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Competency Mapping in Small Businesses: A Pathway to Sustainable Development and Employee Satisfaction

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Abstract: This study explores the multifaceted dimensions of competency mapping and examines how these elements influence employee satisfaction within the small manufacturing business sector. In particular, it highlights the integration of purpose-driven practices into organizational strategies as a pathway to sustainable development. While competency mapping has been widely discussed in larger corporate contexts, its application and outcomes in small business settings remain underexplored. This research addresses that gap by analyzing the relationship between key competency mapping factors and employee happiness, while also considering variations across demographic groups. Competency mapping serves as a structured process to identify, assess, and develop the skills and attributes necessary for optimal job performance. In the context of small manufacturing enterprises—where resources are often limited and employees frequently perform diverse roles—the alignment of competencies with organizational goals becomes critical. This study focuses on core skill domains such as personality, communication, behavioral, leadership, managerial, technical and aptitude, and strategic and creativity skills. The research posits that effectively identifying and enhancing these competencies not only improves individual performance but also fosters a supportive work environment that aligns with sustainable business practices. Data for this investigation were collected from 140 employees representing various small manufacturing businesses in the Mysuru industrial region. A structured questionnaire was employed as the primary data collection tool, using a simple random sampling approach to ensure representation across departments and functions. The statistical analysis encompassed multiple regression, correlation, and reliability testing to establish the robustness of the findings. Cronbach's Alpha values well above the acceptable threshold confirmed strong internal consistency across the measurement items, reinforcing the reliability of the study's results. The analysis revealed that communication skills emerged as the most significant predictor of employee satisfaction, underscoring the importance of clear, effective information exchange in building positive workplace relationships and enhancing morale. Personality skills also demonstrated a strong positive association with satisfaction levels, suggesting that traits such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, and interpersonal sensitivity play a critical role in employee well-being. Interestingly, strategic and creativity skills were found to have a negative association with satisfaction, possibly reflecting the stress or additional workload that may accompany roles requiring constant innovation and long-term strategic planning without adequate support. Demographic analysis indicated that age-related differences significantly influenced personality and communication skills, implying that tailored training initiatives could help optimize these competencies across diverse workforce segments. Gender-specific training and programs tailored to various demographic groups emerged as vital recommendations, particularly in the pursuit of inclusive and equitable workplace development. For small manufacturing businesses aiming to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development, the study advocates for continuous refinement of competency mapping processes. This includes embedding feedback

mechanisms into training programs, ensuring that skill development remains relevant and responsive to employee needs. By integrating sustainability principles into their core operational strategies and prioritizing employee satisfaction, small businesses can enhance their competitiveness while simultaneously advancing societal well-being. Ultimately, the findings reinforce the notion that competency mapping, when strategically applied, can serve as both a human resource development tool and a driver of sustainable growth. For policymakers, business leaders, and human resource professionals in the small business sector, this research offers actionable insights into building a skilled, satisfied, and committed workforce that can support long-term organizational success and contribute positively to broader sustainable development goals.

Keywords: Competency mapping, Employee satisfaction, Sustainable development, Small manufacturing business, Purpose driven practices

Introduction

In today's competitive business environment, small businesses face a unique set of challenges that require effective talent management to ensure both employee satisfaction and sustainable development. Competency mapping has emerged as a strategic tool that helps organizations align employee skills with business objectives, leading to enhanced productivity, retention, and job satisfaction. By identifying core competencies—such as personality, communication, leadership, managerial, and technical skills—businesses can ensure that employees are well-suited for their roles, maximizing their potential and contributing to overall organizational growth [15]. Small businesses, in particular, often operate with limited resources and require a highly adaptable workforce that can handle multiple responsibilities. Mapping competencies such as behavioral skills and creativity ensures that employees not only fit into the organizational culture but also innovate and contribute to long-term strategic goals [35] [2]. Furthermore, competency mapping addresses key aspects like leadership development, communication effectiveness, and technical proficiency, which are vital in sustaining business growth and improving employee morale [31] [27].

Literature review

Competency mapping plays a crucial role in enhancing employee satisfaction and promoting sustainable development in small businesses. This literature review explores the various factors such as Personality Skills, Communication Skills, Behavioral Skills, Leadership Skills, Managerial Skills, Technical & Aptitude Skills, and Strategic & Creativity Skills, which collectively contribute to effective competency mapping and employee satisfaction.

Personality Skills are foundational to understanding an employee's fit within a role. Research [15] emphasizes the role of personality traits such as openness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability in competency mapping. These traits help align employees with roles where they are most likely to succeed, resulting in increased job satisfaction and engagement. Similarly, [36] personality skills are critical in customer-facing roles, as the right personality fit can lead to improved customer relations and higher employee morale.

Communication Skills are equally essential in small businesses, where clear communication often determines the success of teamwork and collaboration. But [22] mapping communication skills can help identify gaps in an employee's ability to convey information effectively, which can be addressed through training programs. Effective communication skills not only enhance internal collaboration but also improve external client relationships, leading to overall employee satisfaction.

Behavioral Skills, such as adaptability, stress management, and interpersonal skills, are strong predictors of job satisfaction [25]. Competency mapping in this domain enables businesses to align employees with tasks that match their behavioral strengths, fostering a supportive work environment. Furthermore, [30] behavioral competencies such as emotional intelligence and conflict resolution play a significant role in enhancing team dynamics, which in turn boosts employee satisfaction and retention.

Leadership Skills are vital for the growth and sustainability of small businesses. Leadership competencies include decision-making, motivation, and strategic vision [31]. When leadership potential is effectively mapped, it results in better organizational outcomes and employee engagement. Das and Sinha [11] highlight how competency mapping for leadership roles can foster a positive work environment, improving employee morale and retention.

Managerial Skills, including problem-solving, resource allocation, and decision-making, are necessary for the effective functioning of small businesses. Competency mapping helps small businesses identify gaps in these skills and target areas for improvement [7]. By aligning managerial roles with employees' skills, businesses can improve efficiency, job satisfaction, and employee empowerment [20]

Technical & Aptitude Skills are particularly relevant in industries where specialized knowledge is required. Competency mapping of technical skills ensures employees are well-equipped to handle evolving technologies, which leads to better job performance and satisfaction [12]. Also, in tech-driven small businesses, competency mapping is essential for continuous business growth and for keeping the workforce technically proficient. Nair [27].

Strategic & Creativity Skills are critical for innovation and business development. Mapping strategic thinking and creativity helps businesses identify employees who can contribute to long-term goals, leading to sustainable development [2]. Similarly, fostering creativity through competency mapping not only drives innovation but also enhances employee engagement and satisfaction [35].

The role of competency mapping in employee development cannot be understated. It highlights how competency mapping aids in succession planning and talent development, ensuring that small businesses can identify potential leaders early in their careers [21]. This not only improves organizational planning but also leads to higher employee satisfaction. Competency mapping also plays a significant role in employee motivation [25]. By aligning personal and organizational goals, competency mapping ensures that employees are motivated to perform at their best, ultimately improving job satisfaction. Finally, competency mapping for employee retention is critical [29]. Small businesses that effectively map competencies can ensure that employees are placed in roles where they can thrive, reducing turnover and increasing job satisfaction. By addressing both personal and organizational needs, competency mapping helps create a harmonious work environment where employees feel valued and motivated to contribute to business success. Competency mapping in small businesses serves as a strategic tool to align employee skills with organizational needs. This process not only enhances employee satisfaction but also promotes sustainable development by ensuring that businesses can effectively manage their talent and resources. The various studies reviewed in this paper demonstrate the significance of competency mapping in fostering a productive, satisfied, and loyal workforce.

Need of the study

The purpose of this research is to explore the impact of competency mapping factors on employee satisfaction in small businesses, focusing on the independent factors of personality, communication, behavioral, leadership, managerial, technical, and strategic skills. Understanding how these competencies contribute to both individual and organizational success provides valuable insights into creating a sustainable and satisfied workforce, which is crucial for small businesses aiming to thrive in a dynamic economic landscape.

Research methodology

This research employs a descriptive research design to explore how competency mapping influences employee satisfaction in small business manufacturing companies within the Mysuru industrial area. The sample size of 140 respondents is justified based on multivariate analysis principles outlined by Hair et al. (2010), who recommend a minimum of 15–20 observations per predictor variable for reliable regression modelling. With seven independent competency variables examined in the study, the required range falls between 105 and 140 responses, confirming the adequacy of the chosen sample. Moreover, the relatively small workforce size in small manufacturing units supports the practical feasibility of this sample. The high reliability score (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.971$) further validates that the sample size is sufficient to ensure consistent measurement of the study constructs. A sample size of 140 employees from seven different small business manufacturing companies was selected using a stratified probability sampling technique, followed by convenience sampling within each stratum. Stratified sampling ensured adequate representation of employees from different departments, while convenience sampling allowed for easier access to participants based on their availability and willingness to participate. Stratified sampling is particularly effective when subgroups of a population need to be represented proportionally in research, which was crucial to capture the varied roles within the companies [10].

The data collection process utilized both primary and secondary methods. Primary data was gathered through a structured questionnaire administered via personal interviews, ensuring a more in-depth understanding of the perspectives of employees on competency mapping. The independent variables measured included Personality Skills, Communication Skills, Behavioral Skills, Leadership Skills, Managerial Skills, Technical & Aptitude Skills, and Strategic & Creativity Skills, while employee satisfaction was the dependent variable. These competencies have been identified in prior studies as critical for employee satisfaction and performance across industries [6] [34]. Secondary data was collected from company reports and industry publications, which helped contextualize the competency frameworks being used in the companies.

To minimize internal bias in this qualitative-driven study on competency mapping and employee satisfaction in small manufacturing businesses, several methodological safeguards were applied to both primary and secondary data.

Primary data collected through structured questionnaires were designed using neutral, non-leading statements to reduce researcher influence, and a simple random sampling approach ensured fair representation across departments and roles. Reflexive monitoring was used throughout data handling to avoid imposing personal assumptions on respondents' perspectives, especially regarding sensitive domains such as personality, communication, and strategic skills. For secondary data, only credible and peer-reviewed literature on competency mapping, sustainable development, and small business practices was included to prevent selective sourcing or confirmation bias. During analysis, triangulation was achieved by comparing regression, correlation, and demographic findings, ensuring that patterns—such as the strong effect of communication skills and the negative association of strategic and creativity skills—emerged from the data rather than preconceived expectations. These measures collectively strengthened the credibility, neutrality, and trustworthiness of the conclusions drawn from the study.

The analysis of data was carried out using SPSS software, employing several statistical methods. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire, with values above 0.7 considered acceptable for confirming reliability [38]. Correlation analysis was employed to examine the strength of the relationships between the competencies and employee satisfaction. Previous studies have demonstrated that strong correlations between these variables often indicate positive organizational outcomes such as higher employee retention and satisfaction[33]. ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) was used to test for differences in employee satisfaction based on demographic factors and company-specific characteristics, similar to approaches found in research [17]. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictive power of various competency mapping factors on employee satisfaction. Multiple regression has been widely applied in research studying workplace satisfaction and competency frameworks [3].

Ethical guidelines were rigorously followed throughout the study. Participants were informed about the objectives and scope of the research, and their participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, and their anonymity and confidentiality were ensured, adhering to ethical research practices outlined[5]. Despite the robust methodology, limitations exist. The study is confined to small business manufacturing companies within a specific geographic area (Mysuru), which may impact the generalizability of the findings to other regions or industries. Furthermore, the use of convenience sampling introduces a potential bias, though efforts were made to minimize this by utilizing stratified sampling techniques [9].

Objectives

1. To study the factors of competency mapping and employee satisfaction in small business manufacturing companies.
2. To study the variation among different demographic group of employees towards competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.
3. To study the relationship between competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.
4. To analyze the impact of competency mapping factors on employee satisfaction in small business manufacturing companies.

Hypothesis

H01: There is no variation among different demographic groups towards competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.

Ha1: There is a variation among different demographic groups towards competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.

H02: There is no relationship between competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.

Ha2: There is a relationship between competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.

H03: There is no impact of competency mapping factors on employee satisfaction.

Ha3: There is an impact of competency mapping factors on employee satisfaction.

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Data Analysis and Interpretation

Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.971	51

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

The reliability statistics from Table 1 show that the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.971 for 51 items. A Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.7 indicates strong internal consistency and reliability in the data, meaning that the items in structured questionnaire are measuring the intended competencies (such as Personality Skill, Communication Skill, Behavioral Skill, etc.) consistently across respondents. A high Cronbach's Alpha suggests that the items are well-correlated with each other, which is crucial when studying a multifaceted construct like employee competencies and their influence on satisfaction[38]. Such a high value also implies that the questionnaire's items are effectively capturing the overall construct of employee satisfaction and associated competency areas, making the survey results trustworthy for further statistical analyses such as ANOVA, correlation, and multiple regression.

ANOVA

H01: There is no variation among different demographic groups towards competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.

Ha1: There is a variation among different demographic groups towards competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction

Table 2: ANOVA (Years of experience employees groups)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personality Skill	Between Groups	2.234	3	.745	2.300	.080
	Within Groups	44.026	136	.324		
Communication Skill	Between Groups	5.868	3	1.956	6.192	.001
	Within Groups	42.962	136	.316		
Behavioural Skill	Between Groups	.836	3	.279	1.323	.269
	Within Groups	28.632	136	.211		
Leadership Skill	Between Groups	.604	3	.201	.903	.442
	Within Groups	30.317	136	.223		
Managerial Skill	Between Groups	.430	3	.143	.378	.769
	Within Groups	51.656	136	.380		
Technical & Aptitude Skill	Between Groups	1.358	3	.453	2.420	.069
	Within Groups	25.439	136	.187		
Strategic & Creativity Skill	Between Groups	1.386	3	.462	2.628	.053
	Within Groups	23.899	136	.176		
Employee Satisfaction	Between Groups	2.851	3	.950	2.395	.071
	Within Groups	53.956	136	.397		

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

The ANOVA (Years of experience employee groups) results for various skills in relation to employee satisfaction present a mixed pattern. Among the independent variables, Communication Skill stands out as the only statistically significant predictor of employee satisfaction (p-value = 0.001). The results from Table 2 with respect to Years of experience of employee groups imply that improving communication skills within small business manufacturing companies could positively influence employee satisfaction. Other skills, while important, did not demonstrate

statistical significance in this study, though Strategic & Creativity Skill and Technical & Aptitude Skill approach significance and may warrant further investigation in future studies.

Table 3: ANOVA (Age group)

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personality Skill	Between Groups	4.404	3	1.468	4.770	.003
	Within Groups	41.856	136	.308		
Communication Skill	Between Groups	3.296	3	1.099	3.282	.023
	Within Groups	45.533	136	.335		
Behavioural Skill	Between Groups	.078	3	.026	.121	.948
	Within Groups	29.390	136	.216		
Leadership Skill	Between Groups	.279	3	.093	.413	.744
	Within Groups	30.641	136	.225		
Managerial Skill	Between Groups	1.164	3	.388	1.036	.379
	Within Groups	50.922	136	.374		
Technical & Aptitude Skill	Between Groups	.455	3	.152	.783	.505
	Within Groups	26.342	136	.194		
Strategic & Creativity Skill	Between Groups	.613	3	.204	1.127	.340
	Within Groups	24.672	136	.181		
Employee Satisfaction	Between Groups	1.173	3	.391	.956	.416
	Within Groups	55.633	136	.409		

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

The ANOVA (age group) results Table 3 reveal significant differences in Personality Skill and Communication Skill across age groups. The F-values for these competencies indicate that age has a notable impact on both personality and communication skills, which are crucial for employee satisfaction. Specifically, variations in these skills, influenced by age, can affect how employees feel about their work environment and overall job satisfaction. Therefore, addressing personality and communication skills in relation to different age groups can be essential for enhancing employee satisfaction in small businesses.

For Behavioural Skill, Leadership Skill, Managerial Skill, Technical & Aptitude Skill, and Strategic & Creativity Skill, the ANOVA results show no significant differences across age groups. This suggests that these competencies do not vary significantly with age and do not have a differential impact on employee satisfaction based on age. Thus, these skills are relatively consistent across different age groups and may not need to be tailored specifically for improving employee satisfaction in relation to age differences.

Correlation analysis

H02: There is no relationship between competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.

Ha2: There is a relationship between competency mapping factors and employee satisfaction.

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Table 4: Correlations

		Personality Skill	Communication Skill	Behavioural Skill	Leadership Skill	Managerial Skill	Technical & Aptitude Skill	Strategic & Creativity Skill	Employee Satisfaction
Personality Skill	Pearson Correlation	1	.331**	.252**	.060	.532**	.126	.388**	.616**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.003	.482	.000	.138	.000	.000
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Communication Skill	Pearson Correlation	.331**	1	.064	.001	.628**	.031	.175*	.352**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.453	.991	.000	.719	.039	.000
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Behavioural Skill	Pearson Correlation	.252**	.064	1	.148	.108	.083	.221**	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.453		.082	.203	.328	.009	.366
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Leadership Skill	Pearson Correlation	.060	.001	.148	1	.030	.082	.079	-.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.482	.991	.082		.723	.333	.354	.316
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Managerial Skill	Pearson Correlation	.532**	.628**	.108	.030	1	.167*	.341**	.391**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.203	.723		.048	.000	.409
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Technical & Aptitude Skill	Pearson Correlation	.126	.031	.083	.082	.167*	1	.138	.085
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.138	.719	.328	.333	.048		.103	.319
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Strategic & Creativity Skill	Pearson Correlation	.388**	.175*	.221**	.079	.341**	.138	1	.070
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.039	.009	.354	.000	.103		.000
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Employee Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.616**	.352**	.077	-.085	.391**	.085	.070	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.366	.316	.409	.319	.000	
	N	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

In summary from Table 4 Personality Skill, Communication Skill, and Managerial Skill show significant positive correlations with Employee Satisfaction, highlighting their importance in enhancing job satisfaction. Conversely, Behavioural Skill, Leadership Skill, and Technical & Aptitude Skill do not significantly affect employee satisfaction based on this analysis.

Multiple Regression analysis

H03: There is no impact of competency mapping factors on employee satisfaction.

Ha3: There is an impact of competency mapping factors on employee satisfaction.

The R-Square value of 0.455 from Table 5 indicates that approximately 45.5% of the variance in the dependent variable (Employee Satisfaction) is explained by the independent variables in the model. This value suggests that nearly half of the variability in employee satisfaction can be accounted for by these competencies, reflecting the significant role these skills play in influencing employee satisfaction.

The ANOVA results for the regression model from Table 6 show a significant F-value of 15.774 with a p-value of .000, indicating that the model is statistically significant. This means that the independent variables—Personality Skill, Communication Skill, Behavioural Skill, Leadership Skill, Managerial Skill, Technical & Aptitude Skill, and Strategic & Creativity Skill—collectively explain a substantial portion of the variance in employee satisfaction.

The regression analysis from Table 7 provides insights into how each competency affects Employee Satisfaction. The Constant term is 2.407 and is statistically significant ($p = .001$), indicating that, when all predictors are zero, the

baseline employee satisfaction score is 2.407. Personality Skill has a significant positive impact on employee satisfaction with a coefficient of .713 ($p < .001$), meaning higher personality skill levels are strongly associated with greater employee satisfaction. Communication Skill also has a significant positive effect with a coefficient of .180 ($p = .046$), suggesting that improvements in communication skills are linked to increased employee satisfaction.

Behavioural Skill, Leadership Skill, Managerial Skill, and Technical & Aptitude Skill do not significantly affect employee satisfaction, as their p-values are above the 0.05 threshold ($p = .552$, $p = .108$, $p = .887$, and $p = .583$, respectively). This indicates that these skills do not have a meaningful impact on employee satisfaction in the context of this model. Strategic & Creativity Skill has a significant negative effect with a coefficient of $-.301$ ($p = .006$), implying that higher levels of strategic and creativity skills are associated with lower employee satisfaction.

Regression model

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.675 ^a	.455	.427	.484
a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic & Creativity Skill, Leadership Skill, Technical & Aptitude Skill, Communication Skill, Behavioural Skill, Personality Skill, Managerial Skill				

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

Table 06: ANOVA table for regression

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.874	7	3.696	15.774	.000 ^b
	Residual	30.932	132	.234		
	Total	56.806	139			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategic & Creativity Skill, Leadership Skill, Technical & Aptitude Skill, Communication Skill, Behavioural Skill, Personality Skill, Managerial Skill						

Source: Authors' computation using SPSS

$$\text{Employee Satisfaction} = 2.407 + 0.713 (\text{Personality skill}) + 0.180 (\text{communication skill}) - 0.301 (\text{Strategic and Creativity skill})$$

Overall, personality and communication skills are positively linked to employee satisfaction, while strategic and creativity skills have a negative impact. Other competencies do not show significant effects in this model.

Findings and Discussion

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate strong alignment with well-established theoretical frameworks referenced in the literature. The significant positive influence of Personality Skills on employee satisfaction supports propositions made by Goleman (1998), whose Emotional Intelligence Theory highlights adaptability, emotional balance, and social awareness as critical drivers of employee well-being. Communication Skills, which emerged as a strong predictor in both correlation and regression analyses, align with the findings of Kumar & Bhatnagar (2021) and Chatterjee & Banerjee (2021), who emphasize that effective communication enhances workplace collaboration, role clarity, and employee morale in small business environments. Managerial Skills also showed positive associations with satisfaction, consistent with the arguments of Joshi & Gupta (2021), who note that managerial clarity, resource allocation efficiency, and supportive supervision contribute significantly to employee performance and satisfaction.

The absence of significant effects for Behavioural, Leadership, and Technical & Aptitude Skills corresponds with Brewster et al. (2016), who indicate that in smaller organizations, relational competencies tend to outweigh formal leadership or technical capabilities due to flatter structures and closer interpersonal proximity. The negative impact of Strategic & Creativity Skills is theoretically supported by the Job Characteristics Model of Hackman & Oldham

(1976), suggesting that high cognitive demand or creative expectations without adequate organisational support may increase employee strain. Sharma & Roy (2020) similarly observed that creativity-intensive roles in SMEs can generate dissatisfaction when resource constraints limit autonomy or innovation capacity.

Overall, the study's descriptive and inferential outcomes demonstrate strong coherence with theoretical and empirical work in competency mapping, reinforcing the robust validity of the findings and underscoring the critical role of communication-driven and personality-driven competencies in the context of small business sustainability.

ANOVA

- The ANOVA results show that Communication Skill is the only skill significantly linked to employee satisfaction, meaning employees who communicate well tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. This aligns with research emphasizing that effective communication enhances job satisfaction and workplace morale [16]. While Strategic & Creativity Skill and Technical & Aptitude Skill show potential for impacting satisfaction, their effects were not statistically significant in this study, suggesting these areas might be worth exploring further. Other skills like Personality Skill, Behavioural Skill, Leadership Skill, and Managerial Skill did not significantly impact employee satisfaction in this study, which suggests their influence might be indirect or less pronounced [21][23].
- The ANOVA results indicate that Personality Skill and Communication Skill vary significantly across different age groups, affecting how employees feel about their jobs. This suggests that these skills are influenced by age and play a key role in job satisfaction, supporting the idea that tailored training in these areas could improve satisfaction for different age groups [21]. On the other hand, Behavioural Skill, Leadership Skill, Managerial Skill, Technical & Aptitude Skill, and Strategic & Creativity Skill do not show significant differences across age groups. This means these skills are generally consistent regardless of age and may not need age-specific adjustments for enhancing employee satisfaction[23][16].

Correlation

- Personality Skill, Communication Skill, and Managerial Skill have significant positive correlations with employee satisfaction. This means that employees with better personality traits, communication abilities, and managerial skills tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. These findings align with previous research emphasizing that strong interpersonal skills and effective management are crucial for improving job satisfaction and creating a positive work environment [1][32].
- In contrast, Behavioural Skill, Leadership Skill, and Technical & Aptitude Skill do not significantly impact employee satisfaction in this analysis. This might suggest that, in the context of small businesses, personal interactions and managerial effectiveness are more critical for employee satisfaction than specific behavioral, leadership, or technical skills. The literature supports this by noting that in smaller organizations, where employees often have closer relationships and more direct interactions with managers, personal and communication skills play a more significant role in job satisfaction [4][18].

Regression

- **Personality Skill** and **Communication Skill** have a significant positive effect on employee satisfaction. Higher levels of these skills are strongly associated with greater job satisfaction. This aligns with research indicating that employees who excel in interpersonal skills and effective communication are generally more satisfied with their work. Strong personality traits can improve workplace relationships and morale [32], while effective communication fosters a more supportive and collaborative environment [1].
- On the other hand, **Behavioural Skill**, **Leadership Skill**, **Managerial Skill**, and **Technical & Aptitude Skill** do not significantly impact employee satisfaction in this study. This suggests that, in small businesses, the immediate interpersonal and communication aspects of work might be more influential for job satisfaction than specific behavioral, leadership, or technical skills. Literature supports this by highlighting that in smaller organizations, where employees often work closely with each other and managers, the impact of personal and communication skills is more pronounced [4].
- Interestingly, **Strategic & Creativity Skill** has a significant negative effect on employee satisfaction. This finding suggests that while strategic and creative abilities are valuable, they might also introduce complexities or stress that negatively affect job satisfaction. This aligns with studies showing that high demands for strategic and creative thinking without adequate support can lead to increased stress and lower satisfaction[18].

Suggestions

- Based on the analysis of competency mapping and its impact on employee satisfaction in small businesses, several suggestions can be made to enhance both employee satisfaction and sustainable development:
- **Enhance Communication Skills Training:** Given that Communication Skill is the only significant predictor of employee satisfaction, small businesses should invest in training programs to improve communication skills among employees. Effective communication fosters a supportive work environment and strengthens interpersonal relationships, which are crucial for job satisfaction [16]. Workshops, seminars, and regular feedback sessions can help employees develop these skills.
- **Focus on Personality Development:** Personality Skill also shows a significant positive impact on employee satisfaction. Small businesses should consider incorporating personality development programs to enhance traits such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, and interpersonal skills. These programs can help employees build better relationships, contribute positively to the work culture, and improve overall job satisfaction[32].
- **Tailor Training for Different Age Groups:** The findings indicate that Personality Skill and Communication Skill vary across age groups. Small businesses should tailor their training programs to address the specific needs of different age groups, ensuring that employees of all ages can benefit from skill development that aligns with their professional and personal growth [21].
- **Reevaluate Strategic & Creativity Skills:** While Strategic & Creativity Skill has shown a negative effect on employee satisfaction, it is still a valuable competency. Small businesses should ensure that the demands for strategic and creative tasks are balanced with adequate support and resources to avoid potential stress and dissatisfaction. Providing clear objectives, adequate resources, and support for creative tasks can mitigate negative impacts and harness these skills effectively [18].
- **Monitor and Assess Competency Impact Regularly:** Competency mapping should be an ongoing process. Regular assessments can help small businesses understand how different skills impact employee satisfaction and make necessary adjustments to training programs. This approach will help maintain a high level of employee satisfaction and support sustainable development [4][18]. By focusing on these areas, small businesses can improve employee satisfaction, foster a positive work environment, and contribute to their long-term success and sustainable development.

Conclusion

In deriving the final conclusions, the subjectivity was minimized by grounding interpretations strictly in statistically significant outputs from ANOVA, correlation and multiple regression analysis, following analytical guidelines recommended by Hair et al. (2010). Each finding was then cross-validated with established theoretical frameworks, including Emotional Intelligence Theory (Goleman, 1998), Competency Performance Theory (Spencer & Spencer, 1993), and Job Characteristics Theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). This ensured that the conclusions did not rely on narrative bias but instead reflected a robust synthesis of empirical evidence and theoretically supported constructs.

In conclusion, competency mapping in small businesses plays a crucial role in enhancing employee satisfaction and fostering sustainable development. By identifying and prioritizing competencies such as Communication Skill and Personality Skill, which significantly impact job satisfaction, businesses can tailor their training programs to meet these needs and improve the work environment. Effective communication and strong personality traits not only boost employee morale but also contribute to a positive organizational culture. While Strategic & Creativity Skills are valuable, they should be managed carefully to avoid potential negative effects on satisfaction. Overall, aligning competency development with employee needs and business goals ensures that small businesses can achieve greater employee satisfaction, drive sustainable growth, and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

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