins (2005), students must do their best to acquire these talents throughout their undergraduate degrees, if they want to succeed in the hotel sector. Generic abilities are critical in assisting employees in performing their duties efficiently and effectively.

There are nine generic skills that students must possess in order to be successful in the tourism industry. According to Raybould and Wilkins (2005): "oral communication, written communication, problem solving, conceptual and analytical skills, information management, team work and leadership, interpersonal, adaptability and learning, and self-management." Students must acquire and strengthen these skills with the help of a teacher who makes the best use of his or her curriculum (Ergin 2013). The hotel business is continually evolving as a result of technological advancements and the adoption of new work methods. Hospitality brands are in fierce battle to attract customers and keep their businesses afloat.

### *Technical Skills*

Technical skills are those that students learn in graduate programs intellectually rather than via their practical or individual ability (Raybould and Wilkins 2005).

They are only temporary and serve a specific purpose. In order to compete in their fields, employees need to establish a diversified profile as well as competent employable abilities. Graduates in the hotel and tourist business are evaluated on their ability to demonstrate the best of their abilities by adhering to humanistic, interactive, communicative, cognitive, behavioral, and general skills. Employees that work efficiently are the foundation of a great hospitality firm. Staff members must demonstrate suitable abilities at the proper times during service to ensure efficiency. Staff are expected to learn these abilities in order to produce the appropriate results. Employee competences are based on skills learned during training, and service quality is based on skill competency. Conflict resolution, self-initiative, sales and marketing, and knowing the quality of service anticipated by international guests were the talents with the highest expected competences, according to a survey conducted in Nairobi hotels by Kamau and Waudo (2012). Other required skills for someone to be regarded competent, according to the study's findings, were self-motivation, specific technical skills, solid interpersonal skills, and information technology, communication, and computer skills and good work habits are also considered. According to Eastaff (2002), skilled personnel should possess personal characteristics such as passion and the correct attitude, foresight, inventiveness, confidence, the capacity to motivate, flexibility, and respect for others.

### *Professional Skills*

Professional skills are needed in the industry, according to the literature. For example, Ap and Wong (2001) stated that if tour guides wanted to improve their recognition, position, and career chances, they needed to strengthen their professional abilities. Indeed, Baum and Szivas (2008) point out the difficulties encountered in the tourism business, where a lack of tourism expertise among the local population has hampered the industry's development. Employees with skills and competences can keep up with changes in the workplace, such as new technology. Furthermore, Hjalager (2003) focused on Euro-business Disney's methods, which place a higher priority on language abilities and personality attributes than particular tourism-related qualifications.

A routine task necessitates technical abilities (Oener 2016). When employed properly, both soft and hard skills improve employee performance, competitiveness, and quality delivery. The hospitality sector is a service industry in which quality is achieved by combining product and service. Professional skills considered in the hospitality industry include: guest greeting skills, guest reservation skills, telephone answering, bed making skills, guest check in and out, supervision skills, guest order taking, cooking skills, cocktail making skills, food and beverage service skills, carrying multiple places, room cleaning skills, guest night auditing skills, and so on. In order to work and manage efficiently in the hotel sector, employees in the hospitality industry must have a combination of generic, technical, and professional abilities. Hotel personnel who possess the necessary skills and expertise are competent and capable of completing the tasks assigned to

them. Work experience is important for hotel staff, according to studies, because it motivates them to do their jobs.

### **Work Experience of Hotel Employees**

Working in the hospitality sector necessitates a combination of talents, passion, and experience, since various studies show that having experienced staff may help them execute their jobs and delight their customers. Working experience in the related position, according to Karani (2011), Kwok et al. (2011), is a significant aspect that influences the recruiter's decision in the hospitality business.

Many researchers and employers overlook one important focus, the demand of internal employees, especially those who directly interact with customers, as Lings (2004) points out. Because the attitude and behavior of employees interacting with customers will influence the feeling and behavior of customers when they receive service, it is critical for managers to efficiently define and manage the demand of internal employees.

According to Kamau and Waudu (2012), hotel managers who want to provide high-quality service should focus on hiring people who can address problems and are fully qualified.

Staff must have emotional and aesthetic abilities, according to Crick and Spencer (2011), because they are constantly in contact with clients from many cultures and countries. It is possible to assign employees with the necessary skills in the appropriate positions. When a work necessitates the use of certain talents, the individuals involved in the task should have those skills (Kayoko et al. 2011). He goes on to say that if a task is properly assigned to staff, the task's performance will improve. As a result, good hotel administration and adequate human resource allocation are critical to the hotel's success.

The effective development of the hotel and tourist industry still necessitates further professionalization and alignment of education and training with the skills demands of hospitality firms. This necessitates strong coordination between industry and education training providers, which necessitates the creation of ways that include academic, apprenticeship, and traineeship programs. Hospitality education institutes are growing increasingly relevant to both students and the business. Students in hospitality management programs are encouraged to think strategically and to grasp how international hospitality firms should be managed (Enz 2011). Specific talents and competencies are expected of employees.

Because the sector is getting increasingly globalized, the demand for intercultural abilities and skills is becoming more crucial for personnel working in the industry (Sigala 2001). It is important to have specialized talents for career advancement.

When distributing work to a practitioner, team leaders must consider two groups of factors, according to Moore and Thielking (2005), in order to provide personnel an appropriate and safe workload so they may provide the greatest possible service to customers. The practitioner's level of experience and competency, the practitioner's present caseload, and the type and complexity of the difficulties



within each of the cases assigned to them are all factors to consider. Recent stressful experience in managing situations, recent similar cases, and the practitioner's training requirements and expertise are all factors to consider when allocating the task.

According to Kim (2008), a bachelor's degree in hospitality management is not regarded as a valuable qualification by students or employees, therefore job experience is more valuable than a bachelor's degree in hospitality management for a prospective employee.

According to Kayoko et al. (2011), hotels in the hospitality and tourism business must consider proper and effective resource allocation to tasks because the hotel's success or failure is determined by its human resource management. As a result, active human resource allocation is critical to the hotel's success. Some services in the hotel industry, such as meeting and welcoming a client, cannot be replaced by technology, hence smart human resource allocation is critical to the hotel sector's success.

Many studies and employers overlook one essential topic, the demand of internal employees, especially those who directly interact with consumers. Lings (2004) underlines the importance of human resource management. Because the attitude and behavior of employees interacting with customers has an impact on the customers' feelings and behavior after receiving service, it is critical for managers to effectively define and manage the way their employees provide service in order to ensure that their attitude and behavior are appropriate for providing the service. When assigning cases to a practitioner, team leaders must make sure that the workload is appropriate for the practitioner's personal and professional abilities and expertise (Moore and Thielking 2005).

When it comes to hotels, where efficiency and customer satisfaction are the top priorities, proper human resource allocation is crucial (Mitsuo et al. 2008). The decision to allocate human resources is mainly based on institutional management and expertise. The success of the hotel sector is dependent on effective hotel management and efficient human resource allocation. Increased professionalism is essential for the successful development of hospitality, and employees must possess specific skills and abilities in order to be assigned to jobs where they will perform successfully and meet customer expectations.

### **Cognitive Personality Traits**

Since the 1980s, majority of researches have focused on accomplishing factors considered as main personality measurements. This attention has been increased due to the development of a well-accepted personality structure (Goldberg 1990, 1992). Almost all of these researches confirmed the five-factor models strength (Murugesan and Dominic 2013), and recommended experiential results based on individual differences (Goldberg 1990, 1992).

They stated that the Big Five personality traits are extremely heritable, which means that the genetic effect on the five dimensions of Big Five personality traits measured as extraversion (53%), neuroticism (41%), agreeableness (41%), openness (61%), and conscientiousness (44%), have a genetic basis (Jang et al.

1996), have remained stable over time (Costa and McCrae 1992), and can be generalized across cultures (Costa and McCrae 1995, Salgado 1997). According to Goldberg (1993), personality traits such as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness, or the Big Five traits in another term, are intellectualized at various levels of concepts from a variety of theoretical viewpoints. Digman proposed his five-factor personality model in 1990, and Goldberg expanded it to include the highest levels of the organization in 1993.

## **Materials and Methods**

The study's population consists of managers and employees, of PRs together with guests of the three-star hotels. The research tool is a set of questionnaire forms that were developed based on literature review and revised by a group of academics and professionals. Validity and reliability of questionnaire forms were 0.76 and 0.79 which indicates a very high value of reliability and validity for the questionnaire items and that they are clear. One hundred and forty questionnaires were distributed in 33 three stars hotel in Greater Cairo. Thirty-three forms for managers, 47 for PRs employees, and 60 for economy hotels guests. The convenient sample technique was used in the distribution of the questionnaires. The distribution and collection took place during April 2020 to January 2021 period.

In this study the researchers used both the descriptive analytical and quantitative approaches to study the case under investigation. The approach is seen to best fit to analyze the case. In addition, it reveals the relationships between its various dimensions to interpret and conclude general conclusions that may contribute to improve the performance of PR. department in three-star hotels. To analyze the data, the SPSS version 28 was used for this purpose. Statistical analysis methods used were percentages, weighted averages and Kruskal Wallis test.

## **Results and Discussion**

What skills do attract the guest more when dealing with employees? To answer this question guests were asked to rank skills they most prefer when dealing with employees. Table 1 shows the ranking of these skills from that perspective.

**Table 1.** Skills Most Preferred by Guests when Dealing with Employees

Attribute Importance level	Very important		Moderately important		Not important		Weighted average	Rank
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Specialized academic qualification	40	74.07	10	18.52	4	7.41	144	1
Experienced in the field of work	34	62.96	14	25.93	6	11.11	136	2
Professional appearance and well grooming	12	22.22	24	44.45	18	33.33	102	7
Communication skills	18	33.34	21	38.88	15	27.78	111	6
Languages fluency	30	55.56	16	29.62	8	14.82	130	3
Managing critical situations	28	51.85	17	31.48	9	16.67	127	4
Emotional stability	22	40.74	20	37.04	12	22.22	118	5

Table 1 reflects the responses of economy hotel guests' preferences which indicate that 74.07% see specialized academic qualification as a very important characteristics that must be available in a PR's employees, while 18.52% said that is moderately important and only 7.41% said that it is not important at all. Moreover, based on weighted average Academic qualification however came in the first rank.

Experience in the field of work came in the second rank based on weighted average. In details, 62.96% indicated that is very important, whereas 25.93% said that is moderately important and 11.11% said that it is not important at all.

Languages fluency came in the third rank with 55.56% consider it as very important, meanwhile, 29.62% said that is moderately important and 14.82% contemplate that it is not important at all.

Managing critical situations came in the fourth rank. Of guests 51.85% stated that is very important, while 31.48% indicated that is moderately important and 16.67% defined it as not important at all.

Emotional stability came in the fifth rank. 40.74% indicated is very important, while 37.04% designated that is moderately important and 22.22%) said that it is not important

Communication skills came in the sixth rank. 33.34% stated that it is very important, 38.88% said that is moderately important and 27.78% indicated that it is not important at all.

Professional appearance and well grooming came in the seventh and last rank. 22.22% designated that it is very important, whereas 44.45% indicated that it is moderately important and 33.33% said that it is not important at all.

The researchers note that the respondents' answers focused mainly on academic qualifications, practical experience, and foreign language proficiency

rather than other personal skills, traits and characteristics. The ranking based on weighted average becomes as follows:

1. Specialized academic qualification.
2. Experienced in the field of work.
3. Languages fluency.
4. Managing critical situations.
5. Emotional stability.
6. Communication skills.
7. Professional appearance and decent smile.

To further investigate the case Kruskal Wallis test was performed to detect differences between managers and guests' viewpoints (Table 2).

**Table 2.** *Kruskal Wallis Rank Comparison of Skills between Managers and Guests*

Calculation Summary
$H = (12/(N(N+1))) * (\sum T^2/n) - 3(N+1)$
$H = 0.057 * 788.643 - 45$
$H = 0.0653$ The p-value is 0.7983. The result is not significant at $p < 0.01$

According to Kruskal Wallis test that compares ranks between groups aside from frequency, the test result is ( $H=0.0653$ ,  $p=0.7983$ ) which indicates non significance among the two groups investigated, i.e., PR managers from one side and guests from the other side. This means that both managers and guests agree to the set of skills proposed and also to their ranking according to importance from both sides aforementioned.

To assess the difficulties that deter the performance of PR department in economy hotels, guests were asked to weigh them according to the severity of impact. Table 3 represents these hindrances and their impacts.

**Table 3.** *Obstacles that Hinder the Performance of PR Department According to Guests*

Obstacles hindering the performance of PRs from guests point of view	Frequency	Percentages	Rank
Deficiency in adapting new technology and applications to keep connected to the guest	30	25	2
Bureaucracy and routine	12	10	4
Unqualified employees recruitment	28	23.33	3
Limited budget due to lack of owners awareness on PR importance	50	41.67	1
Total	120	100	

Table 3 shows the answers of economy hotels' guests on the impediments that deter the performance of PR. department. The researchers note that in this question the number of frequency exceeded 54 because some guests checked more than one

answer, therefore 120 answers were checked by guests of which 41.67% went for limited budget, 25% chose deficiency in adapting new technology and applications to connect with the guests, 23.33% selected unqualified employees recruitment and 10% picked bureaucracy and routine. The researchers concluded from the responses that the ranking of obstacles that deter the PR department performance in economy hotel is as follows:

1. Limited budget due to lack of owner's awareness of PR importance.
2. Deficiency in adapting new technology and applications to connect with the guest.
3. Unqualified employee's recruitment (absence of educational background and/or experience).
4. Bureaucracy and routine.

Guests' suggestions to enhance the role of the PR.s management in economy hotel were investigated. Table 4 reflects guests' suggestions.

**Table 4.** *Guests Suggestions to Enhance the Role of PRs in Economy Hotels*

Guest's suggestions to enhance the role of PRs in economy hotels	Respondents answers		Rank
	Frequency	Percent	
Using advanced technology in PR.s activities and tools	22	40.75	1
Maintain guest data and keep contact with them constantly	20	37.03	2
Recruitment of the appropriate academic Qualified and experienced employees	12	22.22	3
Total	54	100	

Table 4 shows the answers of the guests and their suggestions to improve the role of PR department in economy hotels as follows; 40.75% suggested using advanced technology in PR. activities, 37.03% proposed maintaining guest data and keeping constant contact with them while 22.22% advised the recruitment of the appropriate academically qualified and experienced employees.

The researchers summarized the impediments that deter the PR department performance according the point view of both managers, employees and guests in Table 5.

**Table 5.** *Obstacles Facing PR Department Performance Comparison from the Point View of Managers, Employees and Guests*

Mangers point view	Employees point view	Guest point view
Not using modern technological applications to communicate with customers	Insufficient P budget	Limited PR budget due to lake of owner's awareness
Limited budget allocated to PR.s activities	Not using advanced technology in PR activities	Deficiency in adapting new technology and applications to connect with guests
No interest in training	Use of ineffective tools and methods	Unqualified employees' recruitment (without educational background-without experience)
Routine, bureaucracy, centralization of decision	Unqualified employment or poor performance of PR workers	Bureaucracy and routine
Favoritism in selecting employees since owners and managers. retain these job for their favors	Inefficient planning or poor execution	
	Lag of internal working procedures	
	Lack of follow-up	

To further investigate the case, Kruskal Wallis test was performed to statistically compare answers of guests, managers and employees in regards to impediments detected. Table 6 displays the results of this analysis.

**Table 6.** *Kruskal Wallis Rank Comparison between Managers and Employees Regarding Impediments that Deter PR Department Performance*

Calculation Summary
$H = (12/(N(N+1))) * (\sum T^2/n) - 3(N+1)$
$H = 0.109 * 307.4 - 33$
$H = 0.5345$ . The p-value is 0.4647. The result is not significant at $p < 0.01$ .

As the results of Kruskal Wallis test indicate ( $H=0.5345$ ,  $p=0.4647$ ), therefore, it can be concluded that there are no significant variances detected among managers and employees regarding obstacles that hinder the performance of PR department. In other words they both agree on obstacles found and their ranking.

To further investigate the case a weighted average calculation for ranking of viewpoints of both employees and managers was carried over. The calculations were done based on adding the weights of both employees and managers "according to relevant scale of each variable" and resulted in the following order:

- 1- Favoritism in recruitment with 24 points.
- 2- Bureaucracy and centralization with 20 points.
- 3- Insufficiency of training with 16 points.
- 4- Limited PR budget with 15 points.
- 5- Not using modern technology to connect with guests with 13 points.

To deeply explore the case, the weights of the same variables that belonged to guests were added to the previous calculation using the relevant scale for guests and resulted in the following ranking:

- 1- Favoritism in recruitment with 30 points.
- 2- Bureaucracy and centralization with 24 points.
- 3- Insufficiency of training with 22 points.
- 4- Limited PR budget with 19 points.
- 5- Not using modern technology to connect with guests with 17 points.

Since the calculated mean ( $m=22.4$ ) therefore, Favoritism in recruitment (30 points), Bureaucracy and centralization (24 points) and Insufficiency of training (22 points) can be considered the main obstacles that hinder the performance of PR. department as agreed by managers, employees and guests. It is worth noting here that all factors are internal operational issues. It is worth noting also that what was thought to be major obstacles like limited budget and not using modern technology means of communication with guests' means were less than the calculated average mean and came at the bottom of the list of obstacles.

To further explore the case, guests' points of view were added to those of managers and employees to give a full picture. A summary of managers, employees and guests' viewpoints is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Comparison of Suggestions Recommended by PR Department Managers, Employees and Guests in Economy Hotel

<b>Mangers point view</b>	<b>Employees point view</b>	<b>Guest point view</b>
Using modern technological applications to communicate with customers	Increasing the PR budget	Using advanced technology in PRs activities and tools
Increasing the budget allocated to PR. activities	Using advanced technology in PRs activities and tools	Maintain guest data and keep contact with them constantly
Increasing training program	Recruitment of qualified academic calibers with the required experience	Recruitment of the appropriate academic qualified and experienced employees
Selecting and hiring employees with specialized qualifications and experience	Increasing training program	
Flexibility in decision-making and decentralization	Setting an annual plan for the activities for PR.s and follow up on implementation	

To further investigate the case, Kruskal Wallis test was performed to statistically compare answers of guests, managers and employees. Table 8 displays the results of this analysis.

**Table 8.** *Kruskal Wallis Comparison between Managers and Employees on Suggestions to Improve PR Department Performance*

Calculation Summary
$H = (12/(N(N+1))) * (\sum T^2/n) - 3(N+1)$
$H = 0.091 * 453.292 - 36$
$H = 5.2083$ . The p-value is .02248. The result is significant at $p < .05$ .

According to aforementioned table, Kruskal Wallis test results ( $H=5.2083$ ,  $p=0.02248$ ) which means there is a significant difference among managers and employees viewpoints in regards to their suggestions and their relevant ranking on how to improve PR department performance. PR managers focused on using modern technology followed by increasing budgets. In other words, they focused their suggestions primarily on employees and technology “operational issues”. Whereas, employees focus was different, suggesting the increase of budgets first and use of modern technology second. In other words, they related their suggestions to “financial issues” other than “operational” ones.

To further explore suggestions a weighted average calculation for ranking of viewpoints of both employees and managers was carried over. The calculations were done based on adding the weights of both employees and managers “according to relevant scale of each variable” and resulted in the following order:

- 1- Increase training with 17 points.
- 2- Recruitment of qualified experienced employees 17 points.
- 3- Increasing PR budget allocation with 13 points.
- 4- Use of modern technology to contact guest with 13 points.
- 5- Flexibility in taking decisions with 2 points.
- 6- Planning with 1 point.

To deeply explore the case, the weights of the same variables that belonged to guests were added to the previous calculation using the relevant scale for guests and resulted in the following ranking:

- 1- Recruitment of qualified experienced employees 20 points.
- 2- Increase training with 17 points (no guest weight).
- 3- Use of modern technology to contact guest with 16 points.
- 4- Increasing PR budget allocation with 13 points (no guest weight).
- 5- Flexibility in taking decisions with 2 points.
- 6- Planning with 1 point.



Since the calculated mean for the first four variable “excluding the irregular values of 5 & 6” ( $m=16.5$ ) therefore, recruitment (20 points), training (17 points) and use of modern technology (16 points) can be considered the main suggestions to improve the performance of PR department as agreed by managers, employees and guests. It is worth noting here that all factors are internal operational issues. It is worth noting also that what was thought to be an important suggestion like increasing budget and flexibility in decision making together with planning were less than the calculated average mean and came at the bottom of the list of suggestions.

## **Conclusions and Implications of Research**

Many findings were driven from this research. First, PR managers as well as their employees agree to obstacles that deter the performance of the PR department. Second, that managers and employees tend to relate difficulties to financial deficits rather than operational shortfalls. Third, significant differences were detected among guests from one side and managers and employees from the other side in reference to how to overcome these obstacles.

From guests’ viewpoint the most important attributes were academic qualification, experience in the work place, communication skills, language fluency “all are technical skills”, followed by managing situations and emotional stability “cognitive skills”. This clearly gives evidence to the idea of this research that technical skills surpass cognitive ones and debunking the myth that attitude is the most important attribute that should be searched during recruitment of new employees or retaining old ones. This also gained another proof taking managers viewpoint into consideration since statistical tests showed no significant difference among guests’ viewpoints and those of managers.

Based on final ranking of attributes investigated recruitment of qualified experienced employees was the most important attribute, followed by increasing PR training, use of modern technology to contact guest, increasing PR budget allocation, flexibility in taking decisions and planning for PR activities. It should be noted here that favoritism was pronounced as an important problem that leads to recruiting unqualified PR employees. In other words favoritism whether from the side of managers or owners causes the most irritating problem in the PR department and led to the most important suggestion to improve the department performance i.e., hiring qualified employees.

Many hospitality managers tend to overestimate staff attitude as well as they do with financial resources while at the same time underestimate the value of technical skills in performing work. It’s been heard all the time that the most important values are those related to attitude of employees. It is also a common say that employees can be taught everything but attitude. This research debunks such a myth. The finding of this research gives evidence that technical skills overweigh cognitive ones and that financial deficits are not the deciding factors that contribute to performance but rather; technical skills do. This research was conducted on PR department employees. More research is needed on other

departments to detect whether the same findings apply. Simultaneously, more research is also inevitable on other types of hospitality operations like four and five star hotels, independent versus chain hotels and so forth.

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