

Investigating Motivation of the Hotel Employees at the Operational Level: A Case Study of the Hotel Business in Samut Songkram Province, Thailand

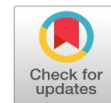
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Abstract: This research aimed to investigate motivation and behaviour of the employees at the operational level towards the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province, as well as examining the relationship between behaviour and motivation of the employees at the operational level in performing the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province. The sample of this study was the employees at the operational level who worked in the hotels located in Samut Songkram Province with indefinite population size. A sample of 400 employees was collected by the use of non-probability sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as the data collecting tool with reliability index of 0.902. The descriptive statistics including percentage, mean and standard deviation were used, whereas the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and Chi-Square were used as the inferential statistics. The finding revealed that the overall behaviour of the employees in performing the hotel operations was ranked at a high level, with each attribute including understanding, involvement, organizational commitment and uniformity in and towards the hotel operations presenting high score as well. The finding with respect to the employees' overall motivation reported medium level, with all attributes including career success, job characteristics, career growth and job security, and relationship with colleagues presenting a medium level as well. In contrast, job welfares and incentives were ranked at a low level. The study found out that there was a relationship between the employees' motivation and behaviour in performing the hotel operations at the significant level of 0.05.

Keywords: Motivation, Operational level employee, Samut Songkram Province

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INTRODUCTION

Thai hotel business has been growing approximately 3.4-5.7 percent since 2014 against the tension of the national political atmosphere. The business growth has also been driven by other factors, for example the opening of more flights direct to destinations without Bangkok stopover to respond to foreign markets, hotel promotional activities, long holiday and nice weather. These factors are motivating domestic market to increase travels within the country. There are more investments on accommodations as well as more businesses of hotel management spreading to provincial tourist destinations within the country and abroad, to reduce the business risk (Wehrich & Harold, 1993). An increase of middle class tourist market has also accelerated accommodations to expand the business to respond to fast emerging of this market. Consequently, the hotel sector in Thailand has now been facing a shortage of workforce due to disparity between the business and market demand and the supply of workforce. This situation has also been associated with Thai education in hotel and hospitality program. Despite the fact that the hotel business rather requires hotel graduates from vocational schools, higher ratio of hotel graduates is still those produced by universities. The pressure derived from the formation of CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) and its gradual growth in tourism is also noted in intensifying Thailand's shortage of hotel workforce, particularly when workers of the CLMV group move back to their countries, and through increased mobility and free flow of labour, including the CLMV forecasted to be another factor that may limit growth in hotel business expansion (Thannews, 2014).

In Samut Songkram Province, Thailand, the accommodation business is occupied by small resorts and homestay establishments, in which most workers are locally employed. By this the majority

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of employees have inadequate skills and knowledge required in hotel business for instance English communication, computerized program used in hotel reservation, professional knowledge and hotel service personalities (Lertphipatnanon, Annanon, Young Noble Order of Excellence Gul made love & Genealogy, 2012; Wijetunge, 2016). This paper therefore aimed to investigate the motivation towards the hotel operations of the employees at the operational level, utilizing the hotel business in Samut Songkram Province as the case study. The findings of this paper would contribute to human resource database in hotel business that benefited competency development planning and management, especially in corresponding with the coming of ASEAN Community and the growth of ASEAN hotel and tourism industry. The review of literature included concepts, theories and relevant studies from reliable sources, which was used for the development of operational definition and conceptual framework of this paper.

Objectives

- To investigate the motivation towards the hotel operations of the employees at the operational level in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province.
- To investigate the behaviour of the employees at the operational level in performing the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province.
- To examine the relationship between behaviour and motivation of the employees at the operational level in performing the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province.

METHODOLOGY

The population of this paper was the hotel employees at the operational level who worked in the hotels in Samut Songkram Province. To determine the sample size was based on the calculation using the Taro Yamane's formula, giving a total of 400 samples at the 0.05 percent of sampling error, with the use of simple random sampling technique. Questionnaire was utilized to collect the data, which was designed with 3 parts including 6 questions for general background of respondent, 18 questions for behaviour of respondent and 24 questions for motivation of respondent with regards to the hotel operations. Four hundred questionnaires were distributed to the defined samples, all of which were returned, and were analyzed (Weiner, 1986).

Statistics used in the analysis

- The descriptive statistics including percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to provide the quantitative description of the data that covered the level of motivation and behaviour towards the hotel operations of the employees working in the hotels in Samut Songkram Province.
- Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and Chi-Square were used as the inferential statistics for the Correlation Analysis to examine the relationship between behaviour and motivation of the employees at the operational level in performing the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province.

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

The demographic findings of the study revealed male respondents as the majority; aged between 21 and 30 years old, single status with bachelor's degree education level. The majority of the respondents have been working for 1-5 years as the hotel staff with an average income between 15,001 and 25,000 Baht. The overall behaviour of the respondents in performing the hotel operations was reported with high mean score. The behaviour attributes presented that understanding, involvement, organizational commitment and uniformity in and towards the hotel operations were also high. Moreover, the respondents' motivation in the hotel operations reported medium level. The motivation attributes including career success, job characteristics, career growth and job security, and relationship with colleagues were also at a medium level, whereas job welfares and incentives reported low level.

The Correlation Analysis reported that there was a relationship between behaviour and motivation of the respondents in performing the hotel operations. The analysis on each attribute found that a relationship between involvement in the hotel operations and organizational commitment existed.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The study investigated the motivation and behaviour of the employees at the operational level in performing the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province, and examined the relationship between their behaviour and motivation. The finding revealed a medium level of significance of career success, job characteristics, career growth and job security, and relationship with colleagues which is relevant to the result of Yamjamuang (2014) stating that the core competency lies in cooperation of colleagues for creating development plan for hotel employees at the operational level. This finding was supported by the fact that the hotel premises were clean and friendly-designed for work, whereas the employees were well supported and appropriately supervised by their commanders, and helped by their colleagues, especially in dealing with daily problems in the operational tasks. Furthermore, the employees have always received praise, recognition and acceptance among colleagues, which builds up employees' engagement. The findings also reflected that right duties and responsibilities of the hotel operations were delivered to the right employees, who would find them fitting in their skills and knowledge, and this was challenging for them to put more efforts in the performance of their duties in order to gain acceptance of their commanders and to get promoted. Contrarily, the motivation of job welfares and incentives reported low level. The findings coincided with the study of Prangprakon (2003) that investigated the relationship between the quality of working life and work satisfaction of the employees of Toyota Motor Thailand Co., Ltd. The study found that the employees had a medium level of the quality of working life in terms of socially responsible work, appropriate working environment, balance between living and working in the higher position, promotion of social integration or cooperation, reasonableness and sufficiency of remuneration, right of privacy, career growth, job security, and opportunity of developing knowledge and competency. For the satisfaction towards work, the employees were satisfied at a medium level with working environment, interpersonal relationship and commanding. The satisfactory motivating factors included career success, job characteristics, acceptance and career growth (Aunjan, 2000; Donald, 1989).

With regards to the behaviour of the employees at the operational level in performing the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province, the level of score of the overall behaviour and of all 4 behaviour attributes (understanding, involvement, organizational commitment and uniformity) in and towards the hotel operations reported high. The finding was explained by the fact that the employees presented at work on time and took personal leave only when necessary; they were involved in making decisions and could deal with problems and obstacles at work; they were willing to dedicate to their jobs and the organization, while sharing the same vision with the organization by devoting considerable effort on behalf of their organization to growth and success. When comparing the performance outcomes against the goal, the record has presented mainly an achievement. This also includes high productivity in utilizing organizational resources and saving. This concurred with the key elements of effectiveness at work (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopaske, 1991). These elements include (1) communication management, which focuses on managing information flow within an organization and connection between divisions and departments; (2) ability in decision-making, which is based on targeting right, appropriate and feasible objects or targets, and on selecting by use of appropriate ways and techniques that can lead to achieving goals; and (3) organization members' adherence to organization's formal and informal rules and regulations.

An examination of the relationship between behaviour and motivation of the employees in performing the hotel operations in the hotel business of Samut Songkram Province revealed that there was a relationship between these two. The employees' motivation was found to relate with the employees' involvement in the hotel operations and organizational commitment. This reflects that the employees have been provided with trainings of hotel knowledge and understanding of hotel operations, resulting in their higher level of responsibility, patience, determination, self-confidence in performing duties, and good interpersonal relationship with colleagues. These consequently contribute to higher level of effectiveness and productivity in the job performance, career success, and relationship with colleagues and commitment towards their jobs and organizations.

SUGGESTIONS

- The hotel business in the studied site should consider re-thinking welfares and incentives for the employees, in particular about those other than monthly payment, as well as an increase of salary and compensation, due to the current high cost of living.
- Improvement on hotel working environment should be taken into account in order that the hotel premises will have safe and secured environment for persons and assets, and friendly atmosphere that encourages the employees at service-oriented work. Furthermore, availability of office appliances should be managed to sufficiency at use.
- Career growth and job security should be considered. This includes not only provision of trainings of necessary operational skills and knowledge to the hotel professional but also reasonable supports for higher education funding.
- Putting the right quantity and quality of duties, deliberating detailed and well-defined job description and the process of work of the hotel operations should be refined.

Future studies may include investigating other unknown factors that determine working motivation of hotel employees at the operational level in Samut Songkram and at other sites, as well as examining working motivation of hotel managerial employees.

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