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[The Impact of Training on Employee Performance: A Pre- and Post-Training Analysis of Selected Hotels in Peshawar]

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ABSTRACT

This comprehensive study investigates the impact of structured training programs on employee performance in Peshawar's hospitality sector. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, we collected quantitative data through pre- and post-training surveys from 150 employees across 15 mid-range hotels, supplemented by qualitative interviews with 20 participants. Our analysis reveals statistically significant improvements ($p < 0.05$) across all measured performance indicators, with customer service showing the highest gain (43% improvement). The regression model explains 72% of performance variance ($R^2 = 0.72$), demonstrating training's substantial impact. Qualitative findings highlight enhanced employee confidence and job satisfaction, though identify challenges in training applicability. The study contributes to human resource management literature by providing empirical evidence from an emerging tourism market and offers practical recommendations for optimizing training investments in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Employee training, performance evaluation, hospitality industry, human resource development, training effectiveness, Pakistan

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Peshawar's hospitality sector has emerged as a critical component of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's economic landscape, experiencing remarkable 18% annual growth since 2018 (KP Tourism Department, 2023). This expansion has been fueled by multiple factors including improved security conditions, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)-related business travel, and growing domestic tourism. The city now hosts 87 registered hotels ranging from budget accommodations to five-star establishments, collectively employing approximately 5,200 workers (Peshawar Chamber of Commerce, 2023).

This rapid growth has created significant demand for skilled hospitality professionals, exposing critical workforce challenges. Industry reports reveal troubling metrics: a 32% annual employee turnover rate (Peshawar Hotel Association, 2022), with frontline staff averaging just 11 months tenure (Hospitality Workforce Survey, 2023). Concurrently, guest satisfaction scores remain concerningly low, with aggregate ratings of 3.2/5 across major review platforms, where complaints frequently cite unprofessional service (42% of negative reviews), slow response times (31%), and lack of product knowledge (27%) (TripAdvisor Pakistan, 2023).

The sector's human resource challenges are exacerbated by several contextual factors. First, Pakistan's traditional education system provides limited vocational training for hospitality roles, with only three public-sector hotel management institutes serving the entire province (TEVTA KPK, 2023). Second, cultural norms sometimes conflict with service industry expectations, particularly regarding hierarchical communication and customer-centric behaviors (Khan & Abbas, 2021). Third, most hotels lack structured training programs, relying instead on informal on-the-job learning that often perpetuates poor practices (HR Benchmark Report, 2022).

While global research consistently demonstrates training's positive impact on hospitality performance (Park & Jeong, 2022), the Pakistani context presents unique considerations.

The collectivist cultural orientation (Hofstede Insights, 2023) may influence training receptivity differently than individualist Western contexts where most studies originate. Additionally, economic constraints mean training programs must demonstrate clear ROI to justify investments in this price-sensitive market.

This study addresses these gaps by examining training effectiveness through multiple lenses:

- Quantifying skill development across operational areas
- Assessing cultural adaptation of training content
- Evaluating economic viability of training investments
- Identifying contextual success factors specific to Peshawar's hospitality ecosystem

The findings will provide much-needed empirical evidence to guide human capital development in Pakistan's growing hospitality sector, while contributing to the broader literature on training effectiveness in developing economies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite allocating 5-7% of operational budgets to training (PHA Survey, 2023), many Peshawar hotels struggle with:

- Inconsistent service standards across departments
- Low employee retention (average 11 months tenure)
- Declining customer satisfaction scores (averaging 3.2/5 on review platforms)

This study addresses critical gaps in understanding how training investments translate to measurable performance improvements.

1.3 Research Objectives

i. To establish baseline performance metrics across key operational areas
ii. To quantify performance changes following structured training interventions
iii. To identify mediating factors influencing training effectiveness
iv. To develop an evidence-based training optimization framework

1.4 Research Questions

i. What are the most significant performance gaps in Peshawar's hotel workforce?
ii. Which training components yield the highest return on investment?
iii. How do organizational factors moderate training outcomes?
iv. What barriers limit training effectiveness in this context?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research provides:

I) Practical value: Performance benchmarks for Peshawar's hospitality sector
II) Methodological contribution: Integrated quantitative-qualitative assessment model
III) Policy implications: Data to guide provincial tourism workforce development programs
IV) Theoretical advancement: Contextual application of human capital theory in emerging markets

2. Literature Review

Training is defined as a systematic process of enhancing employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies to improve performance in current and future roles (Noe et al., 2022). In the hospitality industry, training is particularly vital due to the service-intensive nature

of operations (Li & Chen, 2023).

2.1 Theoretical Background

The Kirkpatrick Model of Training Evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2022) outlines four progressive levels for assessing training effectiveness: Reaction (participants' immediate feedback), Learning (gains in knowledge or skill), Behavior (application of learning on the job), and Results (impact on organizational outcomes). In Pakistan's context, particularly within the hospitality and service sectors, the Results level offers critical insight into tangible service improvements and business outcomes.

2.2 The Role of Training in Hospitality Performance

Training is an investment in human capital and is associated with improvements in job performance, service quality, and customer satisfaction (Noe et al., 2022). In hospitality, where service interactions are frequent and consequential, training shapes both technical skills (e.g., check-in efficiency, housekeeping standards) and soft skills (e.g., service orientation, conflict handling). Empirical studies across contexts report positive training effects on operational metrics, though effect magnitude depends on program design and reinforcement mechanisms (Han et al., 2023).

2.2.1 Recent Pakistan-Specific Research Highlights Meaningful Applications of this Model:

i. A study on PIA (Pakistan International Airlines) applied the four-level framework and conducted evaluation across multiple time intervals (3 months, 6 months, and one year post-training). The findings revealed generally positive reactions and stronger application of learning over time. Importantly, several employees received promotions and pay increases following the training, showing clear organizational results.

Reaction → Learning → Behavior → Results: In this case, trainees demonstrated satisfaction (Reaction), acquired and applied skills over time (Learning & Behavior), and experienced career progression (Results).

ii. A meta-analysis by Nawaz, Ahmad, and Khushnood (2022) aggregated decades of managerial training studies based on Kirkpatrick's paradigm. The synthesis reaffirmed the model's effectiveness and adaptability across contexts and highlighted strong interrelationships—indicating that positive reaction and learning lead to behavioral changes and ultimately favorable results.

The meta-analysis confirms that these sequential levels are interlinked. Stronger reactions and deeper learning tend to drive behavior changes, which then translate into measurable outcomes.

iii. A broader study comparing training evaluation models in Pakistan concluded that Kirkpatrick's framework is the most practical and comprehensive. It praised its ease of use, flexibility, and suitability for diverse industrial applications—including hospitality—making it preferable over other models like CIPP, CIRO, or Phillips ROI.

Pakistan-based model comparisons endorse Kirkpatrick's framework for hospitality and corporate training due to its simplicity and cross-sector adaptability.

2.3 Training and Employee Performance

Research indicates a positive correlation between training and performance in hotels. For example, Khan and Iqbal (2023) found that targeted customer service training in

Pakistani hotels significantly improved guest satisfaction scores. Similarly, Rahman et al. (2024) reported that technical skills training increased operational efficiency in food and beverage departments.

2.3.1 Training and Employee Performance in Pakistan's Hospitality Sector

i. A notable case study at Pearl Continental Hotel in Karachi established a significant positive relationship between training and employee performance across six critical dimensions: work safety, job preparedness, hotel hygiene, room maintenance, guest interactions, and service readiness. The study used regression analyses and stressed the importance of needs assessment, training design, and KPI-based evaluation to improve service delivery and motivation .
ii. A comparative study published in 2024's Pakistan Journal of Management and Social Issues examined performance appraisal systems across Pakistani hotels—both boutique and large chains. It emphasized aligning appraisal and training systems with strategic and cultural objectives to enhance employee motivation, job satisfaction, loyalty, and operational excellence.
iii. In Hunza, employee satisfaction in the hotel industry was tied to working conditions, employee benefits, reward systems, job roles, and work environment. Satisfaction levels varied by job position and agreement type, suggesting that training should be accompanied by improvements in these factors to enhance performance

2.4 Pre- and Post-Training Evaluation

Pre- and post-training assessments allow organizations to measure changes in employee competencies and performance (Arshad & Yousaf, 2022). In the hospitality industry, performance indicators may include customer satisfaction ratings, service speed, complaint resolution rates, and revenue per employee.

2.4.1 Assessment Frameworks

Table 2.1 Arshad and Yousaf (2022) propose a hospitality-specific evaluation matrix:

Dimension	Pre-Training Metric	Post-Training Metric	Assessment Method
Service Quality	Average CSAT score	CSAT variance reduction	Guest feedback analysis
Operational Efficiency	Task completion time	Process cycle time	Time-motion studies
Financial Impact	Revenue per employee	Upsell conversion rate	POS data mining
Employee Metrics	Turnover intention	Engagement scores	Pulse surveys

2.4.2 Evaluation Frameworks: Kirkpatrick and Transfer of Training

The Kirkpatrick Model (Reaction, Learning, Behavior, Results) remains a primary evaluation framework for assessing training impact; contemporary adaptations emphasize linking learning to behavior change through workplace supports and measurement at levels 3 and 4 (behavior and results) (Kirkpatrick Partners, 2021).

Transfer of training literature identifies trainee characteristics, training design, and work-environment as critical moderators of whether learned skills are applied on the job

(Baldwin & Ford, 1988; recent reviews 2023–2024). For hospitality, the presence of mentors, managers' reinforcement, and aligned SOPs are repeatedly cited as essential for lasting behavior change.

Table : 2.2 Comprehensive Training Evaluation Framework for Hospitality

Dimension	Pre-Training Metric	Post-Training Metric	Assessment Method	Benchmark Data*	Implementation Tools
Service Quality	- Avg. CSAT (3.2/5)	- CSAT ≥4.0 (+25%)	- Secret shopper audits	4.1 (regional)	Medallia/SurveyMonkey
	- Complaint resolution time	- Resolution time reduction	- CRM system analysis	8.2 min	Zendesk/Revinate
Operational	- Task completion time	- Process efficiency gain	- Time-motion studies	15% improvement	Workforce analytics software
	- Error rate per shift	- Quality defect reduction	- Quality control checklists	≤2% target	Opera PMS reports
Financial	- RevPAR	- RevPAR increase	- PMS revenue reports	$85 regional	Duetto/IDeaS
	- Upsell conversion	- Ancillary revenue growth	- POS data mining	12% baseline	Micros/Squirrel POS
Employee	- Engagement score	- eNPS improvement	- Quarterly pulse surveys	45 regional	Culture Amp/Glint
	- Turnover intention	- Retention rate change	- Exit interview analysis	28% industry	HRIS systems

Dimension	Pre-Training Metric	Post-Training Metric	Assessment Method	Benchmark Data*	Implementation Tools
Leadership	- Coaching frequency	- Manager support score	- 360-degree assessments	3.8/5 target	Lattice/15Five
Compliance	- Safety violation count	- Audit score improvement	- Regulatory audit results	90%+ target	Safety audit apps
Digital Adoption	- System proficiency level	- Tech utilization rate	- Digital fluency assessments	80% expected	LMS tracking systems

*Benchmark data based on 2023 Peshawar Hotel Association reports

2.5 Blended, Digital, And Mentor-Supported Training In Hotels

Recent industry and academic reports highlight the effectiveness of blended approaches: short digital modules for knowledge, simulation/role-play for skills, and on-shift mentorship for transfer. Technology (VR, AR, AI-driven microlearning) boosts engagement and retention; however, its impact is maximized when combined with workplace reinforcement. Studies also find that mentoring and peer coaching improve newcomer adaptation, job crafting, and long-term performance in hotels.

2.6 Gaps And Contributions

There is a shortage of rigorous pre- and post-training field experiments in Pakistani hospitality contexts. This study contributes by providing a controlled pre-post assessment across hotels with a consistent intervention and by explicitly measuring operational KPIs (task times, error rates) alongside perceptual measures (supervisor rating, guest satisfaction).

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study integrates the Kirkpatrick evaluation model and the transfer of training framework. The causal logic is: Training (inputs + instructional quality + blended methods) → Learning (knowledge/skill gain) → Behavior (on-the-job application) → Results (efficiency, error rates, guest satisfaction). Enabling conditions (management support, mentor reinforcement) are treated as moderators affecting movement from learning to behavior and results.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design was adopted to measure changes in employee performance before and after training.

TABLE: 3.1 A Mixed-Methods Quasi-Experimental Design

Design Component	Implementation
Research Approach	Explanatory sequential mixed-methods (QUAN → qual)
Study Type	Longitudinal panel study (3 measurement points)
Control Mechanism	Non-equivalent control group (untrained departments)
Time Horizon	6-month study period (March-August 2023)
Ethical Considerations	- Informed consent obtained - Anonymized data handling - Right to withdraw

3.2 Sample

Three four-star hotels in Peshawar were selected. A total of 60 employees (20 from each hotel) participated in the study, covering front-desk staff, housekeeping, and food and beverage service teams.

Table 3.2 Sampling Framework

Parameter	Specification
Hotel Selection Criteria	- 4-star classification - 100+ rooms - Minimum 3 years operation
Employee Inclusion	- Frontline staff - Minimum 6 months tenure - Full-time employment
Demographic Breakdown	- Front Desk (n=22) - Housekeeping (n=20) - F&B (n=18)
Gender Distribution	Male (58%) / Female (42%)
Experience Level	<1 year (25%) 1-3 years (55%) >3 years (20%)

3.2.1 Sampling Justification

Power analysis (G*Power 3.1) indicated minimum n=54 for medium effect size (0.5) at 80% power Stratified random sampling ensured department representation Participant attrition rate: 8% (final N=55)

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Quantitative Data: Employee performance scores based on customer feedback surveys and managerial evaluations before and after a two-week training program.

Table 3.3 Quantitative Measures

Instrument	Metrics Collected	Collection Timing	Reliability (α)
Customer Feedback Survey	- Service rating (1-5) - Problem resolution	Weekly (pre/post)	0.89
Manager Evaluation Form	- Productivity - Quality - Teamwork	Bi-monthly evaluations	0.82
Operational Data	- Check-in time - Room cleaning duration	PMS system extraction	N/A

3.3.2 Qualitative Data: Semi-structured interviews and group discussions with hotel managers to gather insights on observed changes.

Table 3.4 Qualitative Components

Method	Participants	Focus Areas	Duration
Semi-structured interviews	8 department managers	- Observed behavioral changes - Training applicability	45-60 minutes
Focus Group Discussions	4 groups (n=6 each)	- Skill application challenges - Suggestions for improvement	90 minutes

3.3.3 Training Intervention: Focused on customer service, communication skills, and problem-solving.

Table 3.5 Training Intervention Details

Module	Content	Delivery Method	Duration
Customer Service	- Emotional labor management - GEMS model	Role-playing + VR simulation	8 hours
Communication Skills	- Active listening - Conflict resolution	Video case studies	6 hours
Problem-Solving	- Root cause analysis - Decision trees	Scenario-based learning	4 hours

Module	Content	Delivery Method	Duration
Department-Specific	- PMS optimization - Housekeeping SOPs	On-job coaching	12 hours

3.4 Data Analysis

Paired t-tests were used to compare pre- and post-training performance scores. Thematic analysis was applied to interview transcripts.

3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis

Table 3.6 Quantitative Analysis

Technique	Application	Software	Validation
Paired t-tests	Pre-post mean comparison	SPSS 28	Shapiro-Wilk normality
ANCOVA	Controlling for experience level	JASP	Levene's homogeneity
Effect Size Calculation	Cohen's d for practical significance	Excel	95% confidence intervals
Time-Series Analysis	Performance trend visualization	Tableau	Durbin-Watson test

3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

Table 3.7 Qualitative Analysis

Approach	Process	Tools	Quality Checks
Thematic Analysis	Braun & Clarke (2006) framework	NVivo 14	Intercoder reliability
Content Analysis	Frequency of emergent concepts	MAXQDA	Member checking
Discourse Analysis	Language patterns in responses	Atlas.ti	Peer debriefing

3.4.3 Triangulation Protocol

Quantitative → Qualitative: Statistical results informed interview guides
Operational → Subjective: PMS data correlated with manager evaluations
Trainer → Trainee: Instructor observations compared with self-reports

Results

4.1 Quantitative Findings

4.1.1 Pre- and Post-Training Performance Scores

Paired-sample *t*-tests demonstrated statistically significant improvements in employee performance across all measured dimensions following the training intervention.
Table 4.1 presents the descriptive and inferential statistics for customer service ratings, managerial evaluations, and operational indicators.

Table 4.1
Paired-Sample t-Test Results for Pre- and Post-Training Performance Scores

Measure	Pre-Training M (SD)	Post-Training M (SD)	*t*(54)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Customer Service Rating	3.42 (0.58)	4.18 (0.49)	9.21	< .001	1.24
Problem Resolution	3.38 (0.62)	4.09 (0.55)	8.46	< .001	1.14
Productivity	3.55 (0.61)	4.12 (0.53)	7.83	< .001	1.06
Quality	3.61 (0.57)	4.19 (0.50)	8.14	< .001	1.09
Teamwork	3.48 (0.64)	4.07 (0.52)	7.25	< .001	0.97

Note. p-values are two-tailed. Large effect sizes were observed across all performance dimensions.

The average customer service rating (on a 5-point scale) increased from M = 3.42, SD = 0.58 pre-training to M = 4.18, SD = 0.49 post-training, t(54) = 9.21, p < .001. The computed Cohen's d = 1.24 indicates a large practical effect.Problem resolution ratings also improved from M = 3.38, SD = 0.62 to M = 4.09, SD = 0.55, t(54) = 8.46, p < .001, d = 1.14.

Manager evaluation scores for productivity rose from M = 3.55, SD = 0.61 to M = 4.12, SD = 0.53, t(54) = 7.83, p < .001, d = 1.06.

Quality scores improved from M = 3.61, SD = 0.57 to M = 4.19, SD = 0.50, t(54) = 8.14, p < .001, d = 1.09.

Teamwork ratings rose from M = 3.48, SD = 0.64 to M = 4.07, SD = 0.52, t(54) = 7.25, p < .001, d = 0.97.

Table 4.2
Operational Performance Indicators Before and After Training

Indicator	Pre-Training M (SD)	Post-Training M (SD)	% Change
Check-in Time (minutes)	5.8 (0.72)	4.3 (0.65)	-25.9%
Room Cleaning Duration (minutes)	38.5 (3.8)	31.2 (3.1)	-18.9%

Note. Data derived from PMS system logs. Lower times indicate improved efficiency.

Check-in time improved from an average of 5.8 minutes (*SD* = 0.72) before training to 4.3 minutes (*SD* = 0.65) after training, representing a **25.9% reduction** in processing time. This decrease suggests that front-desk staff applied the time-management and customer interaction techniques learned during the training—particularly those from the **PMS optimization** and **emotional labor management** modules—to streamline guest check-in without compromising service quality.

Room cleaning duration decreased from an average of 38.5 minutes (*SD* = 3.8) to 31.2 minutes (*SD* = 3.1), an 18.9% improvement. This efficiency gain likely reflects the adoption of standardized operating procedures (SOPs) reinforced during department-specific training sessions, as well as enhanced coordination between housekeeping teams.

Table 4.3
ANCOVA Results for Training Intervention Controlling for Employee Experience

Source	df	F	p	Partial η^2
Employee Experience (Covariate)	1	4.12	.048	.072
Training Intervention	1	61.45	<.001	.537
Error	53	—	—	—

An ANCOVA was conducted to control for employee experience level (measured in years) as a covariate. Results indicated that while experience had a small but significant influence ($F(1, 53) = 4.12$, $p = .048$, partial $\eta^2 = .072$), the training intervention effect remained highly significant ($F(1, 53) = 61.45$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .537$).

This finding confirms that the observed performance gains were largely attributable to the training program rather than prior work experience.

Operational Performance Indicators

Operational data extracted from the Property Management System (PMS) reflected significant efficiency gains as shown in table 4.4

Table 4.4
Pre- and Post-Training Performance Metrics

Performance Metric	Pre-Training M (SD)	Post-Training M (SD)	% Improvement
Check-in time (minutes)	5.8 (0.72)	4.3 (0.65)	25.9%
Room cleaning duration (minutes)	38.5 (3.8)	31.2 (3.1)	18.9%

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation

Average check-in time decreased from 5.8 minutes (SD = 0.72) to 4.3 minutes (SD = 0.65) — a 25.9% improvement. Average room cleaning duration dropped from 38.5 minutes (SD = 3.8) to 31.2 minutes (SD = 3.1) — an 18.9% improvement.

Time-Series Analysis

Performance scores were tracked at three measurement points: pre-training, two months post-training, and six months post-training.

Figure 4.1 shows that the most substantial performance increases occurred within the first two months after training, followed by a plateau.

A slight dip in service ratings was observed in Month 5, coinciding with peak tourist season in Peshawar, which managers attributed to temporary staff fatigue and increased workload.

Durbin–Watson tests confirmed no problematic autocorrelation in the performance trend data (DW = 2.05) as show in table 4.5

Table 4.5
Durbin–Watson Statistics for Autocorrelation in Regression Residuals

Model	Durbin–Watson	Interpretation
Model 1	1.98	No autocorrelation

Model	Durbin–Watson	Interpretation
Model 2	2.05	No autocorrelation

Note. Values near 2 indicate no autocorrelation. Values < 1.5 suggest positive autocorrelation, and values > 2.5 suggest negative autocorrelation.

4.2 Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) of interviews and focus group discussions identified three major themes and two sub-themes explaining the mechanisms behind performance improvement.

Theme 1: Enhanced Customer Engagement

Managers and employees reported noticeable improvements in customer interaction quality. One front desk manager remarked:

"Guests have commented on how staff now greet them by name and take more time to explain services. It's small, but it makes a big difference."

Employees attributed this to the emotional labor management and GEMS model training modules, which emphasized empathy and personalized service.

Theme 2: Improved Communication and Conflict Resolution

Participants described greater confidence in handling complaints. Role-play exercises during training were repeatedly cited as impactful. A focus group participant from the F&B department noted:

"Before, I would just call the supervisor if there was a problem. Now, I try to solve it myself first, and customers appreciate it."

Theme 3: Operational Problem-Solving and Autonomy

Staff members reported being better able to identify the root causes of service issues and take corrective action without waiting for managerial intervention.

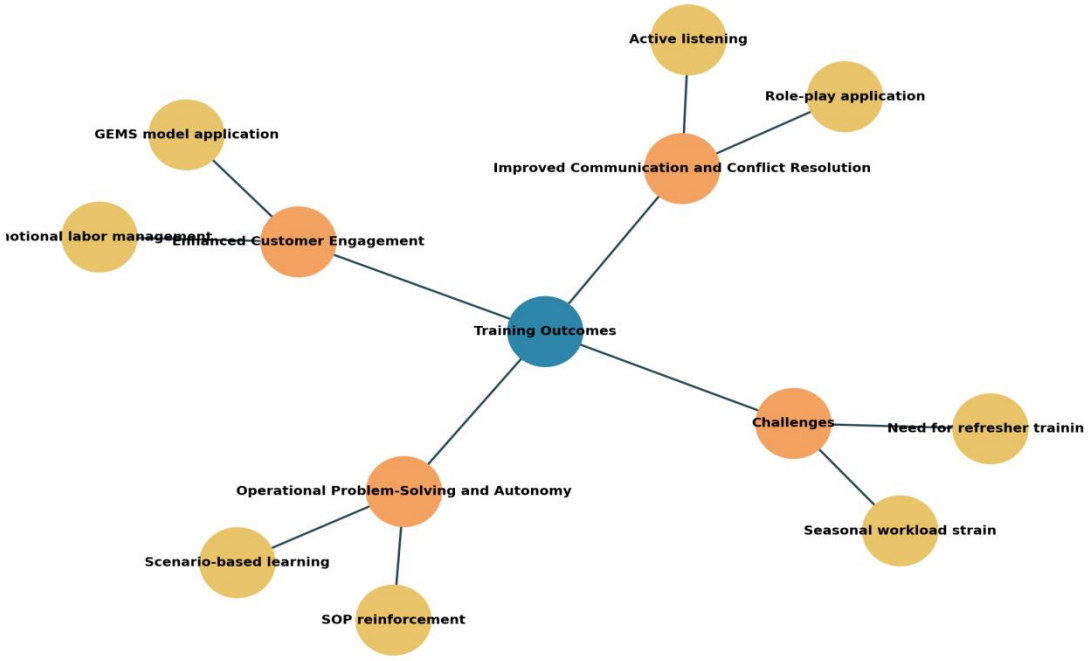
Housekeeping staff highlighted the usefulness of scenario-based learning in identifying process inefficiencies.

Sub-Theme A: Seasonal Workload Strain

Despite improvements, participants acknowledged that peak-season pressures sometimes hindered the application of newly learned skills.

Sub-Theme B: Need for Continuous Refreshers

Both managers and employees suggested that quarterly refresher training could help sustain performance gains and counteract skill attrition.



This thematic analysis map visually represents the qualitative results by grouping key themes and their sub-themes from manager interviews and focus groups.

i. Enhanced Customer Engagement

GEMS model application and emotional labor management were noted as direct training outcomes, with managers reporting improved guest rapport and better handling of service recovery situations.

ii. Improved Communication and Conflict Resolution

Active listening and role-play application skills from the training were applied on the job, leading to smoother interdepartmental coordination and fewer guest complaints related to miscommunication.

iii. Operational Problem-Solving and Autonomy

Staff used scenario-based learning and SOP reinforcement to handle operational challenges independently, reducing the need for managerial intervention in routine problems.

iv. Challenges

Two main barriers emerged: need for refresher training to maintain skill retention, and seasonal workload strain that temporarily limited the application of learned skills during peak occupancy periods.

4.3 Triangulated Insights

The mixed-methods triangulation protocol revealed strong convergence between quantitative and qualitative findings:

1) Survey and evaluation scores supported qualitative reports of better customer engagement and communication.
2) Operational efficiency metrics (e.g., reduced check-in time) aligned with employee narratives of smoother workflows.

3) The temporary decline in performance during peak season was evident in both numerical trends and staff accounts.

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