

Managerial Competency Needs and Training Requests: The Case of the Spanish Tourist Industry

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There is some inconsistency between the theory and practice of the analysis of deficits in managerial capabilities. Some academic literature suggests that the study of needs should be considered as gaps in competencies (Bee and Bee, 1994; Peiró, 1999), but organizations actually analyze needs as training preferences (Ford and Noe, 1987; Guthrie and Schwoerer, 1994, 1996; Tharenou, 1991).

The aim of this study is to analyze technical and generic managerial competency needs and managerial training requests in order to conclude which method provides more accurate information on the real deficits in managerial capabilities. The sample was made up of eighty managers from hotels and restaurants in the Valencian Community on the Mediterranean coast of Spain.

The results show, on the one hand, the existence of technical competency needs in many topics or areas of knowledge (for example, economic-financial management, marketing and market analysis) and also in generic competencies (such as control of hasty reactions in highly emotive situations). However, managers request additional training only in technical aspects, such as information technology and languages, but not in generic aspects. In any case, both methods could be considered complementary. The authors discuss implications and limitations of the study as well as directions for future research.

Note: This article is part of a research project entitled "Análisis funcional de los puestos de gestión de organizaciones de servicios turísticos y su incidencia sobre la calidad del servicio" (Functional analysis of management posts in tourism service organizations and its impact on service quality). It is a joint project between Valencia University and Jaume I University, funded by Conselleria d'Educació i Ciència (GV-3268-95).

We would like to thank Professor Roger Kaufman from the Office for Needs Assessment and Planning, Florida State University, Tallahassee, for his help in reviewing the manuscript.

Tourism, the economic sector on which this study focuses, represents one of the main sources of Spanish wealth and employment. According to data provided by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) (1998), Spain is the fourth major tourism destination worldwide. However, the Spanish government, universities, and the tourist companies themselves have emphasized that the Spanish tourist industry should increase its competitiveness in order to cope with present and future technological and socioeconomic changes (Agrupación Hotelera de las Zonas Turísticas de España [ZONTUR], 1997). This factor is particularly pressing for the tourist industry in the Valencian Community of eastern Spain, one of the seventeen Spanish Autonomous Communities, which has not been able to adapt to the changing market requirements up to now. This is due to the obvious exhaustion of its predominant tourism model ("sun and sand") and its seasonal activity (mainly in summertime) (Camisón and Monfort, 1993).

Moreover, to achieve this growth in competitiveness, the various tourist institutions agree that tourist professionals must improve their job performance. They specifically recommend an upgrade of managerial performance by increasing management competencies (ZONTUR, 1997). In fact, some deficiencies in management competencies have already appeared in two previous studies in the Valencian tourist industry (Grau, Salanova, Agut, and Llorens, 2000; Grau, Agut, Llorens, and Martínez, in press). All these factors lead us to revise two main topics from a theoretical and practical viewpoint: (1) performance improvement through competency needs analysis and (2) managerial competency needs analysis, whether generally or specifically applied to tourism managers.

Performance improvement through competency needs analysis. Very often in academic literature, the study of competency deficits lies in analyzing so-called *training needs* (Agut, 2000), which are traditionally defined as the gap between the current and the desired performance (Rossett, 1987). However, this definition has been widely criticized because a deficit in job performance does not necessarily imply the adoption of a training solution (Wright and Geroy, 1992). In fact, implementing performance improvement at this level might be wrong 80 or 90 percent of the time, so care should be taken in selecting training as the intervention of choice (Triner, Greenberry, and Watkins, 1996).

For this reason, one group of authors has come up with a more precise definition and considers training need as the performance gap caused by a skills deficit (Mitchell and Hyde, 1979; Swierczek and Carmichael, 1985; Wright and Geroy, 1992). Other authors extend the list of variables and define training need as the imbalance between the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) a person must have in order to perform a job effectively and the ones that the person actually possesses (Goldstein, 1993; McEneary and McEneary, 1987).

Nevertheless, managing an organization involves adaptive responses to both the job tasks and the changing features of the environment, but to face

these other situations the traditional KSAs are not enough (Kanungo and Misra, 1992; Lawler, 1994). For this reason, the concept of competency has recently been introduced. According to De Ansorena (1996) and Levy-Leboyer (1997), this construct includes two principal dimensions: on the one hand, competency takes in the KSAs, which basically consist of having knowledge about a topic and knowing how to apply it to the job. It allows the efficient performance of specific tasks, which mostly are routine, programmed, and of a technical nature. This dimension has been labeled *technical competency*; one example is information technology (IT). On the other hand, competency covers other individual characteristics (for example, motivation, attitudes, or personality traits) that involve coping with other less routine, programmed, and technical tasks that are also part of the job. This dimension has been termed *generic competency* (for example, initiative to implement new plans).

Therefore, on the basis of the definition of competency, a competency need emerges when the required competency for efficient job performance is lower than that possessed by the worker (Agut, 2000). Those deficits could be solved through training or other measures, such as job enrichment, job content innovation (Peiró, 1999), job redesign (Bee and Bee, 1994), or enhancement of the organizational climate (Goldstein, 1993). Hence, as training is only one of the possible solutions, some scholars have criticized the label *training need* (Kaufman, Rojas, and Mayer, 1993; Kaufman, 1998, 2000).

Even so, Spanish organizations do not carry out competency needs analysis; rather, they study training needs, although this is not a generalized practice either (Peiró, Cruz-Roche, and Orero, 1997). Moreover, training-needs analysis very often consists of asking subjects about their perceptions of their training needs (self-assessment), which in fact could actually be training preferences (Latham, 1988) instead of real deficits in KSAs or competencies.

Managerial competency needs analysis. The study of managerial capabilities deficits in fact consists of studying training needs but not in detecting competency needs, and management training-needs analysis is an infrequent organizational activity (O'Driscoll and Taylor, 1992; Saari, Johnson, McLaughlin, and Zimmerle, 1988). Even when such a study is carried out (for example, Ford and Noe, 1987; Guthrie and Schwoerer, 1994, 1996; Tharenou, 1991), the most common method is to ask the manager about which training needs he or she perceives (self-reports). Once again, training is assumed to be the most appropriate solution measure for the need.

This situation is even more negative in the case of Valencian tourist managers, because there is a lack of research on management competency needs in terms of gaps. In fact, only two previous studies (Grau, Salanova, Agut, and Llorens, 2000; Grau, Agut, Llorens, and Martínez, in press), which are part of the same research project as this report, analyzed competency needs in terms of gaps between the competency that the manager possesses and what the job requires. Both studies used qualitative methodology: focus groups

composed of key Valencian tourist sector respondents (public administration representatives, hotel and restaurant managers, supervisors, tour operators, service user tourist associations, and labor unions).

The first study (Grau, Salanova, Agut, and Llorens, 2000) analyzed four focus groups and found competency deficits in the categories of IT, languages, health and risk prevention at work, marketing, and impartiality toward problems. The second study (Grau, Agut, Llorens, and Martínez, in press) analyzed six further focus groups and discovered competency needs in further areas: work organization, human resources management, user profile and behavior, and ability to adapt to new and challenging situations.

Therefore, the inconsistency between the theory and practice of managerial capability deficits is obvious. On the one hand, academic literature traditionally suggests that needs should be considered as gaps in performance, KSAs, or competencies. However, nowadays, the analysis of gaps in terms of competencies seems more appropriate, because this new concept allows for a better understanding of efficient managerial performance on the job. Hence, there is a competency need when the manager's competency is lower than what the job requires. On the other hand, organizations analyze needs as training preferences and ignore the gaps in KSAs or in competencies approach.

This leads us to address the following question: Is the analysis of competency needs in terms of gaps, as recent academic literature proposes, more exact than the analysis of the training activities preferred by managers, as commonly carried out by organizations? The aim of this article is to analyze (1) technical and generic managerial competency needs in terms of gaps and (2) managerial training requests, in order to discover which method provides more accurate information about the real deficits in managerial capabilities.

Method

Sample. The criterion for selecting respondents was to include representative hotels and restaurants from the two main Valencian tourism models ("sand and sun" and the conference trade), as featured in a previous descriptive report about the Valencian tourist industry carried out by the research team. Next, we contacted managers of about seventy hotels and sixty restaurants from both tourist models by phone and explained the aim of the research.¹ Of these, eighty managers agreed to participate in the research.

The final sample was made up of eighty tourist organization managers (nineteen from "sand and sun" hotels, twenty-one from conference trade hotels, twenty from "sand and sun" restaurants, and twenty from conference trade restaurants). Of these, sixty-four were men and twelve were women (four individuals did not supply this information). The mean age was 41. Of the sample, 54 percent reported having a university education. All of the managers

had the same professional status (top-level managers). Their current job tenure was seven years on average, with a managerial experience mean (in tourism or other sectors) of sixteen years.

Procedure and Questionnaire Design. The research team carried out data collection between October 1997 and October 1998. The managers filled out a questionnaire entitled “Questionnaire for the Analysis of the Role of Hotel and Restaurant Managers,” which the research team designed based on a review of the literature and previous research experience in other service organizations. The questionnaire was designed to explore both managerial competencies analysis and training requests analysis.

Research team members met with each respondent in a face-to-face interview, using a semistructured interview guide,² to hand out the questionnaire and make sure the respondent understood it completely. Research team members who administered the questionnaires had wide previous experience in this methodology.

Managerial Competencies Analysis. We analyzed technical and generic managerial competency areas from a five-point rating scale (1 = nothing at all; 5 = high).

To analyze technical managerial competencies, we included sixteen topics or areas of knowledge (for example, languages, IT, or quality management), taken from tourist industry literature (Rogers and Slinn, 1993), and also the analysis of the information on technical managerial competencies, gathered in the previously mentioned focus groups. According to the definition of *technical competency* (the ability to do something and the knowledge of how to do it [Kanungo and Misra, 1992]), we analyzed the knowledge and skills in each area of knowledge.

For the analysis of generic managerial competencies, we included twenty-six managerial characteristics, taken from literature on managerial competencies (Boyatzis, 1982; Kanungo and Misra, 1992; McCauley, Lombardo, and Usher, 1989), and also the information analysis of the previously mentioned focus groups. These characteristics refer to three types of generic competencies:

1. Self-efficacy (“being able to do”) (six items): characteristics that are modulators and facilitators, which allow managers to apply knowledge and skills to perform tasks successfully (Kanungo and Misra, 1992)
2. Self-control and interpersonal relationships (“knowing how to behave”) (eleven items): the ability to adapt to and deal with different people and situations, keeping one’s emotions under control and maintaining a responsible attitude in the development of the job
3. Proactivity (“wanting to do”) (nine items): the ability to adopt an anticipative rather than reactive role toward problems and opportunities on the job and in the organization (Morgan and Palmer, 1997)

Managerial Training Requests Analysis. These needs are measured by the following open question: What training activities do you consider necessary to complete your managerial training? (More than one answer is possible.) In order to compare the results of both methods, two judges (the authors) classified the training activities obtained on the basis of the competencies included in the questionnaire. First, they classified the information separately, and later they discussed the classifications jointly, in order to reach a final classification.

Variables Related to Managerial Competency Needs. These variables referring to managerial competency needs are specified.

Technical competencies

- Present knowledge level
- Knowledge importance for efficient job performance
- Present skills level
- Skill importance for efficient job performance

Generic competencies

- Managerial characteristic level
- Managerial characteristic importance for efficient job performance

According to the definition of need in terms of gaps, we obtain the needs by subtracting the required competency level (measured through the competency importance) from the present competency level (measured through the present competency level). The formula used to obtain the needs in knowledge, skills, or managerial characteristics was as follows:

Knowledge, skill, or managerial characteristic level minus knowledge, skill, or managerial characteristic importance

Taking into account that all these variables are measured on a five-point scale, the criterion proposed to attain the gaps was as follows: negative gap (values ≤ -0.51); adjustment margin (values between -0.50 and 0.50); and positive gap (values ≥ 0.51). Thus, three different situations could be obtained from the subtraction. However, we focused on the negative gaps, since those were the needs.³ We obtained three types of needs:

- Knowledge need: This results from subtracting knowledge importance from present knowledge level.
- Skills need: This results from subtracting skill importance from present knowledge level.
- Managerial characteristic need: This variable results from subtracting managerial characteristic importance from managerial characteristic level.

Variable Related to Managerial Training Requests. The variable that explores the managerial training requests is the following:

- Request of a training activity in the various competencies. This is a dichotomic variable: (1) “no training need perception” and (2) “training need perception.”

Results

We have divided the results into four subsections: previous descriptive analysis; method 1: managerial competency needs analysis; method 2: managerial training requests; and relationship between methods.

Descriptive Analysis. First, with regard to technical competencies, managers considered it very relevant to have knowledge to perform the job properly in almost all areas of knowledge (see Table 1), as on the whole, the mean values fall between 4 (quite) and 5 (high). They rated as most important that knowledge related to quality management and rated tourist activity coordination as the least important. They also found it relevant to possess skills to perform the job efficiently in most of the topics (see Table 2), as most mean values were between 4 and 5 (high). They also agreed on the order of importance of knowledge and skills.

However, according to Goldstein (1993), only the knowledge and skills that are important to efficient job performance should be included in a needs analysis. Following this criterion, we proposed the inclusion of the areas of knowledge whose mean values are 3 or over. The only area of knowledge that does not fulfill this criterion is tourist activity coordination, which was consequently not taken into account in the next data analysis.

The mean values of knowledge level were around 3 (some) and almost 4 (quite), except for computing, whose mean value was less than 3 (see Table 1). The mean values range was similar for skills level, as the lowest level of skill was in computing, although in two areas (work organization, people and work team management), the mean values were over 4 (see Table 2).

To assess generic competencies, we carried out a principal-components analysis (SPSS program), in order to determine the empirical structure of the three generic competencies, because this statistical analysis allows the transformation of a group of variables into another uncorrelated variables group named factors (Bisquerra, 1989). We also carried out a reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha).

The final solutions are summarized in Table 3, which contains the following data: factor loadings (factor saturation of each item in the factor, that is, the relationship to the factor), factor variance percentages (the percentage of data variability, which is explained by that factor; the remaining data variability is explained by other nonincluded variables), and Cronbach's alpha of the factor (internal consistency of the factor; Bisquerra, 1989).

Table 1. Knowledge: Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Consistencies (Cronbach's Alpha), and Gaps Analysis

Areas of Knowledge	Mean Value of Knowledge Importance			Mean Value of Knowledge Level			Perceived Gap in Knowledge		Type of Gap
	N	Mean		N	Mean		Mean		
		SD	SD		SD	SD			
1. Economic-financial management	74	4.35	0.71	75	3.03	1.01	-1.31	Negative	
2. Marketing and market analysis	74	4.39	0.72	75	3.12	0.93	-1.26	Negative	
3. Quality management	74	4.55	0.64	75	3.61	0.97	-0.94	Negative	
4. Health and risk prevention at work	74	4.05	1.06	75	3.15	1.04	-0.90	Negative	
5. Work organization	72	4.49	0.73	74	3.84	0.91	-0.65	Negative	
6. People and work team management	74	4.50	0.67	75	3.76	0.94	-0.74	Negative	
7. Human resources management	74	4.24	0.82	75	3.31	1.05	-0.93	Negative	
8. Tourism products and services	74	4.16	0.86	75	3.39	0.97	-0.77	Negative	
9. User profile and behavior	71	4.34	0.81	73	3.59	1.00	-0.75	Negative	
10. Knowledge of environment and territory	74	4.08	0.98	75	3.68	1.02	-0.40	Adjustment margin	
11. Computing	73	3.84	1.07	74	2.62	1.26	-1.22	Negative	
12. Languages	74	4.27	1.00	74	3.03	1.12	-1.24	Negative	
13. Commercial management	72	4.22	0.86	73	3.22	1.00	-1.00	Negative	
14. Accommodation management	49	4.00	1.12	52	3.54	1.26	-0.46	Adjustment margin	
15. Food and drink management	73	4.32	0.81	74	3.62	0.95	-0.70	Negative	
16. Tourist activity coordination	52	2.98	1.48						

*Gap: value $\leq - .51$: negative gap (need); $- .50 \leq$ value $\leq .50$: adjustment margin, value $\geq .51$: positive gap

Table 2. Skills: Means, Standard Deviations, Internal Consistencies (Cronbach's Alpha), and Gaps Analysis

Areas of Knowledge	Mean Value of Skill Importance			Mean Value of Skill Level			Perceived Gap in Skill		Type of Gap*
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Mean		
1. Economic-financial management	70	4.40	0.75	72	3.44	0.85	-0.96	Negative	
2. Marketing and market analysis	70	4.31	0.83	72	3.44	0.98	-0.87	Negative	
3. Quality management	70	4.59	0.69	72	3.83	0.89	-0.76	Negative	
4. Health and risk prevention at work	70	4.19	0.92	72	3.36	1.09	-0.83	Negative	
5. Work organization	71	4.51	0.69	72	4.14	0.61	-0.37	Adjustment margin	
6. People and work team management	71	4.54	0.71	72	4.04	0.66	-0.50	Adjustment margin	
7. Human resources management	72	4.26	0.89	72	3.65	0.92	-0.61	Negative	
8. Tourism products and services	71	4.10	0.99	73	3.62	0.86	-0.48	Adjustment margin	
9. User profile and behavior	69	4.29	0.82	71	3.80	0.80	-0.49	Adjustment margin	
10. Knowledge of environment and territory	72	4.11	1.03	73	3.77	0.98	-0.34	Adjustment margin	
11. Computing	70	3.96	1.08	72	2.86	1.34	-1.10	Negative	
12. Languages	72	4.31	1.00	73	2.32	1.15	-1.99	Negative	
13. Commercial management	69	4.33	0.87	71	3.42	1.00	-0.91	Negative	
14. Accommodation management	47	3.96	1.23	51	3.49	1.30	-0.47	Adjustment margin	
15. Food and drink management	70	4.44	0.79	72	3.85	0.87	-0.59	Negative	
16. Tourist activity coordination	50	2.97	1.56						

*Gap: value ≤ -0.51 : negative gap (need); $-0.50 \leq$ value ≤ 0.50 : adjustment margin; value ≥ 0.51 : positive gap

Table 3. Principal-Components Analysis and Internal Consistencies (Cronbach's Alpha)

Competencies	Competency Importance Factor Loading	Competency Level Factor Loading
<i>Self-efficacy ("being able to do")</i>		
1. Ability to express your thoughts, opinions, and feelings to others freely	.644	.775
2. Ability to go beyond the barriers or limitations that come up in the development of the job	.723	.589
3. Ability to argue your opinions in the decision-making process	.839	.734
4. Self-confidence in your ability to achieve job objectives	.538	.668
5. Ability to manage your work time efficiently	.707	.616
Variance percentage	48.65 percent	46.51 percent
Cronbach's alpha	.7278	.7063
<i>Self-control and interpreting relationships ("knowing how to behave")</i>		
6. Impartiality toward problems	.718	.576
7. Control of hasty reactions in highly emotive situations (aggressiveness, resignation, excitement, etc.)	.588	.516
8. Ability to adapt behavior and way of thinking to new situations	.642	.573
9. Objectivity in judgment (people and situations)	.727	.762
10. Attitude toward others (being available to listen to other people)	.609	.505
11. Ability to adapt language, physical appearance, behavior, etc. to specific job situations	.823	.676
12. Stress tolerance, being able to maintain efficiency under time pressure situations, disagreement, conflict, etc.	.525	.548
13. Consideration of ethical criteria in management	.619	.748
14. Responsibility for decisions and behaviors	.715	.549

Variance percentage	42.15 percent	29.93 percent
Cronbach's alpha	.8189	.6946
<i>Proactivity ("wanting to do")</i>		
15. Ability to maintain and create a high level of activity	.729	.501
16. Efficiency and flexibility to solve problems detected	.822	.666
17. Enterprising spirit, active search for new opportunities	.715	.661
18. Initiative to implement new plans	.779	.795
19. Perseverance in solving problems and inconveniences	.827	.477
20. Control of aims achievement within time limits	.682	.431
21. Attitude to meeting targets	.704	.513
Variance percentage	56.70 percent	34.86 percent
Cronbach's alpha	.8674	.6806

Note: Following Bisquerra (1989), only eigenvalues above 1 are extracted.

The final analysis shows that each generic competency was actually made up of only one factor, and each of them was also sufficiently internally consistent, because Cronbach's alpha meets the criterion of .70 (Nunnally, 1978) in almost all cases. However, the items do not explain the high factor variance percentage. The scale with the highest variance percentage is "wanting to do" (56.70 percent), and the lowest percentage appears in "knowing how to behave" (29.93 percent), as Table 3 indicates. The "wanting to do" scale of importance shows the highest internal consistency value (Cronbach's alpha = .8674), and the lowest value appears in "wanting to do" level scale (Cronbach's alpha = .6806).

Finally, the mean values of the final generic competencies, shown in Table 4, indicate that managers considered the possession of all of these competencies to be quite important (all the values are over 4). The most important characteristic is responsibility for his or her decisions and performance (related to "knowing how to behave"), while the least important is consideration of ethical criteria in management (related to "knowing how to behave"). Furthermore, managers reported that they have a good level in those competencies, with a mean values range between 3.75 and 4.51.

Method 1: Managerial Competency Needs Analysis. As Table 1 indicates, the knowledge gaps fluctuate between -1.32 and -0.4 , and there are needs in all the areas of knowledge. The greatest need is in economic-financial management, followed by marketing and market analysis. Only the two categories of knowledge of environment and territory and of accommodation management are within the adjustment margin.

The skill gaps range between -1.99 and -0.34 (see Table 2). Again, we find needs mostly in the areas of knowledge. The greatest needs are in languages, followed by IT (user level). In contrast to the previous results, five topics are within the adjustment margin: tourism products and services, people and work team management, work organization, tourist products and services, knowledge of environment and territory, and accommodation management.

The generic competency gaps analysis was carried out with the mean values of the final items,⁴ and those gaps range between $-.88$ and $-.26$ (see Table 4). The needs appear in twelve of the twenty-one characteristics, which mostly refer to "knowing how to behave" and "being able to do." The highest need is in control of hasty reactions in highly emotional situations. The mean values closest to 0 are in (1) consideration of ethical criteria in management and (2) responsibility for decisions and behaviors.

Method 2: Managerial Training Requests. First, we must point out that all the activities requested by managers to complete their managerial training are concerned with technical competencies; not one refers to generic competencies. Moreover, the eighty managers put forward few training requests (in total, 168 training activities). That is to say, each manager would request an average of 2.1 activities to complete his or her managerial training.

As Table 5 indicates, the largest training requests are for computing (23.8 percent of the total training requested), followed by languages (15.5 percent of the total) and economic-financial management (14.3 percent). That means that more than half of the total requested training activities (53.6 percent) is concentrated on only three topics.

Managers hardly mentioned additional training in the topics of health and prevention of risks at work, accommodation management, user profile and behavior, and knowledge of environment and territory (only one manager requested training in each of these).

Relationship between Methods. Even though we do not test any hypotheses, we could expect that the managers who report training requests in a specific area of knowledge display a greater need (in knowledge and/or skills) in that area than do the ones who request no training. Training would therefore be a way to solve the deficit, and the methodologies could be considered complementary. However, this is possible within technical competencies, as the managers solely report training requests in those aspects. To test this, we carried out one-way analysis of variance, in which the dependent variables were the knowledge or skills gaps, and the factor was the training requests.

The results show that the gaps in knowledge and skills are more negative in managers who request training in that area of knowledge than in those who do not request any training. In other words, the managers who request training in a specific topic show a greater competency need in that area than do the managers who request no training in that subject. Nevertheless, this result is statistically significant in only three areas of knowledge: economic-financial management (skills) ($F = 6.078$; $df = 68$; $p = 0.016$), marketing and market analysis (knowledge) ($F = 4.953$; $df = 73$; $p = 0.029$), and computing (knowledge) ($F = 9.550$; $df = 72$; $p = 0.003$).

Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this article was both to analyze technical and generic managerial competency needs in terms of gaps and to study managerial training requests. In addition, we compared both methods in order to discover which one offers more accurate information on managerial capability deficits.

Method 1: Managerial Competency Needs. In the technical competencies, both knowledge and skills needs appear in ten of the fifteen areas of knowledge. Managers themselves detect deficits in knowledge and skills in many topics relevant to efficient managerial performance. These results are similar to those we obtained in the two previous studies that used focus groups made up of other subjects, in addition to Valencian tourist managers (Grau, Salanova, Agut, and Llorens, 2000; Grau, Agut, Llorens, and Martínez, in press). Thus, despite the use of different techniques and respondents, the studies coincide in that managers from Valencian hotels and restaurants have knowledge and also skills deficits in computing, languages, health and risk

Table 4. Generic Competencies: Means, Standard Deviations, and Gaps Analysis

Characteristics Making up Generic Competencies	Mean Value of Characteristic Importance			Mean Value of Characteristic Level			Perceived Gap in Characteristic		Type of Gap*
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Self-efficacy ("being able to do")									
1. Ability to express your thoughts, opinions, and feelings to others freely	74	4.54	0.60	75	4.15	0.67	-0.39		Adjustment margin
2. Ability to go beyond the barriers or limitations that come up in the job	74	4.74	0.50	76	4.14	0.63	-0.60		Negative
3. Ability to argue your opinions in the decision-making process	75	4.67	0.55	76	4.03	0.73	-0.64		Negative
4. Self-confidence in your ability to achieve job objectives	72	4.74	0.50	75	4.33	0.68	-0.41		Adjustment margin
5. Ability to manage your work time efficiently	74	4.59	0.57	76	3.83	0.81	-0.76		Negative
Self-control and interpreting relationships ("knowing how to behave")									
6. Impartiality toward problems	74	4.55	0.72	76	3.78	0.86	-0.77		Negative
7. Control of hasty reactions in highly emotive situations (aggressiveness, resignation, excitement, etc.)	74	4.64	0.56	75	3.76	0.91	-0.88		Negative
8. Ability to adapt behavior and way of thinking to new situations	74	4.55	0.67	76	3.75	0.93	-0.80		Negative
9. Objectivity in judgment (people and situations)	73	4.64	0.54	76	3.95	0.80	-0.69		Negative
10. Attitude toward others (being available to listen to other people)	74	4.73	0.53	76	4.33	0.74	-0.40		Adjustment margin

11. Ability to adapt language, physical appearance, behavior, etc. to specific job situations	74	4.62	0.63	76	4.22	0.74	-0.40	Adjustment margin
12. Stress tolerance, being able to maintain efficiency under time pressure situations, disagreement, conflict, etc.	74	4.59	0.62	76	3.89	0.84	-0.70	Negative
13. Consideration of ethical criteria in management	73	4.53	0.67	75	4.27	0.70	-0.26	Adjustment margin
14. Responsibility for decisions and behaviors	73	4.77	0.43	75	4.51	0.58	-0.26	Adjustment margin
<i>Proactivity ("wanting to do")</i>								
15. Ability to maintain and create a high level of activity	74	4.61	0.57	76	4.16	0.57	-0.45	Adjustment margin
16. Efficiency and flexibility to solve problems detected	74	4.74	0.44	76	4.17	0.62	-0.57	Negative
17. Enterprising spirit, active search for new opportunities	73	4.66	0.56	74	4.34	0.82	-0.32	Adjustment margin
18. Initiative to implement new plans	73	4.59	0.57	75	4.15	0.90	-0.44	Adjustment margin
19. Perseverance in solving problems and inconveniences	73	4.67	0.53	75	4.15	0.67	-0.52	Negative
20. Control of aims achievement within time limits	74	4.64	0.56	76	4.12	0.69	-0.52	Negative
21. Attitude to meeting targets	74	4.64	0.51	76	4.08	0.69	-0.56	Negative

*Gap: value $\leq -.51$: negative gap (need); $-.50 \leq$ value $.50$: adjustment margin; value $\geq .51$: positive gap

Table 5. Managerial Training Requests

<i>Areas of Knowledge</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1. Computing	40	23.8
2. Languages	26	15.5
3. Economic-financial management	24	14.3
4. Food and drink management	16	9.5
5. Quality management	15	8.9
6. Human resources management	11	6.5
7. Marketing and market analysis	10	6.0
8. Work organization	7	4.1
9. People and work team management	6	3.6
10. Tourism products and services	5	0.3
11. Commercial management	4	2.4
12. Health and risk prevention at work	1	0.6
13. Accommodation management	1	0.6
14. User profile and behavior	1	0.6
15. Knowledge of environment and territory	1	0.6
Total	168	100

prevention, marketing, work organization, human resources management, and user profile and behavior.

In the generic competencies, the results show needs in twelve of the twenty-one competencies. However, there is no agreement with the two previously mentioned studies, as those detected deficits in only two generic competencies. A possible explanation for this lack of deficits in our earlier studies could be the fact that respondents considered many of the generic competencies as personality traits and not as important competencies for efficient job performance.

In conclusion, the existence of these needs in managerial competencies actually corroborates the statements from the various tourist institutions on the importance of improving managerial competencies in order to enhance the institutions' job performance (ZONTUR, 1997). However, these deficits are not high, as their mean values in only two cases are over -1 . In short, managers present many competency needs, but these are not alarming.

Method 2: Managerial Training Requests. We noted an absence of training requests for generic competencies. This could be due to the fact that managers actually have no needs in these areas, but this explanation seems unlikely, as method 1 did detect deficits in these competencies.

A more feasible explanation is that managers do not think they can be trained in the generic competencies; if they believe that training does not provide a solution to their deficiencies in these competencies, they will not request training. This explanation could be more likely, if we consider the

Spencer and Spencer approach (1993), which states that generic competencies actually form part of the personality, making them more difficult to be assessed and developed through a training process.

On the other hand, we find that managers request training activities only in technical areas, mostly in computing or languages. Nevertheless, this low confidence in training could prove risky, if we consider present training approaches that emphasize the importance of training to cope with future technological, labor, and socioeconomic changes (Hesketh, 1997; Thayer, 1997).

Relationship Between Methods. We found that method 1 provides more information than method 2. In addition, the information obtained from method 1 is more rigorous and reliable than that gained from method 2. Why? The first method consists of analyzing real gaps in competencies; the second does not identify gaps but rather consists of asking managers which training they think they require. However, according to some scholars (Kaufman, Rojas, and Mayer, 1993; Kaufman, 1998, 2000), this definition of *need* as a verb (to require something) is more subject to error, as it leads to the implementation of a method (in our study this method was training), without analyzing the causes of the problem. Therefore, the training activities that the managers conceive as necessary are actually training preferences or requests.

Besides this, we cannot conclude that both methods are particularly linked, because in only three areas did the managers who requested additional training in a specific area present a larger competency need in that area than those who did not. Therefore, training appears to be the legitimate solution only in these cases.

We could propose several explanations for this lack of a connection between competency needs and training requests. As we have already said, the fact that on the whole the managers' competency level is medium-high could lead them to consider training unnecessary. A second possibility is that managers are not aware of the usefulness of training as a solution to their needs or that they might consider other measures to solve them. This explanation is quite likely, according to the results of a study on training in the Valencian tourist industry (Llorens, Agut, Grau, and Salanova, in press). This study revealed that there is a proliferation of training courses based on what trainers want to offer rather than on the existence of real needs in the industry. Furthermore, the efficacy of this training has not been evaluated.

In any case, both methods could be complementary, because they allow for the detection of deficits in competencies and also for the analysis of whether managers regard training as the right strategy to solve those needs. Whether deficits in competencies are solved through training or other strategies, managers will be better able to perform their jobs efficiently.

Implications for HRD. We could state that, from a theoretical viewpoint, this study constitutes an advance in the analysis of managerial capabilities in

terms of competencies. This concept is important because it allows us to explain why the manager performs the specific tasks of the job and also why he or she is able to cope efficiently in nonprogrammed situations. Hence, the concept of competency is more appropriate than the traditional KSAs, because only competency can explain why the manager performs specific tasks efficiently.

This study also has implications for HRD. First, it is possible to apply an operative method to analyze competency needs in terms of gaps, as the academic literature proposes. This method also provides more rigorous information than the second method. Therefore, so long as competencies deficits are detected accurately, they could be solved by the more appropriate method, and as a consequence an improvement in performance will occur.

Once we have analyzed competency needs from the managers' sample, we should answer the main questions that arise from the results: Should managers solve their competency needs? How should they do this? According to Kaufman (1998), after the needs assessment, a cost-consequences analysis must be carried out. This consists of answering the question, What is the cost of solving the need versus the cost of ignoring it? The need will be solved if the cost of solving it is lower than the cost of ignoring it.

Perhaps, in this study sample, the cost of ignoring the manager's need is lower than the cost of solving it (finding out the most appropriate method to solve the need). Considering that the managers' competency needs are not high, we would recommend not solving them. Rather, it seems more appropriate to confirm these results through a larger sample and to use other techniques to analyze these needs.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research. First, we must point out the insufficient measurement of required job competencies by using only one criterion: the manager's self-perception of the importance of competencies. Future studies must include other respondents (for example, subordinates or sector experts). Also, it would be useful to include questions related to other tactics for improving managerial job performance (for example, job restructuring) and not only consider training.

Another limitation concerns the measurement of person-job imbalance, criticized for its low reliability and validity (the reliability and validity of differential values is lower than the reliability and validity of their components) (Hontangas, 1994). In addition to this, the small sample limits generalization to other managers from the tourist industry and other sectors. At this point the difficulty of obtaining study data must be emphasized, as many managers did not wish to collaborate with this research due to their heavy workload.

We also suggest different guidelines for further research. On the one hand, it would be interesting to study the influence of individual and contextual variables on the existence of competency needs. We were unable to do this with such a small sample. In fact, some studies (for example, Ford and Noe, 1987; Tharenou, 1991; Guthrie and Schwoerer, 1994) have studied the influence of different factors on self-assessment of training needs, although

their results do not coincide with ours and are not focused on the tourist industry.

In the future, we could analyze the influence of sociodemographics (age, educational level, motivation to learning, and attitudes toward the usefulness of training), labor (managerial level and job tenure), and organizational (type and size of the organization) and sector variables (modality of tourism: “sand and sun,” conference trade, or rural).

According to the results of previous studies (Grau, Salanova, Agut, and Llorens, 2000; Grau, Agut, Llorens, and Martínez, in press), we could expect that tourist managers who are young, have a low educational and managerial level, manage small organizations (commonly restaurants), and have also been in management for a shorter period will have greater competency needs. Moreover, we could expect that managers who are more motivated to learn and have positive attitudes toward training would be more aware of the importance of analyzing their competency needs and would even perceive larger competency needs. So, as long as we know the characteristics of the people presenting competency needs, we could take into account those characteristics when proposing a solution to the needs. Moreover, we could change the aspects that could have a negative effect (that is, negative attitude toward training or a low motivation to learning) on the implementation of a solution.

On the other hand, because this study has an individual focus, we suggest carrying out a wider assessment of needs, following the Organizational Elements Model (Kaufman, Rojas, and Mayer, 1993; Kaufman, 1998, 2000). In this model, the organizational elements have two scopes: internal (organization) and external (societal). The model covers three domains: organizational efforts, organizational results, and social consequences. It may also be used to identify what is and what should be in terms of results and also to prioritize the gaps. Moreover, the identification of needs is best done at three levels: Mega level (gaps in societal results), Macro level (gaps in organizational results), and Micro level (gaps in individual and small groups results). Hence, the use of this process would allow us to identify and prioritize needs at these levels, thereby giving us more accurate information about what the needs actually are.

Notes

1. Agència Valenciana del Turisme (2000), the Valencian tourism agency, a government institution, provided the specific data regarding tourist establishments focusing on “sand and sun” and the conference trade.
2. We have not included the interview guide in this article due to its length, but it is available to any interested reader.
3. The method of data collection is self-assessment, so competency needs are actually perceived needs.
4. This is because the individual factor values are standardized values, where the mean value is zero (Bisquerra, 1989). Thus, the study of the gaps by using factor values makes no sense.

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