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HOTEL BUSINESS TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT: ENHANCING CHINESE LANGUAGE SKILLS

Abstract:

The purposes of this research were: 1) to compare the difference of achievement scores earned in Chinese knowledge and skills of hotel personnel before and after the training for personnel development in enhancing Chinese language skills, and 2) to study the satisfaction towards the training of hotel personnel. The research samples consisted of 50 hotel staff in Koh Samui, Thailand, collected by purposive sampling technique. The instruments used in this research were the course modules for hotel business training for personnel development in enhancing Chinese language skills, pre-test and post-test, and satisfied evaluated questionnaire. The frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that: 1) the hotel personnel's achievement in enhancing Chinese language knowledge and skills increased with statistical significance ($p < 0.01$), and 2) Hotel personnel's satisfaction in the training program and resource persons were at high levels. Modules and contents, course organization and management, application of knowledge and skills, and the overall satisfaction were at good levels. The feedback gathered from the participants confirmed that the resource persons and facilitators were qualified, experienced and able to explain difficult content topic in clear and simple term.

Keywords:

hotel business, training, personnel development, language skills

JEL Classification: J24, L80

Introduction

The population of the People's Republic of China has more than 1300 million people, excluding Chinese who are living in other countries around the world. Many people around the world communicate with each other by using Chinese language. The economic growth and economic expansion of China is resulting in increasing of the average income, drawing power of trade and investment that everyone keeps watching. The Chinese government allows the citizens can leave the country even more. Increasingly, Chinese tourists travel abroad, especially to Thailand. Trade and investment between China and Thailand are growing enormous.

Since 2008 onwards, the number of Chinese tourists traveling to Thailand increases continuously. Chinese tourists travelling in Thailand, using travel agencies services, have purpose of travelling to relax. Their most popular place is the natural attractions in the southern part of Thailand (Channual, 2013). Koh Samui is one of the most popular places for Chinese tourists. The Samui Island is located in the Surat Thani province, southern Thailand, in the Gulf of Thailand. The island is equipped with the beauty of the natural landscape with the lifestyle of simplicity of the local people living (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2007). Koh Samui is also one of the most famous tourist attractions throughout the world. Tourists come to visit the island enormous each year because of the beauty of its natural resources, tourist places and lifestyle (Praneetham and Satjachaleaw, 2015). Tourism is the main source of income of Koh Samui (Haicharoen, 2016). As the Chinese have a high demand for traveling in Thailand. Therefore, the Chinese language is necessary for tourism industry, trade and investment in the foreseeable future.

Human resource development in the Chinese language skills is essential for the tourism industry, as well as for hotel business. Human resources are the most important resource in the management of organizations. Personnel should be able to perform and achieve operational efficiency and effectiveness. The quality and potential of personnel depend on knowledge, ability, skills and appropriate attitudes to the duties of each personnel. Staff's knowledge, positive attitude and behavior, great features desirable, and ability to perform in accordance with the goals and strategy of the organization will be the benefit of the organization and can lead to organizational progress and ongoing development. A good preparation of personnel to be ready for any changes that might happen now and in the future is therefore important.

Human resource development is important both to the employees (themselves) and to the organization. The importance for themselves are obtaining new ideas and knowledge, pace with the advancement of technology, perform with high quality and performance, as well as meet the needs of their progressive. The importances to the organization are increasing the productivity of the organization, and maintain the quality and effectiveness of personnel. Hence, human resource development would provide benefit for both employees and organization.

Encouraging the learning in a systematic way will help to enhance knowledge, skills, experience and performance of personnel. They will increase capability and capacity and be able to perform efficiently and effectively in work environment. Hence, training for personnel development in the hotel business, especially enhancing Chinese language knowledge and skills of hotel personnel is necessary. They will have more confidence to communicate in the Chinese language and can provide services to customer professionally.

The Purposes of the Research

The objectives of this research were:

1. To compare the difference achievement scores earned before and after the hotel business training for personnel development in enhancing Chinese language skills of the hotel personnel.
2. To study the satisfaction towards the training of hotel personnel.

Methodology

The samples in this study were 50 hotel personnel. The purposive sampling technique was employed for the research. The research instrument was the close-ended questionnaire. Each questionnaire used a ranking scale of 1-5 (1 = very poor/not satisfied, 2 = poor/somewhat satisfied, 3 = okay/mostly satisfied, 4 = good/satisfied, 5 = excellent/very satisfied). The mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and t-test were used to analyze the data.

The course for hotel business training for personnel development in enhancing Chinese language skills comprised of five modules, namely; 1) introduction, 2) basic conversation, 3) hotel and room facilities, 4) room services, and 5) accommodation services.

Results

The results show that post-test mean scores of hotel personnel were statistically significant higher than the pre-test mean scores in all aspects of Chinese language knowledge and skills ($p < .01$) as illustrated in table 1.

Table 1: Knowledge and Skills Achievement of Pre-test and Post-test of Hotel Personnel

Experimental Group	Number	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
Pre-test Knowledge	50	2.34	1.24	15.47	.000**
Post-test Knowledge	50	4.02	0.74		
Pre-test Skills	50	2.74	1.20	14.40	.000**
Post-test Skills	50	4.04	0.66		

* * Significant Level at .01

Table 2: Satisfaction towards the Training for Hotel Personnel Development

Satisfaction towards the Training	\bar{x}	SD
Modules and contents		
1. Usefulness and effectiveness of modules and contents.	4.50	0.58
2. The training topics relevant to your work.	4.38	0.64
Total	4.44	0.61
Resource persons / facilitators		
3. Professionalism, expertise of resource persons.	4.74	0.48
4. Helpfulness of facilitators.	4.50	0.51
Total	4.62	0.50
Course organization and management		
5. Location for training course.	4.38	0.53
6. Duration of training course.	4.14	0.61
7. Number of participants (networking and sharing).	4.28	0.64
Total	4.27	0.59
Application of knowledge and skills		
8. Language skills development.	4.04	0.57
9. Knowledge and skills gained can be applied in the job.	4.36	0.56
10. Knowledge gained from training program help to acquire additional knowledge on the subject.	4.54	0.58
Total	4.31	0.57
Satisfaction towards training program		
11. Overall assessment of the training program.	4.60	0.50
12. Training program met expectations.	4.74	0.44
Total	4.67	0.47
Grand Total	4.42	0.56

Table 2 shows that, overall, the hotel personnel's satisfaction on the training for hotel personnel development in enhancing Chinese language skills was at "good" level (Mean = 4.42). Most of hotel personnel were satisfied in training program (Mean = 4.67), and resource persons / facilitators (Mean = 4.62) at very good levels. Modules and contents (Mean = 4.44), application of knowledge and skills (Mean = 4.31), and course organization and management (Mean = 4.27) were found at good levels.

Discussion

The study found that post-test mean scores of hotel personnel were statistically significant higher than the pre-test mean scores in all aspects of Chinese language knowledge and skills ($p < .01$), which is accorded to the Boonnuch (2012)'s research who found that the training for personnel development can lead to better performance in hotel operations of staff in terms of knowledge, skills, abilities, service mind and appropriate attributes. Focusing on staff development to meet the needs of customers and make them satisfied with the services provided, will help hotels run their business effectively and smoothly (Mongkolnimit, 2011). Sivalai and Sonsuphap (2014) mentioned that the ASEAN Economic Community will have impact on the hotel industry in attract new customers. Old customers may be retained, and new customers may be attracted. Hence, hotel business should focus on maintaining high standards of service, presenting Thai culture and service mind, adjusting room rates, offering various packages, planning for sales and marketing strategy, and improving personnel's language skills and specializations in order to attract new customers.

The research results found that hotel personnel's satisfaction on the training for hotel personnel development in enhancing Chinese language skills was at "good" level. The respondents indicated that they were "very satisfied" with the resource persons' professionalism and expertise. The feedback gathered from the hotel personnel confirmed that the resource persons and facilitators were qualified, experienced and able to explain difficult content topic in clear and simple term. Qualified and experienced instructors fruitful with knowledge and skills will allow learners learn, understand and practice correctly. Instructors are extremely important in teaching and learning, as well as organizing learning activities.

Most of the hotel personnel realized that all five modules and contents were very useful and relevant to their work. Training program provided met their expectations. They agreed that they acquired additional knowledge from the training program. Knowledge and Skills gained can be applied in their job. Langputeh (2001) pointed out that training for hotel personnel could lead improving staff's skills and implement their work task as well. Staff agreed that knowledge and skills gained from training provided can be applied in their job. Moreover, the training helped to strengthen unity and relationship between employees.

Recommendations

The hotel personnel found that all five modules and contents were very useful and relevant to their work. However, they mention that the time allotment for each module was quite short. It would be better if the time can be extended longer. Instructors should create learning activities which encourage interaction with native speakers of Chinese language. Moreover, instructors should use a variety of learning materials and activity tasks for teaching and learning, in order to stimulate exciting and enjoyable experiences.

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