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# FACTORS IN SELECTING SENIOR CITIZENS TO WORK IN THE HOTEL BUSINESS IN BANGKOK UNDER MODERN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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## Abstract

Nowadays, senior citizen workforce is a problem affecting the country's business sector due to a decreased birth rate. This makes the aging population structure increasing, resulting in a higher proportion of the workforce. Meanwhile, the young workforce has a low increasing rate due to the low birth rate. This is an opportunity and challenge of human resource in changing workforce management and welfare. This is particularly on hotel business having stiff competition and facing workforce shortage. In addition, creating good experience to the organization results in the occurrence of human resource management in the new era of hotel business. Therefore, senior citizen workforce is the key to making a difference in the hotel business. However, to be able to do that must rely on a long work experience. This includes excellent service skill and a better understanding about the hotel organization culture. Thus, senior citizen workforce is a valuable one with accumulated experience for a long time. This creates a competitive advantage in the hotel business and replaces working-age workers very well. This article is therefore the presentation of human resource management in the modern era which requires managing the senior citizen workforce to drive the hotel business instead. In the future there will be a shortage of young workers so human resource professionals need to consider policy planning that is consistent with workforce conditions. This also includes skills and experience, work commitment and performance, personality and human relations, work behavior, compensation management, and welfare for senior citizen workers.

**Keywords:** Senior Citizens, Hotel Business, Human Resource Development

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## Introduction

The current world society is now having a change in the population structure towards an aging society. This is in line with what the United Nations has assessed. The situation is that the year 2001-2100 will be the century of the elderly. This is because the structural change of the world's population involves a decrease in birth rate but an increase in a number of aging people. It makes the average lifespan of the world's population is at least 9 years, and there are more than 2,000 million people over the age of 65 (one-fifth or 20% of the world's population) (Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute, 2020). According to forecast of the elderly population in 2050 in Southeast Asian countries, Thailand ranks second in a number of elderly population (Kaewthep et al., 2011). Senior citizen workforce with expertise is therefore valuable in creating a competitive advantage in service business. This article presents the challenges of human resource management in managing servitor citizen workforce in the service business. In the near future, there will be a shortage of young workforce and it needs to turn to managing senior citizen workforce for the rapid expansion of the service business. In other words, there is a shortage of workers who will be a cog in driving the business, especially business that lack efficient workers. This conforms to data for National Statistical Office (2020).

For these reasons, the author is interested in the investigation of basic data, attitudes and needs of the hotels to employ and develop potential of target senior citizens under modern human resource management. Specifically, this study aimed to examine basic data, attitudes and factors in the selection of seniors for work in the hotel industry in Bangkok, Thailand in the context of modern human resource management. Results of this study are expected to be used as guidelines for the application of the employment and development of potential of target senior citizens (Wechayanon, 2011). In addition, results of the study can be guidelines for preparing readiness to cope with lack of workforce in the future creating competitive advantage and sustainable development (Khammaddee et al., 2017).

## Research Methodology

This study employed qualitative research and in-depth interview was used for data collection. It was conducted with 4 Centara Grand hotels in Bangkok, a capital city of Thailand, since these hotels wished to employ senior citizens and those who had retired from the hotels. In this respect, the researcher wished to investigate basic data, attitudes and needs of the hotels to employ and develop potential of target senior citizens under modern human resource management.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentary review. In other words, basic data included name, surname, sex, position and years of service. Needs of the hotels for the employment and potential development of target senior citizens included: 1) skills and experience, 2) commitment to work, 3) work competency, 4) work personality, 5) human relationships, 6) work behaviors, and 7) compensation (Hall, 1991).

The author employed content and systematic analyses related to potential of the elderly. This included description, interpretation of comments, analyses of basic data, attitudes and needs of the hotels for the employment and potential development of the target senior citizens. This was under modern human resource management.

## Research Results

### Skills and Experience (Competency)

The Centara Grand hotels needed for senior citizen hotel employees having skills in computer, language use and hotel work. Four important aspects consisted of the following: 1) skills, 2) competency, 3) experience, and 4) educational qualifications. To make the senior citizen employees be successful, it needed to make use of skills and experience be successful, it needed

to make use of skills and experience which it is their competency needed. The interviewee number two, there was the idea that the success of the results was important which might be beyond expectations. Therefore, to be successful in goal achievement and hotel goals the senior citizen hotel employees must have skills and continual development. Meanwhile, interviewee number four suggested that prior to the arrangement of employment contract for target senior citizens, it should have an assessment of their work performance during the probation. This might be in terms of computer literacy, foreign language competency, human relationship, etc. The position received might depend on aptitude or ability of the target senior citizens. Importantly, they must be reconsidered as appropriate before allocating positions and duties. The interviewees shared common attitudes that most senior citizen hotel employees of the hotels lacked foreign language proficiency such as English and Mandarin. Most of the hotels' guests used these foreign languages and this resulted in language communication barrier. Therefore, it was essential that these senior citizen hotel employees be competent in either English or Mandarin or both. Furthermore, some of the senior citizen hotel employees did not have computer literacy as well as knowledge about hardware and software. This included skills in document printing program, work schedule program, presentation program, using email, and data retrieval. Hence, if a senior citizen is hired to work it is necessary to develop such skills to meet the needs of the hotels.

### **Commitment**

The Centara Grand hotels had attitudes towards most senior citizen hotel employee that they had determination and patience. This was particularly on work disciplines and responsibilities. It was found that these senior citizens were more responsible than co-workers of other ages. This resulted in success according to the hotels' set goals. Meanwhile, the interviewees number one and four added that the senior citizen employees were very attentive to their duties in various departments such as Housekeeping and Kitchen departments. Besides, they were ready and willing to continuously improve or develop themselves for effective and successful working performance.

In addition, it was found that the senior citizen employees of the hotels tried to improve their assigned tasks. For example, those working on the hotel front desk developed themselves by studying additional English. Likewise, interviewee number three claimed that the senior citizen hotel employees tried to adapt themselves to current situations. Meanwhile, interviewee number four indicated that the senior citizen hotel employees were able to analyze work goals and problems encountered. This conformed to the opinion of interviewee number two that the senior citizens hotels employees were dedicated and hardworking. Also, they were able to solve problems in work to achieve the goals as set.

### **Working Performance (Capable)**

According to the key informants, it was found that the senior citizen hotel employees had the ability to work. That was, they were able to do their assigned tasks well like those working in the departments of Housekeeping, Front Desk, and Laundry. Moreover, the interviewee number four claimed that the senior citizen hotel employees had the ability to solve problems straight to the point. However, their weak point was use of technology related to modern office equipment. Not only this, they needed to be developed or trained in terms of use of ready-made programs, data retrieval through websites and foreign languages. According to their experience in senior citizen hiring, it was found that they were not competent in foreign languages which needed to be development for the provision of services to foreigners. Hence, it should have a policy on foreign language training for new senior citizen hotel employees.

In addition, the senior citizen hotel employees should enrich their ability in work performance of different departments such as housekeeping, laundry, kitchen, and administration. This aimed to increase the efficiency in their work performance, management, and operational planning. In this respect, the interview number Two added that the senior citizen hotel

employees had a level of work performance found in Kitchen and Administration departments. Also, they were able to replace working age workers. Thus, the Centara Grand hotels perceived the importance of senior citizen hiring and were confident that these senior citizens had potential which could be developed.

### **Work Personality**

The Centara Grand hotels realized that the Human Resource Management Division should put the importance on external personality screening of the target senior citizens. The following were examples of the external personality: 1) compatible polite dress, neat and clean; 2) the manner of walking was elegant and polite; 3) clear and polite speaking communication; and 4) outgoing personality with good external appearance. Moreover, the interviewees number two and four added that the hotels needed to screen front desk applicants because good personality cleverness and politeness influenced hotel first impression of hotel clients. Importantly, senior citizen hotel employees must have commitment, responsibility, confidence, honesty, effective teamwork, etc. All of these characteristics were needed by the hotels leading to sustainable and successful hotel business operation.

### **Human relationships (Compatible)**

The Centara Grand hotels perceived that the senior citizen hotel employees were respected persons, calm and had leadership. They were able to transfer their accumulated body of knowledge and experience to co-workers which was beneficial to the organization. Meanwhile, they honored and respected their younger superiors. Furthermore, the interviewees number one and two added that the senior citizen hotel employees who truly loved hotel work put the importance on human relationship creating. Also, they respected hotel department heads, co-workers at the same level, and hotel administrators. This really lessened problems in working and age gap. Importantly, the senior citizens realized that hotel administrators who were younger than them were leaders in hotel business operations.

### **Work Behavior (Culture)**

The Centara Grand hotels had an attitude that the senior citizen hotel employees were persons who were considerate towards their co-workers. Although there was an age gap between them, they could get along with one another very well. This conformed to all of the key informant who claimed that the senior citizen hotel employees could perform their tasks as a teamwork very well. Also, they expressed opinions and transferred knowledge based on their accumulated knowledge and experience which was beneficial to the organization. Meanwhile, interviewee number two stated that the senior citizen hotel employee group were people with a generous heart, considerate and had a high sense of responsibility. Based on the observation of interviewee number three, it was found that the senior citizen hotel employees, regardless of whether they worked in a nearby department or in any position were calm and respectful. However, the interviewees number one and four commented that the senior citizen hotel employees should be able to transfer their accumulated knowledge and experience to their co-workers very well. Besides, those who truly love hotel work should have desirable work behaviors i.e. honor and respect for supervisors who were younger than the interviewees.

### **Compensation**

All the interviewees had the same guidelines and opinions that the senior citizen hotel employee hiring should have a year-to-year contract together with the following employee welfares: salary, one free meal/day, bonus, service charge, and employee welfare group insurance, etc.

## **Conclusion and Discussion**

According to results of the study, the Centara Grand hotels perceived that the senior citizen hotel employees were considerate, calm, and respectful. Besides, they possessed leadership and were willing to transfer their accumulated knowledge and experience to co-workers of different

age. Most of them were patient, determined and hard working with disciplines and a high sense of responsibility. To achieve the hotels' goals, the Human Resource Management Department should put the importance on external personality of the senior citizen hotel employees and co-workers. This included the following: 1) appropriate clean and neat dressing; 2) polite and careful walking; 3) polite, clear, and correct verbal/nonverbal communication; 4) friendly and outgoing personality, etc. Interestingly, the senior citizen hotel employees honored and respected their supervisors who were older of younger than them. However, most of the senior citizen hotel employees needed to develop their foreign language proficiency and modern technology.

Importantly, the Centara Grand hotels were willing to hire the senior citizen hotel employees. This was because the senior citizens were careful, honest and attentive workers with a high sense of responsibility. Nevertheless, the hotels needed to hold a training on English/Mandarin and modern technology (Program package) for the senior citizen hotel employees for sustainable success of the hotels.

Therefore, results of this study could be guidelines for developing senior citizens, this could be used to determine policy and planning of the Centara Grand hotels as well as concerned government policies.

Aside from being a research for developing potential of senior citizens, this study also revealed their potential which was beneficial to the society of both public and private agencies. Furthermore, it was an important source of data used for determining policy on the hotel planning. Also, it was guidelines for other agencies to further human resource management.

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**Data Availability Statement:** The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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