

## RELATIONSHIP OF SOFT SKILLS AND EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE OF HOTELS IN CHINA

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### Abstract

More and more companies realize that employees are one of the important factors for the company's further development. If you want to develop better in the information age, you must have a group of outstanding employees. Therefore, the training plan to improve employee performance is a relatively important work in human resource management. Hard skills are just our visible professional and technical indicators, while soft skills are invisible indicators, and they are also a scale to measure a person's ability to handle things. This research aims to investigate how soft skills affect the performance of employees at Hotels in China. This study adopts convenience sampling and analyzes the data from 158 questionnaires distributed through SPSS. The analysis results will find out the more important and useful skills in Hotel. This study was conducted at the Guizhou Province, China. Three soft skills of communication, negotiation, and leadership were tested to be positively correlated with the performance of hotel employees. This research also allowed us to identify which soft skills are most important to a team to enable the overall team to succeed. This research can provide a reference for the human resource management of hotels to plan the soft skill development training of employees.

### Keywords

Soft skills, employee performance, communication, negotiation, leadership, China

### INTRODUCTION

It is one of the primary economic sectors that is able to adjust to the realities of modern life while simultaneously transitioning to new technological paradigms, and the service industry has become a branch of the economy that not only focuses on providing functional goods or durable goods and fulfilling people's demand for various services, but it is also one of the main economic branches that can do so (Vasily, 2021) . Therefore, keeping up with new technology is a required hard skill for our company, but that does not necessarily mean that the business is profitable. Therefore, we need to work on improving our soft skills in order to be able to adjust to modern life.

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The leaders of a company always have high hopes that newly hired employees will have excellent all-around capabilities, but the reality is that many employees are unable to meet the requirements. As a result, company leaders should take into account and assess the available soft skills when recruiting new employees and develop training programmes to help employees improve their skills. Soft skills, not just hard skills.

The ability to activate others as well as yourself is referred to as soft skills. The employee's performance in the industry is good if they are able to complete their tasks perfectly, and the value of the employee's soft skills increases when those skills have a higher level of sophistication. Hard skills are essential for breaking into an industry, but soft skills are what allow employees to successfully complete the tasks they are given. Naturally, there is no specific curriculum for developing soft skills, so this cannot be done at a university or a college. Must be acquired through experience gained in the workplace.

Hotels in China possess a quality that allows it to be classified as either a chain store or a franchise store. When it comes to training programmes for employees, various categories of hotels have developed a variety of unique approaches. Some hotel implements a unified brand image, unified service quality, unified operation standards, unified marketing, and unified information management chain management for all of its chain stores. This allows the hotels to provide customers with high-quality hotels and member services that adhere to unified standards and offer quality assurance.

With an average of 20–24 staff members, some hotel branch is not a very large organisation. We can find pertinent information about employee training in the employee handbook of the hotels, which is as follows: The first is theoretical training, which may include corporate culture, team building, and other topics; the second is skill training, which may include professional skills, job responsibilities, and other topics, with an emphasis on professional skills. It is a term that refers to the concrete abilities that one must have. How to improve the skills of employees is one of the most important factors in improving the competitiveness of a hotel, especially when facing competition on an international level, and employees are one of the best showcases of the hotel's capabilities.

The purpose of this study is to determine the essential non-technical skills that are required in the hospitality industry as well as the consequences for workers who do not possess these skills. The only way to acquire soft skills is through hands-on experience, as opposed to taking classes taught by professionals. To boost employee performance on the job and boost overall competitiveness, many businesses are willing to invest in the development of employees' soft skills. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the importance of soft skills on hotel employee performance. such as the communication, negotiation and leadership are significantly related to employee performance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The term "soft skills" refers to an individual's attitude and behaviour that is suitable for both their professional life and their personal interactions (Vasanthakumari, 2019). Not only are soft skills

critical for obtaining good work performance, but they are also essential for the continued existence of the employment relationship (Md et al., 2019). The term "soft skills" refers to a broad variety of talents, capacities, and behaviours that provide an individual the ability to navigate, operate, and succeed in the workplace (Lippman et al., 2015).

First, the results that showed that firms improved their performance as a result of general training of employees' competencies in soft skills, behaviour, and attitude have enriched the human capital theory. These results show that firms can improve their performance by training employees in these areas. Second, the company's ability to fulfil its operational objectives and improve its business performance is aided by the production of workers who possess abilities that are singular and unrepeatable and who provide value to the organisation.

Table 1: Frequency of Soft Skills

Soft skills   Author	(Foster et al., 2019)	(Apodaca, 2019)	(Gladstone, 2022)	(Jian et al., 2018)	(Kowai, 2022)	(Grimmer, 2021)	(Cai, 2014)	Frequency
Communication	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	7
Enthusiasm	x							1
Teamwork	x					x		2
Problem solving			x				x	2
Critical thinking	x							1
Empathy		x						1
Adaptable/ flexible		x	x					2
Leadership		x	x	x			x	4
Negotiation		x	x		x			3
Conflict management				x	x			2
Motivation				x				1
Coordination						x		1
Innovation ability							x	1
Delegation						x		1

Source: Compilation

As can be seen from Table 2, the three soft skills of communication, leadership and negotiation have the highest frequency in this study, which can be further studied.

### Communication

The absence of effective representation for project stakeholders is the factor that contributes to poor communication the majority of the time, followed by a lack of communication planning and training. The fact that the persons working on the project do not fully understand one another is, however, the least essential factor for poor communication. On the other side, the most evident effects of poor communication are misunderstandings and disagreements amongst those working on a building project together. Yet, a tardy reaction to a catastrophe is the least significant consequence that results from poor communication. (Suleiman.,2022). The link between

organisational communication, employee job motivation, and employee work performance is crucial in projecting the organisation to a higher pedestal; as a result, employees have a tendency to perform significantly better when they are favourably and continuously motivated in their jobs (Ekundayo & Omodan, 2018).

Establishing a communication system that is aligned with the execution of a business goal is essential, as is defining certain fundamental communication methods and behaviours, and then associating those behaviours and ways with incentives and sanctions. Utilizing evaluation as a tool to motivate people to work towards improving their communication skills. Workers have the ability to perfect their communication skills and content, as well as their abilities to communicate with one another, in order to minimise unfavourable conflicts that are caused by strategic communications. A breakdown in communication may be caused by a failure to implement a communication system that is aligned with the execution of the strategy and that defines certain fundamental methods and linguistic behaviours in communication while also relating these behaviours to incentives and penalties. Utilizing evaluation as a tool to motivate people to work towards improving their communication skills. Workers have the ability to perfect their communication skills and content, as well as their abilities to communicate with one another, in order to minimise unfavourable conflicts that are caused by strategic communications. A breakdown in communication may occur as a result of variations in perception, interactions between people of different genders, the use of various communication styles, or ego conflicts (Tabassum, 2020). When communication breaks down, it always leads to conflict.

The quality of life of workers may be improved by improving internal communication, which in turn can increase employee engagement, contentment, profitability, and the overall success of the firm. It is a crucial aspect of running a company that drives motivation and coordination across the whole organisation and comes before the formation of trust (Prikshat et al., 2020). Humans have a built-in propensity to communicate with one another, collaborate on projects, coordinate activities across levels, and guide both themselves and others towards achieving their objectives. The failure to communicate constituted a disturbance, which in turn produced delays, as well as conflict between individuals and among themselves. (Petar et al., 2022). In the end, having clear and concise communication makes it much easier to do the responsibilities that have been delegated. It is essential to communicate in order to explain the objectives and purposes of the firm. In other words, efficient communication is the cornerstone of a powerful team that is united in its pursuit of the same objective.

### **Negotiation**

Negotiation is essentially a practical skill. Improving the daily negotiating skills of employees can improve the working skills of practitioners.(Ramirez-Marin et al., 2022)

Negotiations are not limited to serious political or business scenarios and are almost ubiquitous in everyday life and work. (Huang,2022)Business negotiation is the unity of theory and practice, history and logic. It is also a technology, but also an art, but also a science, with the characteristics of abstraction, regularity, and universality. At the same time, business negotiations often involve

many tangible interests, and if the negotiations fail, it is likely to lead to the termination of trade, bringing unpredictable losses (Lin et al., 2020)

Employees initiated negotiations when they experienced negative discrepancy and negative affect, as well as when they believed the negotiation issue had a high valence, the benefits outweighed the costs, and their probability of being able to successfully initiate and complete the negotiation was high (Kathrina et al., 2022). Employees did not initiate negotiations if they did not perceive negative discrepancies or negative affect, or if the activating effects of negative discrepancy and negative affect were buffered by negative instrumentality, no expectancy, or low valence. Employees also did not initiate negotiations if they expected a positive outcome from the negotiations and did not perceive a negative outcome.

The higher the concentration of companies and customers, the lower their relative negotiation power, and they are more likely to provide commercial credit. It is further found that in areas with low marketization progress, companies have weaker negotiation power than major customers and are more motivated to provide commercial credit. Key suppliers have enhanced negotiating power and are more likely to obtain commercial credit. (Wu et al., 2022)

Throughout the process of negotiation, one may differentiate between three different types of topics that need to be agreed upon: distributive, integrative, and compatible issues (Martin-Raugh et al., 2020). The parties who have the aim of winning are referred to as distributive, and the purpose of reviewing is to decide whether or not to win in the negotiation. Integrative means that both parties are able to maximise the value that they get from the output together. On the other hand, integration means that priorities be brought into line with one another in order to further shared goals.

### **Leadership**

Classic leadership theories are based on the behavior of leaders and their relationships with employees. However, newly developed leadership theories focus not on the behavior of the leader but on the incentives or rewards the leader provides and define three types of leadership: transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire( Ramos-MAcaes et al., 2022). The finest leaders are perceived as having a focus on people, being motivated by teamwork, and having an eye towards the future. Integrity, vision, and inspiration are three of the most important components of good leadership, and the most successful leadership styles are those that emphasise collaboration and performance.

It is via a collection of leaders who are all equipped with the necessary leadership qualities that an organisation will have the best chance of successfully achieving its common goal (Samera & Mark, 2020). Thus, several academics are of the opinion that leadership has a substantial influence on the levels of satisfaction and commitment experienced by employees. Because of this, we are able to strive towards and ultimately achieve the organization's vision and values. Hence, executives that possess authenticity have the ability to touch the hearts of workers and will be able to propel the organization's goal forward. In high-pressure and chaotic circumstances, it's sometimes more

effective to maintain a constructive calm by demonstrating leadership than than speaking out. It promotes results that are maintained by constructive actions taken together.

Frawley et al, (2013) mentioned interaction between people is the foundation of leadership, and leaders get advantages from establishing and maintaining connections with followers. It was discovered that leadership may be exercised in a variety of ways, including verbal exchanges, non-verbal interactions, and social processes of meaning production.

### **Employee Performance**

Individual (for example, the kind of work being performed) and market characteristics are the most significant predictors of employee job success, according to Matthew and Robert (2021). (e.g., labour market constraints). In order for the organisation to maximise revenues while cutting down on the use of resources and costs, increasing productivity is a critical problem that must be addressed. The level of performance shown by workers was a significant factor in this situation. Enhancing the performance of workers was a primary concern for HR as well as the firm as a whole. A high level of employee performance also raises the bar for the market standard. This is because a high level of employee performance results in excellent service and goods. The performance of employees may have a positive impact on the success of the business. Hence, the success or failure of a business might be contingent on the performance of its employees (Bui., 2021).

Even while the performance of the individual contributors was strong, the performance of the team as a whole was shockingly poor. The paradigm of teleworking has had an effect on the interpersonal ties that exist among workers, and as a result, job performance has become an aspect that is up for debate in businesses. Employees' personal issues are overlooked owing to a lack of personal touch and encouragement from front-line supervisors, who are focused on duties and prolonged working hours instead of listening to or encouraging their workers. This had an effect on work performance and led to a high turnover rate among employees. Organizations are attempting to address the problems of their staff members via a variety of programmes designed to foster connections and enhance professional effectiveness (Chellam & Divya,.2022).

It is necessary to use performance evaluation that makes use of efficient instruments and methods of human resource management in order to meet the requirements of the labour force and realise the goal of the company at the highest possible level of productivity while also catering to the requirements of the workforce. For the business to continue to thrive and maintain high standards for its workforce, it is essential to have an effective assessment system that also makes use of its results. Naturally, developing and implementing a performance assessment process may assist businesses in accomplishing their goals. This is because the process helps improve the efficacy of employees. It has been stated that inadequate training and development may be remedied to improve overall performance. Performances have to be assessed both before and after training interventions in order to guarantee that the workers benefited from the training that was provided. (Mehale, 2021).

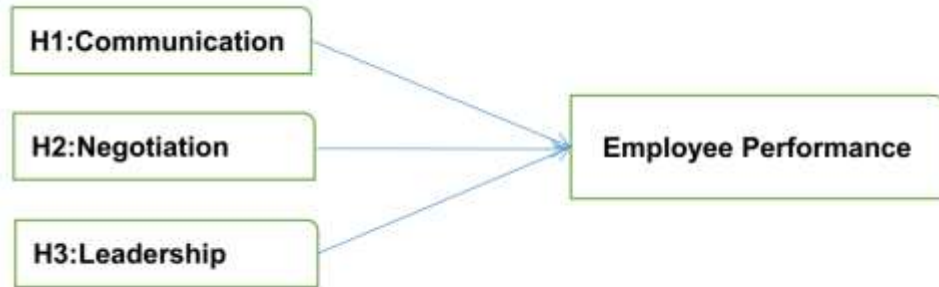


Figure 1: Research Framework

These are three hypotheses in this study:

H1. Communication has a significant relationship with the employee performance of hotel employees.

H2. Negotiation has a significant relationship with the employee performance of hotel employees.

H3. Leadership has a significant relationship with the employee performance of hotel employees.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopts quantitative analysis method. Quantitative analysis is the use of statistical or numerical data to find frequency and significance. Qualitative methods were chosen due to time constraints and suitability for this study. This study assessed the relationship between soft skills and employee performance. The data collection method is by distributing online questionnaires, and using SPSS to conduct predictive research on the data collected by the questionnaires.

The online questionnaire survey adopts the 'Questionnaire Star' form, which is convenient for distribution and monitoring. Online questionnaires can be quickly distributed through social media such as WeChat, QQ, and fb. This may increase participation rates, as questionnaires can be accessed at any time or place using an information device.

The target population of this study is hotels in Guiyang. The background of the interviewees is mainly from the employees of hotels. Sampling is a statistical method often used in the research process, and there is a positive correlation between sampling research and data accuracy. This study adopts the method of convenience sampling. Convenience sampling was used because it was expected that the questionnaire would be distributed in familiar settings. Also, non-probability sampling is effective for increasing the number of respondents. Respondents, therefore, welcome the recruitment of other respondents from familiar settings.

There are about 13 hotels in Guiyang with 265 employees are targeted. Therefore, the sample size will be 155. In this study, 158 questionnaires will be distributed to the employees of the hotels in Guiyang. Taherdoost, (2017) emphasizes the importance of a balance in sample size. According to research, when the sample size is too large, the accuracy of the data decreases. Therefore, it is recommended that the target sample size for this study be at least 155 valid responses. A population size of 246 can be achieved with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.



The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient may range anywhere from 0 to 1. The greater the degree to which the value received is comparable to one, the higher the level of internal consistency (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The values of Cronbach Alpha that are shown in Table 1 would serve as a point of reference for the examination of the data.

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha Test

Cronbach's Alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable

Source: Jain and Angural, (2017)

## FINDINGS

### Demographic Information

The survey involved 158 people. Although an attempt was made to have all participants be employees of hotels in Guiyang, there were still 3 participants who were not hotel employees. Therefore, we have 155 active participants. The highest number of participants came from between the ages of 20 and 30, with 65 participants. The second highest was in the age group 30 to 40 with 45 participants. We only had 4 participants under the age of 20. In the work experience groups. The maximum is 6 to 10 years of work experience. The second highest number is below 5 years. 21 years old and above experience group with 11 people. In the educational background of the participants. Mostly undergraduates, a total of 94 people participated. The second highest number came from certificates/diplomas with 46. We only have 4 nos postgraduate / PHD.

### Hypotheses testing

ANOVA and Multiple Regression (including Beta Coefficient, VIF/Multicollinearity) will be carried out to analyze the relationships between the dependent variable (enterprise performance) and independent variables (human resource planning, recruitment employed, and performance appraisal). Multiple linear regression was used to analyze communication, negotiation and leadership as independent variables and employee performance as dependent variable. The premise of regression analysis is that the residual items are independent and there is no multicollinearity.

Table 3: Model Summary

As	Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	1	.961a	.923	.922	.254633323

shown in Table 3, The determination coefficient R<sup>2</sup> was 0.961, and the adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value was 0.923. communication, negotiation and leadership can account for 92.3% of the total variation of dependent variable enterprise performance.

Modea		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	1117.976	3	39.325	606.514	.000b
	Residual	9.791	151	.065		
	Total	127.766	154			

Table 4: Table of ANOVA

As shown in Table 4, the results of ANOVA show that the calculated p value is less than 0.001, which indicates that the proposed model is of positive significance in explaining the research phenomenon. Therefore, the model proposed in this study is considered to be relevant and appropriate.

Table 5: Coefficients

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.063	.112		.561	.575
	CM	.014	.028	.013	.505	.614
	NG	.715	.026	.786	27.494	<b>.000</b>
	LD	.243	.025	.264	9.852	<b>.000</b>

As shown in Table 5, the standardized regression coefficients of communication, negotiation, and leadership dimensions are 0.013 (Sig=0.614>0.05), 0.786 (Sig=0.000<0.005), and 0.264 (Sig=0.000<0.005), respectively. From the results, Only communication did not reach a significant

level, negotiation and leadership had significant positive effects on employee performance. From the effect point of view, negotiation has the greatest impact on employee performance, followed by leadership, and communication has the least effect.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the importance and performance of three selected soft skills. The current performance of soft skills is identified and fully recognized as important to the organization. To achieve the performance of an employee, individual performance alone is not enough, a team is also needed. Looking at the overall results, most of the responses were dissatisfied with the performance of their teams, which may affect the performance of the hotel.

This study was carried out according to the research objectives. From 155 valid participants, the study concluded that all study objectives were met. The results of the study are listed in Table 52.

Table 6: Accomplishment of Research Objective

Research Objective	P-value	Hypothesis
Objective 1 Determine whether the communication is significantly related to employee performance.	P>0.05	Not Supported
Objective 2 Determine whether negotiation is significantly related to employee performance.	P<0.05	Supported
Objective 3 Determine whether leadership is significantly related to employee performance.	P<0.05	Supported

All the hypotheses studied in this study are positively related to the employee performance of hotels in Guiyang. Communication This skill is demonstrated to communicate properly between one's own team and other guests. This skill is important, especially in Guiyang because we host people from all over the world. Without proper communication skills, we may encounter many problems. A hotel needs a leader. Different opinions will be encountered in the course of business. Equipped with good leadership members, employees can find appropriate solutions in situations of disagreement and debate.

There will, in the end, be some kind of negotiating. When confronted with an issue or a disagreement, negotiation is an essential skill to have. The most effective strategy is to stay out of fights. As a result, the talent of negotiating is challenging to acquire and tough to perfect. Communication, negotiation, and leadership all play a vital part in ensuring that members of a team are happy with their performances. What kind of communication is most likely to unify workers around a common goal and bring them forward together? When there are disagreements amongst workers, negotiation is another crucial factor that plays a part.

The assessment of the performance of the staff members is a difficult aspect of this study. No matter what sort of assessment is carried out, performance cannot be quantified; rather, it is entirely dependent on the individual's point of view. Thus, add reliability tests to the findings that have been obtained. A questionnaire like this one was sent around from friend to friend. would lead to an imbalance in the number of people belonging to each demographic group. For instance, the vast majority of participants are not managers but rather elderly cleaners, which may have an impact on the reliability of the findings. It's possible that the findings will be more accurate if the survey is conducted in person.

There is a possibility that the content of the study is wrong as a result of the particularities of the various hotel operations and the management measures taken in response to the epidemic scenario in China. This research was carried out in Guiyang, thus the findings may not be generalizable to other cities or hotel sectors. As a result, it has been proposed that the study be publicised in order to enhance the reference relevance for research that will be done in the future. In addition, using a qualitative method makes it easier to produce findings that are accurate as well as thorough for the purpose of analysis and future reference.

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