

EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR IN HOTEL; YANGON, MYANMAR

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ABSTRACT

The hotel industry in Republic of the union of Myanmar is one of the major investments for multinational enterprises. The one challenge of the hotel that operated in Yangon, Myanmar is the lack of skilled labor. The main reason is that the inadequate hospitality education system to provide international standard skilled labor for fast growing hotel business, due to the opening of the country during this decade. The qualitative research, conducting participatory action research by traveling and staying in three to five stars hotels in Yangon for five days to observe the hotel staffs behavior and to interview some of the managers. The results found that 1) Myanmar employees like a group working 2) Employees love to have equal workload and compensation in the same group 3) There is too-over services mind that may interfere with the client. 4) Because of their lack of hospitality working skills, they must have on the job training continuously 5) Managers cannot expect the high performance of their employee works, so they need for both formal and informal relationships with their employees 6) Managers also need to take care of their families during their works 7) Myanmar employees must be motivated by psychological factors.

Keywords: 1) Working Behavior 2) Group Working 3) Team Work 4) Employee Behavior 5) Myanmar Hotel

1. Introduction

The Republic of the union of Myanmar (or Myanmar) is located in South East Asia nations and surrounded by Bangladesh, India, China, and Thailand. The country covers a surface of 676,550 km², exports teak, and rice (Thett, 2012). Estimated Myanmar's population was between 43 and 48 million (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2016), currently reported in the World Bank (country profile) website that is 53.37 million in 2018. Ethnic divided into five main minority groups, each own history, language, and culture, 14 regions; capital city is Naypyidaw (Elliot and McGregor, 2001).

Myanmar had been promoting and encouraging multinational enterprises (MNEs) to invest in Myanmar. Major investment is the hotel industry that accommodated the growth rate of international expatriate and tourist in the future (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand, 2013; Witvorapong, et al., 2015). There are numerous of MNEs interested to invest in the hotel industry in Myanmar. However, the significant challenge is

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that Myanmar employee is still lacking of skilled-workers with knowledge in management level (Abe & Masato, 2014; ASEAN, 2017).

It was an effect from military rule in the past fifty years ago; they lack of suitable education both quantitative and qualitative. Also, found some of the signification problems of MNEs operated in Myanmar about general business environment of Myanmar that is the local employee also still lack of experience with modern global management (Speece and Sann, 1998; Julian, 2008; Zhang, 2008; Mellish, 2016). The most important is also the different among workers' behavior has influenced on organization performance of MNEs (Aycan, 2000).

Human resources management is the significant challenges encountered in Myanmar especially at the level of the management staff and high skilled workers. The most workers who are unskilled could be employing in a few alternatives since; they have limited qualification, limited in international educated and no oversea experience. For the previous decades, these unskilled workers have poor efficiency, low productivity, poor discipline and lack of high quality knowledge. The Myanmar employees were interested in finishing day to day responsibilities and has not enthusiastic about increasing production or maximizing profit and one of the most important problems is the lack of motivation on employees (Speece and Sann, 1998).

According to Myanmar closed country for a long time, it still has limited research on the behavior of hotel employees in Yangon, Myanmar, the country that labor markets face the lacks of international skills and there is still less evidence of what the employees' behavior in hotel industry. This article is presenting the employee behavior in the hotel and showing the guidelines for planning personnel development for hotel employees in Yangon, Myanmar who have some limited skills for MNEs.

2. Literature review

We conducted pre-research to find the research gap by having some participation action research (Wongsaichue, et al., 2014; Sangnak, et al., 2015; Sangnak, et al., 2017). We found the gap of different cultural perspective, then we have done the systematic literature reviews of the motivation model of cultural management in Myanmar (Poodom, Lertputtarak and Lertbuasin, 2016) and have constructed the conceptual model of the international cross-cultural management for Thai MNEs investing in Myanmar (Poodom and Srijumpa, 2016). We collected the data in Yangon, Myanmar and found some gaps of Myanmar employee needed to explore, which are what exactly the behavior of Myanmar employee in the hotel industry and then we reviewed several literature in the relative concepts as follow;

Human capital in Myanmar

There are some reviews of country analysis framework even in Myanmar focus on the aspects of skill formation and the job focuses called human capital or workforce development (Benson, Gospel and Zhu, 2013). The skill shortages (Benson, Gospel, & Zhu, 2013) and human resource management are necessary for promoting economic growth in developing countries, in Myanmar, however there is still facing the skilled-labor shortage (Becker, 1980; Hanushek and Woessmann, 2008; Bhattacharya and Bathla, 2011). There are five percent of Myanmar workforce has tertiary education and only 15

percent had secondary education. It is low when compared with other developing countries group (McKinsey Global Institute [MGI], 2013; Gillan and Thein, 2016). Moreover, they had concentrated on primary education, which more than half the education budget, 19 percent of the secondary and tertiary levels 24 percent (OECD, 2014).

The cost of education and training are the most significant for the FDI inflows. (Becker, 1980; Slaughter, 2002). MNEs also have to invest in human capital includes short-term on the job training or interactions beside host country education and training institutions if the quality of education in the host country is limited (Slaughter, 2002). The human capital of Myanmar has an imbalance in demand and supply (Kohlhaas and Moser, 2015), the training institutions have undeveloped, and lack of training is entirely in Myanmar. This is the countries that the human capital base on the primary solve issue (Benson, Gospel and Zhu, 2013; OECD, 2014; World Bank, 2014; Tanaka, Spohr and D'Amico, 2015). Myanmar government has revenues from natural resources investment, while problems are a little share of the revenues from oil and gas to increase spending in the human capital more (Bissinger, 2013). In 2014, in the business surveys over 3,000 firms in Myanmar found almost 60 percent of respondents recognized the skill labor shortages is the key problem to operate the business (Masato and Molnar, 2014).

Moreover, in the near future there is a high possibility to increase skilled worker shortage in Myanmar. Many companies in Myanmar have reported that the amount of the salaries was paid less for skilled especially for local workers, this could imply that there is few local skilled labor in the country (Kohlhaas and Moser, 2015). Human capital development and its impact on MNE decisions for FDI remain crucial competitive in foreign investment in Myanmar. If MNEs cannot confront with enough levels of human capital, or the value of the expense with the shortage skill overbalance the revenue of investment, Myanmar will have the risk of losing competitive advantages and missing out on the economic development. Myanmar remains facing the lack of enforce ability of engagement contracts that is also a problem of the Myanmar government for the law enforcement in workforce. It relates the contractual agreements with workers to train in the employment of the MNEs (Kohlhaas and Moser, 2015).

The impact of employee behavior on clients' service quality perceptions

Employee's behaviors generally have either negative or positive impact on client's satisfaction. The human contact is a critical determinant of client satisfaction, and when clients are satisfied with the human interaction, they may be forgiving other problems. The hotel industry relies on the intangible product to create a positive clients experience. The employees who deliver superior service would receive the foundation of competitive advantage. Hotel employees can enhance the image of the hotel and the level of perceived and actual service quality. Hotel managers must adopt strategies to select employees that engage highly devoted to delight and satisfy for clients. On the other hand, the probability success of the organization is the hotel managers can select candidates' employee that has a greater likelihood of delivering quality service and ensuring client satisfaction (Kattara, Weheba and El-Said, 2008).

3. Research Methodology

We conducted qualitative research through participatory action research (PAR) (Krause, Scherzer and Rugulies, 2005; Afify, 2008). The researchers were acting same as general traveler, by booking in and staying in a 3-5 star hotel in Yangon, Myanmar for 5 days with 5 hotels, experiencing at least one day and one night per hotel and utilized the employee services of the hotel without revealing to the staff that we are as researchers. The researcher team is fortunately unstructured interviewing (Qu and Dumay, 2011) some Thai expatriate managers of 5-star hotels and Myanmar manager of a 5-star hotel in Yangon, Myanmar. The researchers have record the data of hotel employee behavior who have worked in the Yangon, Myanmar that could affect to the hotel service quality. The data were analyzed by the researcher team discussion during the formal meeting to investigate and summarize the data using a thematic analysis technique for analyze the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4. Result

We collected some of quantitative data from 3-5 star hotels' profiles in Yangon, Myanmar and integrated with qualitative data from indepth interview and the researcher participation during interactions with the hotel staffs. The results from our thematic analysis shown that the working behavior of Yangon, Myanmar hotel employees in a large perspective as following;

1) Myanmar employees like a group working.

By observing the employee behavior in each department, employees expressed themselves well in a group working, where each employee can work well with their group members in a combination of both physical expression and English communication. In the group, there still some imitation of learning the proper work among of each group. Also, from interviews with hotel managers, it was found that the working of the hotel staff could work well if they were working in groups and had better performance than working individually. For understanding the employee behaviors, the manager have observed the long journey of them during working with the hotel starting from the beginning of orientation, training and real working of the employee. It is also including activities beyond working for example, if employees are involved in group activities, they can increase the efficiency of their employees. Everyone in the group could work in the same or similar manner as each other.

2) Employees love to have equal workload and compensation in the same group.

Employees love to have the equal workload and receive compensation for the work in the same group. We also found that all employees have opportunities to discuss or ask about the workload that manager assigned and the compensation paid in the work group is equal or not. If an employee knows that they have a different workload and compensation, they will have several expressions, such as keeping the feelings out of the expression (a majority), questioning the reasons for disagreement (a minority), and resignation. The finding refers that if the work group receives equal both workload and quality could make the group work be more effectively.

3) There is too-over services mind that might interfere with the client.

From the observing, and receiving of the employee services, it was excellent, they have good service mind; they pay attention to clients all the time whether the clients is satisfied or not, however according to the principle of good service, the appropriate level of service brings the impression of clients but if services is too much or over service it might interfere the client and causing some dissatisfaction. We sometime observed the over service of the hotel employees that cause dissatisfaction of clients' impression such as in the food and beverages department, employees served and took care clients too much by keeping an eye on their clients all the time for any requests from them. This may make the clients feel be watching attentively for a mistake. Sometimes the employee would like to create satisfaction for clients, but they express themselves without a smile. These service manners might interfere with the clients and negatively effect on clients satisfaction.

4) Because of their lack of hospitality working skills, they must have on the job training continuously.

When hotel recruits and have new employees, hotel service orientation and training are required to enhance employee to be able to meet the service standards of the hotel, then the employees develop themselves for better service performance. We found that there is more specific training by management of hotel in Yangon, Myanmar, in addition to staff orientation and on the job training, for an employee who provides services that are not appropriate to the clients since they may pay improperly attention or too-over services for the clients. This situation is occurred since employees are lack of the service work experience in which in accordance with the hotel or international standards. Thus, the training should regularly and continuously on the job training for better service performance. The training must be thoroughly described in every step and into details, and manager must show an example to employees to make sure that they understand and can work properly for the hotel in the future.

5) Managers cannot expect the high performance of their employee works, so they need for both formal and informal relationships with their employees.

The practices of the hotel employees in Yangon could serve clients from various countries but the clients cannot expect the high performance as international standard since the employees may change their work behavior every day, due to learning from friends working with another hotel. Since the lack of work experience, hotel employees have the idea that the service provided by their colleagues or friends in the group may be correct but still not meet the international standards. Therefore, the managers need to practice them for changing the behavior of employees to meet the standards of the hotel organization. It is important for hotel managers to establish formal and informal relationships with the local employees. According to the people in Yangon is Buddhist, it is necessary to have religious activities together on a regular basis to dissolve behaviors between foreign workers and Myanmar employees, as well as other unity activities.

6) Managers also need to take care of their families during their works.

Aforementioned, the characteristics of working behaviors within the group, the employees illustrate the feelings that the organization is the working place like their home; they feel that they work to get a salary from their home and thus must be better, if their family is a part of the home or organization. The employees have an expectation that the organization must give importance to their family, such as when the wife maternity

birth, the hotel needs to give their money and leave work to take care for their wife. If their family member got sick, the manager should give permission for them to leave for taking care of their family and also give them welfare. If the organization realize important to their family, they will be happy to work for the organization.

7) Myanmar employees must be motivated by psychological factors.

We found the psychological factors have importance effect on the performance of hotel expatriate manager, the manager must understand Myanmar employee and motivate by the way psychological factors. It consistent with another result to explain the relationship perspective affected employee performance. The elements of feelings and other cognitive characteristics affect the attitude, behavior and functions of the human perspective. These factors can impact the person thought and then affect decisions and relations in daily life and work conditions; it includes the work methods, and the context of works including relationships and interactions with managers and supervisors, colleagues and coworkers, and clients.

5. Conclusion

We utilized the participatory action research (PAR) and some unstructured interview to collected the data in hotel 3-5 star in Yangon, Myanmar to find the working behaviors of Myanmar employee and found that 1) Myanmar employees like a group working 2) employees love to have equal workload and compensation in the same group 3) there is too-over services mind that may interfere with the client. 4) they must have on the job training continuously since the lack of hospitality working skills, 5) managers cannot expect the high performance of their employee works, so they need for have both formal and informal relationships with their employees 6) managers also need to take care of hotel employees' families during their works 7) Myanmar employees must be motivated by psychological factors.

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