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## **OPTIMIZING SKILLS MANAGEMENT AS A PERFORMANCE DRIVER FOR MADAGASCAR'S HOTELS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Global economic changes have brought the concept of skills back to the forefront of human resources management. Skills, defined as a set of knowledge, know-how, and interpersonal skills that can be mobilized, are now a key factor in organizational performance. In the Malagasy context, marked by a notable boom in tourism and hospitality, competency management appears to be a strategic dimension in meeting the growing demands for quality, competitiveness, and customer loyalty. This research examines the relationship between competency management and the performance of hotel establishments in Madagascar. It is based on the hypothesis that optimizing individual and collective skills contributes to long-term organizational effectiveness. Statistical analyses of data from a survey of 200 Madagascan hotel employees, revealing trends and correlations between skills development practices and performance indicators, highlight the importance of proactive and contextualized skills management in the hotel sector. They also open up practical perspectives for HR managers and theoretical implications for the study of organizational performance in emerging contexts.

**KEYWORDS:** Hotel sector, Human resources, Skills, Management, Performance

### **INTRODUCTION**

Until the 1990s, the world of work underwent many changes, such as changes in the competitive

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environment and the opening up of national economies to global markets. In this context, the notion of skills became a major concept in management sciences, particularly in human resources management. This notion of competency is therefore central to human resources and concerns all professional groups: workers, employees, executives (supervisors, senior managers, etc.) and managers (executives, administrators, etc.).

The notion of competency, which is not limited to the sphere of work and business, has appeared at different times in various scientific fields (F. D. Le Deist & Winterton, 2005). In the broadest sense, skills refer to knowledge (knowledge, know-how, interpersonal skills) that can be mobilized, generally derived from experience and necessary for the performance of an activity. Over the past few decades, Madagascar has experienced significant growth in the tourism sector, attracting domestic and international travelers thanks to its exceptional biodiversity, unique natural landscapes, and rich cultural heritage. This growth has stimulated demand for quality hotels and led to strategic approaches by these establishments towards the skills of their employees. It is in this context that the question arises: how does skills management impact the performance of hotels in Madagascar?

Based on the assumption that optimizing skills management ensures the long-term performance of hotel establishments, this study aims to analyze the importance of considering employee skills in the pursuit of performance. To carry out this study, we adopted a rigorous methodological approach combining an exhaustive review of the literature with surveys of a sample of 200 employees of hotel establishments in Madagascar and statistical analyses.

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## **I- CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Skills management refers to the methods and tools used in human resources management to optimize a company's performance by seeking the best possible match between the skills required by the company and the skills available within its human resources.

Henri Fayol (1930) discusses the importance of optimizing skills management to ensure the long-term performance of the organization. Fayol emphasizes that effective skills management involves identifying, developing, and judiciously allocating talent within the company. According to him, when employees' skills are properly managed and utilized, it allows the organization to function optimally, adapting its human resources to the changing demands of its environment.

Michael Armstrong (1994) emphasizes the importance of matching skills to jobs to ensure the operational performance of the company. He asserts that when employees' skills are appropriately aligned with the requirements of the position they hold, this promotes greater efficiency and increased productivity. By ensuring that each individual has the skills necessary to perform their duties, the organization can optimize

its operations and achieve its operational objectives more effectively.

Chris Argyris (1993) emphasizes the importance of training in improving an organization's operational performance. He argues that organizations that encourage continuous training for their members are better equipped to adapt to change, innovate, and improve their operational efficiency. Training not only enables the acquisition of new skills, but also promotes an environment where learning is integrated into the organizational culture.

By preserving the company's human capital, promoting employee engagement, and investing in their development, organizations can ensure their competitiveness, agility, and success in an ever-changing economic environment. Armstrong (1999) highlights the fact that the loss of key skills can have a significant impact on an organization's ability to achieve its strategic objectives. By promoting talent retention, the company can preserve its know-how, expertise, and capacity for innovation, which is essential for maintaining its competitiveness and operational performance over the long term.

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## II. RESULTS

Skills management in the hotel sector involves identifying the skills required for each position, whether at reception, in catering services, maintenance, management, etc. Given that the hotel sector in Madagascar has unique characteristics due to its geographical location, tourism development, and economic context, it is crucial to take these specificities into account in skills management.

### **2.1 Consideration of competence in the recruitment process**

Analyzing the recruitment process in hotel establishments provides essential information for understanding how job-specific skills are managed and valued. By focusing on key aspects such as the clarity of the skills required in job advertisements, the alignment of recruitment tests with these skills, the match between the skills of recruited candidates and job requirements, and the adequacy of the salaries offered for these skills, this study aims to assess the effectiveness and relevance of recruitment strategies in the hotel sector.

***Table 1: Distribution of employee opinions on the assessment of skills suitability and recruitment conditions***

Opinions	Never	Rarely	Quite often	Often	Always	TOTAL
Skills-recruitment match						
Definition of useful skills	6,0%	5,0%	3,0%	82,0%	4,0%	100%
Skills-based test	2,0%	3,0%	9,0%	4,0%	82,0%	100%
Skills-job match	8,0%	1,0%	2,0%	88,0%	1,0%	100%
Skills-salary match	8,0%	0,0%	81,0%	6,0%	5,0%	100%

Source: Authors, 2025

An analysis of employees' perceptions of skills assessment and recruitment conditions in the hotel industry reveals some significant trends. First, 82% of respondents consider the definition of skills in job offers to be clear, which promotes targeted and relevant recruitment, although a minority (11%) still point to shortcomings. Second, while 88% believe that the skills required do indeed correspond to the positions assigned, only 11% consider their salary to be in line with their skills, highlighting a problematic gap between recognition and remuneration. Finally, 82% confirm that recruitment tests accurately assess the expected skills, reflecting an overall effective approach. These results show that, despite satisfactory management of the skills-job match, perceived unfairness in remuneration remains a key issue that can affect staff motivation and retention.

## **2.2 Skills development**

When it comes to skills development, analyzing the recruitment process in hospitality establishments is essential to understanding how job-specific skills are managed and valued. By focusing on key aspects such as the clarity of the skills required in job advertisements, the alignment of recruitment tests with these skills, the match between the skills of recruited candidates and job requirements, and the adequacy of the salaries offered for these skills, our research aims to assess the effectiveness and relevance of recruitment strategies in the hotel sector.

Analysis of employee perceptions of skills development in the hospitality sector reveals strong and insightful trends. A large majority emphasize the relevance of the training programs in place: 82% believe that they meet job requirements, while 86% confirm that they are appropriate for employees' skills. These results reflect a clear desire to align training programs with the specific needs of the field, ensuring high-quality service and greater competitiveness.

In addition, 85% of respondents say that training is regularly provided during assignments and 83% during promotions, revealing a particular focus on preparing employees for new responsibilities. This proactive approach demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of continuous skills development, not only to improve individual and collective performance, but also to promote job satisfaction and staff retention.

In an industry with high turnover, this strategy is key to keeping hotel services stable and high-quality.

**Table 2: Distribution of employees' views on skills development in the hospitality sector.**

Opinions Skills development indicator	Never	Rarely	Quite often	Often	Always	TOTAL
Job requirement training	4,0%	3,0%	6,0%	82,0%	5,0%	100%
Skill-based training	1,0%	5,0%	3,0%	86,0%	5,0%	100%
Assignment-based training	4,0%	3,0%	5,0%	85,0%	3,0%	100%
Promotion-based training	4,0%	9,0%	1,0%	83,0%	3,0%	100%
All of the above	3,3%	5,0%	3,8%	84,0%	4,0%	100%

Source: Authors, 2025

In short, this data shows that hotels are really committed to helping their employees keep learning new skills, which is super important for keeping services high-quality and making sure the hotel industry stays successful for a long time.

### **2.3 Retention of skills**

Analyzing talent retention in hospitality establishments provides essential insight into strategies for engaging and retaining skilled employees. Our study examines how rewards, compensation adjustments, career development support, and contractual commitments related to training influence talent retention. This analysis is fundamental to understanding the effectiveness of human resources management policies in retaining qualified and motivated staff, a key factor for success in the hospitality industry.

Analysis of employee perspectives on skills development in the hospitality industry reveals strong and insightful trends. The majority consider training to be well integrated into the realities of the job: 82% believe that it meets the requirements of their positions, while 86% emphasize its relevance to employee skills. This orientation confirms a proactive approach aimed at adjusting training programs to the immediate needs of the field, which is essential for ensuring a high level of service and competitiveness.

Furthermore, training is considered frequent during assignments (85%) and promotions (83%), reflecting the desire of establishments to effectively prepare their employees to take on new responsibilities. This strategy demonstrates a clear understanding of the importance of continuous skills development, not only to improve individual performance, but also to enhance staff satisfaction and retention.

These results reveal a strong commitment by the hotel sector to lifelong learning, which is considered an essential lever for service quality and organizational sustainability.

**Table 3: Distribution of employee opinions on the presence of skill retention in the hospitality industry**

Opinions	Never	Rarely	Quite often	Often	Always	TOTAL
Knowledge retention indicators						
Bonuses based on skills	5,0%	82,0%	5,0%	5,0%	3,0%	100%
Remuneration based on skills	3,0%	86,0%	1,0%	5,0%	5,0%	100%
Support based on skills	4,0%	83,0%	4,0%	6,0%	3,0%	100%
Obligation after training	6,0%	5,0%	83,0%	4,0%	2,0%	100%
Overall	4,5%	64,0%	23,3%	5,0%	3,3%	100%

Source: Authors, 2025

#### 2.4 Performance of hotels and resorts

The tourism and hospitality sector in Madagascar has undergone remarkable development over the years, reflecting both the unique challenges and opportunities of this island destination. Historical and recent information suggests that, although Madagascar has faced significant challenges, particularly due to the pandemic, the potential for tourism growth and development remains significant. The recovery of tourism could play a crucial role in the economic revitalization of the island, capitalizing on its unique biodiversity and appeal as an ecotourism destination.

Interviews with hotel operators in Madagascar revealed crucial information about the performance of hotels in this unique region. First, geographic location proved to be a determining factor in the financial success of hotels.

In addition, the commercial performance of hotels in Madagascar appears to be influenced by the diversification of services.

The survey of hotel industry employees revealed that a large majority of these employees (60.5%) view their company's performance positively, suggesting renewed optimism after the challenges posed by the pandemic. In addition, 16.5% of employees have a "very positive" perception. However, it is important to note that 1.5% have a "negative" opinion and 0.5% a "very negative" opinion. These contrasting opinions highlight the importance of closely monitoring performance indicators to maintain growth in the

sector and address employee concerns. Overall, these data point to encouraging growth and development potential for the hotel sector in Madagascar.

*Table 4: Performance evolution*

Performance evolution	Frequency
Positive	60,5%
Stable	21,0%
Very positive	16,5%
Negative	1,5%
Very negative	0,5%
TOTAL	100%

Source: Authors, 2025

### III. DISCUSSIONS

The validation of the hypothesis suggesting that optimizing skills management ensures the long-term performance of hotel organizations is carefully structured into three distinct analytical phases. Each phase targets a specific sub-hypothesis, which together form the basis of our overall understanding of the impact of skills management on the performance of financial institutions.

#### **3.1 Recruitment skills and company performance**

The first sub-hypothesis argues that taking skills into account during recruitment is crucial for company performance. This notion is rooted in the literature on strategic human resource management, particularly in the work of Wright and McMahan (1992), who emphasize the importance of aligning recruitment practices with the company's overall strategy. In this phase, we will examine how identifying and selecting specific skills during recruitment helps to strengthen the organization's capabilities and improve its long-term performance.

Analysis of the summary table of the hotel business performance model, taking skills into account, reveals relevant information. The coefficient of determination R-squared ( $R^2$ ) is 0.575, showing that 57.5% of the variance in hotel business performance is explained by the variables in the model. This high value suggests that the model is well suited. The predictor variables include the experience and qualifications of candidates at the time of recruitment. Their significant impact on performance is confirmed by the Sig. F variation value of 0.013, well below the standard threshold of 0.05. Thus, the results suggest that

recruitment criteria based on experience and qualifications are key indicators of performance in the hotel sector. Such results highlight the importance of a targeted recruitment policy to improve organizational performance in the hotel industry.

**Table 5: Summary of the hotel business performance model based on recruitment criteria**

R	R-two	Modifier les statistiques			
		Variation of F	ddl1	ddl2	Sig. Variation of F
,758 <sup>a</sup>	,575	4,439	2	197	,013

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Are the recruitment criteria within this company based on the candidate's experience? Are the recruitment criteria within this company based on the candidate's qualifications?

Source: Authors, 2025

### **3.2 Training as a moderator between skills development and business performance**

The second sub-hypothesis posits that training acts as a moderator between skills development and company performance. This idea is based on organizational development theory, as explained by Cummings and Worley (2014). They demonstrated that employee training and development are essential for maintaining and improving skills within the company, which has a positive effect on overall performance. We will analyze how effective and targeted training programs contribute to developing employee skills, leading to improved performance and successful adaptation to market changes.

The analysis of the coefficients of the variables in the hotel business performance model, focusing on employee skills development and the interaction of skills development through training, reveals important information.

The coefficient for skills development is 1.526 with a standard error of 0.719 and is statistically significant ( $p = 0.035$ ). A high beta of 0.655 suggests that skills development has a strong and positive impact on company performance, which clearly indicates that investments in employee skills development are closely linked to improved business performance. Furthermore, the interaction of skill development through training has a positive coefficient of 0.326, with statistical significance ( $p = 0.027$ ). This presupposes that not only is skill development itself important, but its effectiveness is amplified when combined with training initiatives. The negative beta (-0.718) for this interaction could indicate a saturation effect where, beyond a certain point, further increases in training may have diminishing returns on performance. Consequently, the importance of continuous employee skills development in the hospitality sector, particularly when reinforced by tailored training programs, is highlighted by these

results. Hospitality companies that invest in employee training and development are therefore likely to see significant improvements in their overall performance.

**Table 6: Coefficients of VARIABLES IN the model of hotel business performance in relation to employee skills development and the interaction of skills development through training**

Model	Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Erreur standard	Bêta		
(Constant)	3,005	1,022		2,939	,004
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	1,526	,719	,655	2,123	,035
Interaction of Skills Development through Training	,326	,118	-,718	2,228	,027

a. Dependent variable: How do you assess the company's performance over time?

Source: Authors, 2025

### **3.3 Skill retention and company performance**

Finally, the third sub-hypothesis suggests that skills retention is a key factor in maintaining long-term performance. According to Boxall and Purcell's (2011) work on talent management, retaining key skills within the organization is crucial to its sustainability and long-term success. This phase focuses on the importance of retaining talent and essential skills, examining how retention strategies, such as career plans, rewards, and recognition, influence the stability and continued growth of the company.

The study of the variables in the logistic regression model equation that assesses the impact of skills retention on long-term performance provides important insights into human resource management practices in companies. The results relate to three main aspects: rewarding skilled employees, aligning compensation with employee skills, and supporting skilled employees in their career development.

The first variable, "Are competent employees rewarded?", shows a positive effect ( $B = 0.420$ ) with statistical significance ( $\text{Sig.} = 0.014$ ), indicating that the practice of rewarding competent employees is indeed linked to better long-term performance. The odds ratio ( $\text{Exp}(B) = 0.657$ ) therefore establishes that when competent employees are rewarded, the probability of achieving sustainable organizational performance is lower than when they are not. In other words, although rewards are positive, they are not sufficient on their own to maintain high performance in the long term.

Regarding “Does compensation evolve according to employee skills?”, the positive coefficient ( $B = 0.466$ ) and statistical significance ( $\text{Sig.} = 0.019$ ) show that aligning compensation with skills contributes to improved performance. A odds ratio of 1.594 indicates that this practice significantly increases the likelihood of maintaining long-term performance, highlighting the importance of a fair, competency-based compensation policy.

The third variable, “Are competent employees given special support in their career development?”, has the highest coefficient ( $B = 0.824$ ) and is statistically significant ( $\text{Sig.} = 0.031$ ). The odds ratio of 2.279 highlights the crucial importance of career development support for competent employees. As a result, companies that invest in the career development of their competent employees can expect a significant improvement in their long-term performance. Such results reflect the importance of a talent management strategy focused on developing and leveraging skills within the organization.

**Table 7: Variables in the model equation Skill retention maintains long-term performance**

		B	E.S	Wald	ddl	Sig.	Exp(B)
Pas 1 <sup>a</sup>	Are competent employees rewarded?	-,420	,393	1,146	1	,014	,657
	Does compensation vary according to employee skills?	,466	,379	1,514	1	,019	1,594
	Are competent employees given special support in their career development?	,824	,421	3,824	1	,031	2,279
	Constant	-,636	1,060	,360	1	,549	,530
a. Introduction of variables in step 1: 53- Are competent employees rewarded? 54- Does compensation evolve according to employee skills? 55- Are competent employees given special support in their career development?							

Source: Authors, 2025

Each of these steps provides valuable insight into the impact of skills management on different aspects of performance and confirms that optimizing skills management ensures the long-term performance of hotel organizations. Thus, it is clear that effective and targeted skills management strategies are crucial for sustainable success in the hotel industry.

## CONCLUSION

This research highlights the strategic importance of skills management in the hotel sector in Madagascar. The results show that aligning employee skills, job requirements, and training practices not only contributes to improved organizational performance, but also to staff satisfaction and retention. Optimizing skills management therefore appears to be an essential lever for ensuring the competitiveness and sustainable performance of hotel establishments in the face of the challenges of a constantly evolving market.

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