PROACTIVE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HR DEPARTMENTS IN STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIRST-RATE LUXURY HOTELS AND RESORTS IN BANGKOK

Watunyoo Suwannaset[1]

Faculty of Education, Burapha University

Email: watunyoo@go.buu.ac.th

Abstract

Despite the attempts of hotels in improving service quality of hotel staff in Bangkok through training, a number of studies uncovered some undesirable training outcomes derived from an ineffective training process. This research was conducted based on the assumption that it would have been better for hotels in Thailand if they had reviewed active roles and responsibilities in staff training and development practiced by experienced senior HR administrators working in hotels and resorts which were accredited with a five-star rating. The purpose of this study was to determine proactive roles and responsibilities of the HR departments in staff training and development in first-rate luxury hotels and resorts in Bangkok. The research design of this study was a qualitative approach applying Grounded Theory strategy. The participants of this research were 21 directors and training administrators working in five-star hotels in Bangkok. The participants were identified through the means of three non-probabilistic sampling techniques – purposive sampling, theoretical sampling and snowball sampling. The data collection technique was semi-structured interviews. Constant Comparative Method was undertaken to analyze the data. The study reported six active roles and responsibilities in staff training and development that the HR departments of the first-rate luxury hotels and resorts in Bangkok undertook. These were 1) finalizing the training budget, 2) identifying training needs, 3) designing HRD activities, 4) organizing compulsory in-house training programs, 5) assuring the good quality of all in-house training programs and ensuring employees learn with a smooth training experience, 6) assisting techniques for staff performance management and career development. Recommendations and implications based on the findings found in this study were highlighted.

Keywords: Roles and Responsibilities, Human Resource Departments, Staff Training and
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[1] Burapha University, 69 Longhaad Bangsaen Road, Saensook, Mueang, ChonBuri 20131

Introduction

The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicted that in 2020, there would be over 1,600 million tourists travelling to South East Asia (Pongbungong & Wiboontanakul, 2018). Thailand, one of the most visited destinations in the region has been working on generating good sources of income from welcoming large numbers of visiting tourists (Thanasettakij, 2016). This could be because tourists travelling to Thailand spent large amounts of money during their visits on accommodation, food and beverages, souvenir shop purchases, experiencing many tourist activities, etc. (Suwannaset, 2017). Recently, Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand was, in particular, forecasted as the number one most visited cities in the world in 2016 (the Global Destination Cities Index as cited in Mollington, 2016). To ensure good impressions and the comfortable travelling experiences of the revenue generators, the Thai government, tourism sectors and Bangkok metropolitan authorities have constantly developed and provided adequate and good urban infrastructures.

Hotels and resorts were a fast-growing hospitality business within the tourism industry which were expected to be one of the leading contributors to the global economy (Bagri, Babu & Kukreti, 2010). Due to the rapid changes and development of a competitive industry globally, it strongly lifted up the service standard, forcing frontier hotels to enhance their service quality to compete with each other. Increasing guests' satisfaction and maintaining high quality services have become the most important mission of all the hotels since nearly all the revenues of the hotels are based on the results of impressive services the customers could receive from well-trained hotel staff. In other words, competencies of hotel employees - knowledge skills and constructive attitudes are regarded as important powers of companies in competing with their business rivals, and effective training and development were used as tools to create these competitive advantages. Rathore and Maheshwari (2013); Acquaful, Dedume, and Appiah (2016) and Hazra, Ghosh and Sengupta (2017), in addition, highlighted the direct relationship between hotel staff effective training and the upgrading of the quality of guest services so that with proper training, hoteliers could perform and deliver excellent service to their guests.

It has been found that the hotel business sectors in Thailand have responded well in preparing themselves to welcome the high demands of tourists entering the country. This included conducting intensive programs concerning service training, career development, succession planning, and talent development. Without developing good training suggestions, it may not always be an easy or a successful task. Boon-itt (2010) highlighted evidence found in his study that the service quality of some hotels in Thailand were fairly rated at a low level and fell short of the expectations of customers. This could also be seen from a number of related studies reporting some undesirable training outcomes derived from an ineffective training process (Khanfar, 2014). These, for example, were some staff delivering services to their hotel customers without being given adeqate training and development programs (Rathore & Maheshwari, 2013), conducting training needs assessment to identify competency gaps of hotel staff was often ignored (Bayoud, 2013), many HR staff themselves

had not received updated knowledge on how to conduct strategic training, hotel managers lacked managerial skills and important knowledge and practice in Human Resource Management (Çetinel, Yolal, & Emeksiz, 2009), or some hotels might not receive adequate training budgets (Breiter & Wood, 1997).

Since well-trained hotel staff with professional knowledge and hospitality skills could effectively deliver impressive service to their customers, the great challenge was providing good training, development and professional development programs to ensure quality professionals among hotel staff is given to hotels' HR departments. This was supported by Gazija (2012) that one of the most effective strategies which today's hotel industry needed for enhancing their service quality and gaining competitive advantages in the global competition was the way the HR departments in hotels could learn new training methods and techniques for improving their staff.

Acknowledging the ineffective training situations practiced in hotels, considering the given recommendations regarding the importance of hotel HR staff learning new training methods and techniques shared by the HR departments in successful hotels, and not finding any single study concerning proactive roles and responsibilities of the HR departments in staff training and development of the first-rate hotels and resorts in Thailand, the researcher conducts this study with his philosophy assumption (belief) that training knowledge and practices suggested from HR experts in 5 star hotels in Bangkok could be effectively used as guidelines in suggesting the strategic roles and responsibilities of the HR departments in staff training and development in other star rated hotels.

Research Objectives and Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to study active roles and responsibilities concerning staff training, development and career development of the Human Resource Departments in the first-rate luxury hotels and resorts in Bangkok. The research question asked in this study was "what were roles and responsibilities concerning staff training, development and career development of the HR departments in the first-rate luxury hotels and resorts in Bangkok.

Scopes of the Study

1) The findings presented in this study were analyzed based on the training and development roles and responsibilities exercised and shared by HRD/Training administrators in first-rate luxury hotels and resorts in Bangkok. The frame of representatives in this study was limited only to executives or administrators who were responsible for HRD Departments in five-star hotels and resorts in Bangkok.

2) Purposive selection criteria were set as a frame to identify specific groups of research participants. Not applying any probabilistic sampling technique, the degree of transferability of the research findings to other star grade hotels or hotels located outside Bangkok needs to be cautiously considered.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions were clarified to ensure readers' understanding of operating key terms used in this study.

1) Proactive roles and responsibilities in staff training and development are linked with the duties and accountabilities of human resource developers in undertaking strategic activities to develop meaningful training in five star hotels and resorts in Bangkok.

2) Staff training and development refers to related human resource development activities the HR departments in the selected hotels were conducting for responsible staff development.

3) First-rate luxury hotels and resorts refers to hotels or resorts having been continuously accredited as five-star hotels or resorts in Bangkok since 2013. Their names and star rating were displayed on the Hotel Resort Directory website.

Review of Relevant Literature

Roles and responsibilities of the HR Departments in hotel businesses

The work concerning human resources could be assigned to different groups of people in different types of hotels. In large hotels, Human Resource Departments could have a team of HR professionals carrying out a number of duties concerning staff management and development. In contrast, in small and medium size hotels, the work of human resources could be assigned as part of the manager's responsibilities. The duties of managers in small hotels could basically involve assisting staff and maintaining work competencies of their team (Singh 2014). However, it has been lately acknowledged that there were some shifts in the training professionals' roles and responsibilities. The duties of the HR department could be, for example, viewed as described by Acquaful, Dedume, and Appiah (2016).

Acording to Acquaful, Dedume, and Appiah (2016), … dramatic shifts in responsibilities and accountability, effective training and development functions are finding themselves an integral part of the organization's strategic planning. In the hospitality and other business organizations, few things change as much as the training and development function. Change can be seen from numerous perspectives, including the way programs are initiated, developed, designed, and delivered. The various individuals that comprise the process - from trainees to immediate managers, to professional staff, to senior management - are changing perspectives and paradigms on training and development (p.185).

Another learning concept concerning training and development that has shifted traditional training practice and influenced roles of training has come from providing training programs to facilitating employees' learning. This was to ensure that the organized learning activities could deliver

expected learning outcomes to their trainees. Singh (2014) moreover, pointed out that the work of human resources concerning training and development helped 1) prepare new employees to perform their required job functions, 2) update existing employees' new ways of performing their tasks, 3) prepare staff who wish to move up to more responsible positions to reach their career development goals, and 4) most organizations to attain their organizational goals, and gain competitive advantages over their competitors.

Training process in the tourism sector

Martínez-Ros and Orfila-Sintes (2012) described that the training process in the tourism sector started from conducting HRD needs assessment. Planning was the second step of the training in which goals, methods, duration, structure and selection procedure were drafted. The third step was implementing the well-designed training programs. The final step was evaluating the performance of the training programs. This was in line with a framework for the HRD process called "ADImE'. Werner and DeSimone (2012) outlined that there were 4 stages in the HRD process. These were Assessment stage, Design stage, Implementation stage, and Evaluation stage as shown below:
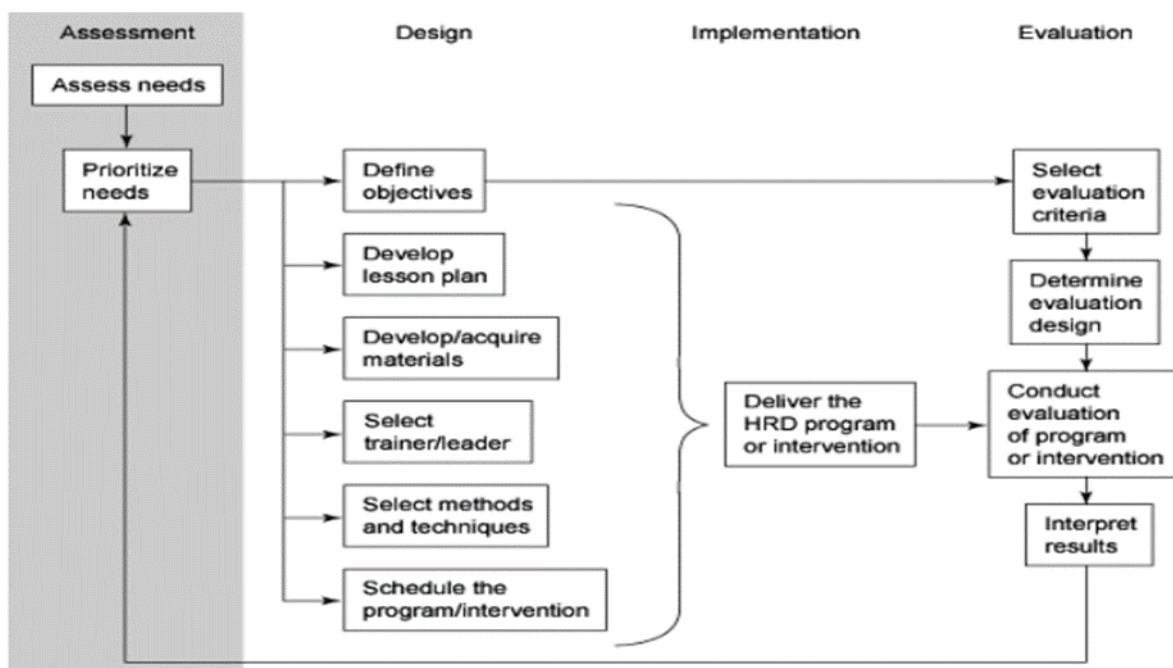

Figure 1 A framework for HRD process called "ADImE'
(Werner & DeSimone, 2012)

This framework described that HR practitioners organizing HRD activities, should start from conducting HRD needs assessment so that needs for employee development, analyzed at organizational level, task level and individual level could be clearly identified. Then, the management team concerned, as well as heads of each department, should work together on prioritizing them. The

second stage is the design phase in which each selected program would be planned and designed. The important activities in this phase consists of 1) defining objectives; 2) developing lesson plans; 3) developing/acquiring materials; 4) selecting a trainer/leader; 5) selecting methods and techniques and 6) scheduling the program/intervention. After each activity in the second phase is planned in detail, it is time to implement the program. The third phase is called 'deliver the HRD program or intervention'.

To ensure the success of the implementation, 4 steps of HRD evaluation including selecting evaluation criteria, determining evaluation design, conducting evaluation of program or intervention and interpreting the results are steps in the final phases.

Standard Criteria of Five Star Hotels in Thailand

The Tourism Authority of Thailand believes there are a number of factors which determine hotel ratings (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2011). Ratings are established by the Thailand Hotel Standard Task Force who have both Regional and National Centres which conduct scrupulous onsite inspections. A visit involves at least four Inspectors representing probably three different organizations (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2011). Additionally, the Department of Tourism has a criteria for establishing the standard of Five-star hotels in Thailand. Examining the following 12 major areas determines whether or not a hotel can be accredited with five-stars.

Major Area 1: Location, environment, infrastructure and car parks (4 criteria with 13 indicators)

Major Area 2: Lobby, public toilets, elevators, and walkways in the buildings (4 criteria with 56 indicators)

Major Area 3: Standard rooms with corridors and bathrooms (8 criteria with 120 indicators)

Major Area 4: Suite room and Executive floor (2 criteria with 14 indicators)

Major Area 5: Restaurant, coffee shops, bars, and kitchens (5 criteria with 86 indicators)

Major Area 6: Recreation zone, and swimming pools (2 criteria with 37 indicators)

Major Area 7: Business Service Center: conference room and Business Center (3 criteria with 51 indicators)

Major Area 8: Staff and service (7 criteria with 68 indicators)

Major Area 9: Safety and security (2 criteria with 15 indicators)

Major Area 10: Resources and community and facilities (3 criteria with 25 indicators)

Major Area 11: Employees (2 criteria with 8 indicators)

Major Area 12: Extra services (3 criteria with 6 indicators)

Maintenance is an important criterion when granting a star rating, together with employees receiving regular training and evaluation along with management being deemed efficient as specified by The Thailand Hotel Standard Foundation. The hotels' resources are also of great important as well as placing a high emphasis on the environment and sustainable growth. The list of hotels and their

accredited stars is usually updated on a four yearly cycle on the Hotel Resort Directory website.

Previous related studies

Acquaful, Dedume, and Appiah (2016) conducted descriptive research investigating the challenges and problems of training and development in the hospitality industry in Ghana. The sample of this study was identified through the means of Stratified and Convenient Sampling Methods. The participants were human resource practitioners and employees at both Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). They were randomly assigned into sub groups based on their unique characteristics. Questionnaires were distributed to obtain quantitative data. To obtain qualitative data, Convenient Sampling Technique was applied to identify 58 human resource practitioners and employees (27 employees were from SSNIT and 31 employees from KNUST) for their interviews. To obtain primary information, a structured interview was the data collection technique. The study found that ongoing training for existing employees allows them to increase their productivity, continuously. Inadequate on-the-job training techniques, inadequate off-the-job training techniques and not enough refresher courses were major challenges for both SSNIT and KNUST.

Singh (2014) studied different techniques the hotel industry could use to maintain the training and development of their employees during an economic recession. The research design was mixed-method. The data was collected from 53 respondents working for Renaissance Shanghai Yuyuan Hotel. The research uncovered that the importance of staff training was not realized by the employees. Suggestions for enhancing the awareness of hotel staff towards the importance of training practices should be the responsibility of the HR departments who should organize training programs based on the training needs surveyed from staff.

Hazra, Ghosh, and Sengupta (2017) conducted a study entitled 'Importance of Training and Development and its Impact on Employees' of Hotels in Kolkata, India: An empirical study'. The purposes of this study were 1) to identify the importance of training and development, and 2) to evaluate its impact on employees in the hotel industry. The participants of this study were 106 employees working in hotels in Kolkata, West Bengal in India. The data was collected from April to September, 2016. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire. Statistics used for data analysis were Correlation and Regression. The results of this study showed that employees reported the benefits of training as follows: firstly, Self-Development Training: they viewed that training helped to develop new skills; it improved health and safety; it improved working conditions; it helped to get internal promotion; it suggested proper work planning; it refreshed the work skills of old employees. Secondly, Organizational Commitment: they found that training motivates employees towards organizational goals; it helps to know about working in organizations; it helps in career development and it reduces fatigue and struggle.

Research Design and Methodology

After carefully reviewing the research problem, the researcher could indicate areas of knowledge which the researcher needed to obtain for addressing the problem. The researcher determined that the study required knowledge which fell under the constructivism philosophical paradigm. Thus, the qualitative approach was deliberately chosen. The research strategy was also chosen from the belief that by understanding knowledge and practices concerning proactive roles and responsibilities in staff training and development exercised by the top rate hotels and resorts in Bangkok and analyzing the essence of core HR roles and responsibilities practiced by HR experts, some roles and responsibilities in staff training and development exercised in the top rate hotels and resorts in Bangkok could be greatly articulated. To develop guidelines to assist other star rate hotels on taking active training roles and responsibilities, Grounded theory strategy was the research strategy employed in this study.

Participants and Identification Technique

The participants in this study comprised of 21 HR directors, training managers, assigned HR officers or experienced staff whose positions might have different titles but they were in charge of planning staff training and Human Resource Development activities, authorizing and making decisions about staff development and career development programs in the selected five star hotels and resorts in Bangkok. Additional criteria which these participants must have met included having over three years of work experience directly related to training and staff development.

Data Collection Process and Instrument

A series of data collection processes in this study was suggested by Creswell (1998) in 7 steps namely 1) Locating site/individual, 2) Gaining Access and making rapport, 3) Purposefully sampling, 4) Collecting data, 5) Recording information, 6) Resolving field issues and 7) storing data. The detailed descriptions of each step is presented as follows:

Step 1) Locating site/individual: The researcher visited the Hotel Resort Directory website to get a list of all five star hotels in Bangkok. The researcher made some phone calls to the number found on the internet to his potential participants who were HR directors, training managers, HR officers in the selected five star hotels and resorts to introduce himself, present his research project and ask if the researcher would be welcomed to visit them for data collection.

Step 2) Gaining Access and making rapport: After obtaining the approval for paying a visit from his potential participants, the researcher sent emails confirming the date and time for his visit. The emails were, in addition, enclosed with a scanned formal request letter file issued by the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Burapha University where the researcher was working, a scanned document file explaining 1) the research objectives, 2) data collection techniques, 3) a list of interview questions as well as a scanned consent form file for them and their seniors.

Step 3) Purposefully sampling: About 3 techniques for identifying qualified participants were implemented in this study. These were purposive sampling, theoretical sampling and snowball sampling. As being suggested by Marshall and Rossman (2011) that the researcher should try to collect his or her data from participants who could provide the researcher with rich information, a list of criteria of participants including they must have been heads of the HR departments, or those who had a major responsibility in staff training and development and must have worked in the hotel business sector for over 3 years were then purposively included. In addition, to ensure a sufficient amount of obtained information, Seale (1999) suggested that the researcher should analyze the data on the same day he collected it. The researcher followed this suggestion to determine 1) if the data he had in his hands reached its saturated level, 2) if he could discontinue collecting data from a new informant, and 3) if he can summarize and present his concrete research results. The snow ball technique of data collection advised by Flick (2007) was also in the researcher's consideration as an effective participant identifying technique. The researcher could additionally identify the participants whose qualifications also met the set of informant criteria from recommendations given and being introduced by previous interviewees.

Step 4) Collecting data: Only the potential participants responding to the emails confirming date and time for the interview were the participants in this study. The researcher visited the hotel and entered the interview room on time. The researcher spent around 45 to 60 minutes interviewing each participant in a quiet room.During this informal interview, the interview questions prepared in the interview guide were asked and answered. The researcher thanked his participants and asked for advice regarding new potential participants before leaving.

Step 5) Recording information: Apart from taking notes, the researcher asked for permission to use an audio recorder to record the conversation and prevent the loss of important information during the conversation. The audio files, the notes and the transcriptions from the conversation were securely recorded.

Step 6) Resolving field issues: Some plans to avoid and prevent certain undesirable situations during collecting the data at the hotels were developed. These included 1) Checking hotel locations and finding out directions to the hotel before the appointment days, 2) planning to use different types of questions to encourage participants to share their practices as well as being prompt to ask for further examples or clarifications, 3) Being aware of loud noises and making sure that the interview rooms were quiet enough for having a clear conversation between the researcher and the participants.

Step 7) Storing data: All forms of obtained data – audio recording files, notes, transcriptions of the interviews were confidentially kept and required a passcode to access. These were in 2 external computer memories, email inbox and a personal online storage.

Data Analysis

As a qualitative study applying Grounded Theory strategy was the research design in this

study, the following 4 stages of the Constant Comparative Method was undertaken to analyze the data.

Stage Process

    1 Transcription

    2 Initial (open) coding (semi-complete)

    3 Writing initial memos

    4 Intermediate (focused) coding including Memo writing, Refining the code system, Linking codes to other codes, Identifying Categories, Defining Categories, Production of a diagrammatic representation of analysis – showing categories and relationships between them. (Braun & Clarke, 2013)

To code and categorize the obtained data into themes, Atlas.ti version 6.2 which is the qualitative data analysis and research software was used.

Trustworthiness strategies

To ensure standard practices and earn trust on the quality of the research design and findings, in this study the researcher employed certain ethical strategies to warrant the foremost trustworthiness principles (Credibility, Applicability, and Dependability) as follows:

Table 1 Trustworthiness strategies exercised in this study

Credibility	- Collecting data from different sites or locations - Ensuring participants' willingness to join the research project by acknowledging their right to withdraw from the study and proposing that they read and sign their consent forms. - Using Theoretical sampling technique to obtain sufficient data.
Applicability	- Providing detailed information on how the study is conducted. - Presenting findings revealing similar results in theories and previous related research
Dependability	- Using 6 types of questions (Experience question, Opinion question, Feeling question, Sensation question, Knowledge question, and Background question) to verify the correctness of the given information. - Recoding the same data in different time periods to ensure the correctness of the researcher's viewpoints.

Research Findings

This study found that the proactive roles and responsibilities concerning training,

development and career development of the Human Resource Departments in the first-rate luxury hotels and resorts in Bangkok can be classified into6 categories. These were 1)working on the training budget, 2)conducting training needs assessment, 3)designing effective HRD programs/interventions, 4) implementing some important in-house training programs, 5) assessing the quality of all in-house training programs and ensuring employees learning and their smooth training experience, and 6) advising supervisors on issues concerning performance management and career development of their subordinates.the detailed descriptions of the findings are presented as follows.

1) Working on training budget.

The HR departments have certain roles and responsibilities concerning figuring out and working on planning the hotel training budget. This could start from finding out how the training budget may be best allocated. The HR departments need to work to obtain related information from a number of sources and conduct a thorough training needs analysis. This is because not all training programs require financial support. For instance, some knowledge and skills the employees must possess to perform their everyday work are often conducted at their work stations. These kinds of training are less likely to require much money (some coaching/training do not require any financial support). However, there could be some training programs which need some budget allocations. To see how the training budget should be effectively spent, the HR department must have called for meetings among GMs, Heads of the Finance Department and all departmental trainers so that these people can discuss important competencies, the directions of the staff development plan and then finalize the training budget.

2) Conducting Training Needs Assessment could be divided into 3 particular tasks these include (2.1) Identifying HRD needs, (2.2) Reviewing staff retraining programs, and (2.3) Prioritizing Training programs and developing an annual training plan.

▪ Identifying HRD needs

Scheduling the annual staff training and development plan is one of the most important roles of the HR departments. Each year, the HR departments need to conduct a training needs assessment. After identifying a list of training and development programs, the HR departments need to spot trainees who may require the knowledge and skills. It is likely that a training program can have trainees coming from different departments in the hotels.

▪ Reviewing staff retraining programs

Furthermore, reviewing staff retraining programs allows the hotel to maintain high quality staff work skills and ensure service excellence is received by hotel customers.

▪ Prioritizing Training programs and developing an annual training plan

Because not all the HRD programs could be organized at the same time, the HR departments of five-star hotels must make a careful decision. To acquire assistance, the departments usually called for meetings among management teams and people whom it may concern to discuss and weight the importance of each training need. It had been reported that HRD programs were often prioritized

based on training budgets, customers' needs, hotel occupancy periods, parent company assignments and organizational strategies, together with laws and external auditing periods.

3)   Designing Effective HRD Programs/Intervention could involve (3.1) Designing HRD Interventions, (3.2) Facilitating required training programs, and (3.3) Selecting the trainers.

- Designing HRD Interventions

The HR departments work on designing staff learning interventions/activities such as training and development programs, peer to peer learning, a buddy system in the workplace, coaching or self-learning. These are based on the analysis of the objectives of learning and development programs and also the information received from notes recorded on the first day a staff member was interviewed, new staff competencies assigned each year by company headquarters, requests from heads of departments, and the results of employee's appraisal or guests' comments.

- Facilitating required training programs

While each department has their own particular accountability to train work skills to their team, the HR departments could also receive requests for help in organizing or facilitating some new training and development courses that may be of interest but are not within the fields of their expertise. Before proposing these training requests to the management teams, the HR departments must carefully review and determine the importance of the training proposals. Feedback and suggestions concerning teaching activities may be given if they are necessary. If the HR departments found that they could not design or run some of the requested courses by themselves, the HR departments could do their best to help find out and coordinate with recommended training institutes from outside in order that either trainers from outside can come to teach and train the staff or the staff can be sent out for the training.

- Selecting the trainers

As the curriculum assigned from the company headquarters, for example, do not always come with detailed learning activities, new HRD activities for the programs need to be designed. Therefore the HR departments need to consider who may be the most suitable trainers to facilitate the designed learning activities. Searching for experts or champions in facilitating the developed training activities needs to be done either getting recommendations from people working inside to identify potential trainers within the hotel or outsourcing them from outside the hotels. It is an unavoidable role of the HR departments to do a lot of coordinating work.

4) Implementation of training programs undertaken in five star hotels could comprise (4.1) Conducting in-house training programs and (4.2) Organizing Train the Trainer programs

- Conducting in-house training programs

Not only do the HR departments develop annual training plans after conducting HRD needs assessment and hosting all the mandatory in-house training courses such as orientation, service excellence, hotel brands, brand service behaviors, service culture, service minds and service standards, but the HR departments also need to work with the head of each department in running

some standard operating procedure courses. It is often the KPI of the HR department that each employee must attend at least three training programs each month.

- Organizing Train the Trainer programs

Each year, the HR departments will receive training plans from all departments so that training officers from the HR departments are able to review the trainers of these training proposals. Organizing "Train the Trainer programs" are courses which the HR Departments, and departmental trainer committee help each other to enhance teaching and training competencies of potential staff chosen from each department. Consequently, the hotels can have their own departmental trainers to help train the new members working in their work stations. The "Train the Trainer programs" also cover the cases when the HR departments need to select some hotel staff and send them to receive a training program from outside. Therefore, they can be assigned as trainers for particular topics when returning.

5) Assessing the quality of all in-house training programs and ensuring employees learning and their satisfactory training experience

In-house training programs can be held by either the HR departments or the departments in which the employees are working. If they are not conducted by the HR departments, it is an accountability of the HR departments to pay a visit and ensure 1) the quality of the organized training programs, 2) smooth journey of staff training experience, 3) positive attitudes or satisfaction levels of staff towards their training and development, and abilities of trainers/departmental trainers in facilitating their staff learning. However, the overall training and their learning outcomes will be reported and sent to the HR departments at the end of the courses. Comments and suggestions are considered as useful feedback for the HR departments to review and ensure their future improvements.

6) Advising supervisors on issues concerning performance management and career development of their subordinates consisted of (6.1) Assisting supervisors on staff improvement and development, and (6.2) Supervising the career development and succession planning of staff

- Assisting supervisors on staff improvement and development

Since career development of staff can be motivated through training, the HR departments need to ensure that the concepts of career development and succession plans are clearly understood by all employees and their supervisors. It is also the job of the HR department to provide assistance and training to the heads of all departments regarding leadership skills, coaching and steps for undertaking workforce planning.This is because the hotels expect all managers and supervisors to inspire, supervise, and maintain good performance of their subordinates.After tutoring these kinds of assistance and training, the HR departments still need to send their team to monitor and supervise the trained supervisors.

- Supervising the career development and succession planning of staff

While each department does their best to fill up KSAs which employees need to have in order

to perform their routine work, the HR departments take the responsibility for developing their soft skills and critical attitudes to prepare them for climbing to higher levels. Courses such as time management, solving problems, dealing with customers, prioritizing work and conflict management are examples of courses organized by the HR departments to prepare them to grow.

The HR departments must work collaboratively with the heads of each department to identify competencies of staff that have potential to move up to higher positions. This can be done by examining individual employees' competency gaps from their training and development records, mid-year performance reviews, comments from supervisors and performance appraisals. By doing these kinds of investigation, training and development programs can be supportively drafted in a list of training programs that need to be achieved. Additionally, recognizing employees sometimes wish to move and progress their career advancement in other departments. It is also one of the roles of the HR departments to work as coordinators talking to the gate keepers (managers or the heads of other departments) whom the staff want to move to and grow in their departments. There could also be circumstances where some employees have strong potential to grow and continue their career advancement in other properties. The HR departments are expected to help find available positions in other hotels or resorts within the hotel chain for them.

Discussion of Research Findings

To increase the degree of applicability, the following section reveals some similar results found in related theories and previous related research that match with research findings reported in this study.

This study found that conducting HRD needs assessment is regarded as the responsibility of HR departments in all five star hotels and resorts in Bangkok and is also the first part of the framework for the HRD process called "ADImE" which Werner and DeSimone (2012) outlined. Singh (2014), moreover, agreed with this pointing out that to enhance the significance and importance of training practices, hotels should match their training needs with training implementation. This study found that one of the important roles of HR professionals was designing effective staff training programs that help employees to prepare themselves for career advancement. This responsibility of the HR departments was similarly noted by Hayes and Zaccarelli (1996) underlining that training was vital for hospitality operations. Training professionals in the HR departments often took the role of informal trainer, providing both new and existing employees with assistance. For this reason, training was used as a tool for enhancing competencies of staff allowing them to climb up their career ladders. Also, this study reports that the HR departments had a responsibility to conduct important in-house training. This was consistent with a result found in the study of Martínez-Ros and Orfila-Sintes (2012) revealing that in-house training programs were often done linked with external training. A further responsibility of the HR departments in first-rate hotels is that HR developers must visit all training and development programs to assess the quality of all in-house training programs and ensure

employees' learning as well as enjoying the training experience. A similar finding was reported in the work of Martínez-Ros and Orfila-Sintes (2012) stating that it was the responsibility of the Human Resource Executive (HRE) to ensure a smooth implementation of any training and development programs planned. This study, in addition, found that the training budget needed to be discussed in meetings with management teams and other relevant personnel so that they could weigh the importance of each training need and finalize how the training budget could be best allocated. This was in line with the concept of prioritizing needs in the framework for the HRD process (Werner and DeSimone, 2012). This point of interest was additionally explained by Martínez-Ros and Orfila-Sintes (2012) saying that when conducting training analysis, the decision should be made and approved by a group of the heads of the organization so that the training budget could be heard by all involved people and allocated agreeably.

To conclude, the roles and responsibilities in training and development practiced by top-rated hotels and resorts in Bangkok could be seen as maintaining good training standards, conducting an effective training needs identification, prioritizing and scheduling training programs, supervising departmental trainers and heads of departments in designing effective HRD activities and motivating career development of their teams, setting up new trainer teams, as well as observing and evaluating the success of organized training.

Recommendations and Implications

1) By acknowledging the roles of the HR departments in the leading hotels in setting up teams of departmental trainers, not only does this guide other hotels to learn how Train the Trainer programs can be organized, but it can also help the HR departments to cascade down the training and development work improving functional competencies of new staff members to their supervisors, experts and practitioners working at their work stations.

2) This study emphasizes the roles of HR departments in providing both supervisors and subordinators with the clearly-understood concepts of career development. Training, as a result, should be regarded as a supportive tool for the HR departments in every hotel to drive and grow the career development of the staff.

3) This study reports the roles of the HR departments in the leading hotels in designing various forms of HRD interventions. It provides human resource developers in hotels with various forms of training and development which could be undertaken.

4) This study suggests the groups of people who may be concerned with prioritizing training and criteria for both training budgets allocation and scheduling training programs.

Recommendations for Future Studies

Since this research emphasized only on one area which is Bangkok, therefore, the future research can focus on studying another areas as well as extend the study to other service business

sectors, besides hotel and resorts, in order to see the difference of viewpoints. In addition, the future research should also study about organizational environment as well as organizational supports which perhaps positive affect the proactive roles and responsibility of staff. Moreover, this study lacks discussion of technological implication to HR training which the technology now has an important role. Therefore, the next study should include the technological issues such as strategic technology management or technological administration quality into the study.

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