

แบบจำลองความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุการพัฒนาทุนมนุษย์ที่ส่งผลต่อ
ความได้เปรียบทางการแข่งขัน และความสำเร็จในการดำเนินงาน
ของโรงแรมในเขตภาคใต้

The Causal Relationship Model Human Capital Development
Affecting the Competitive Advantage and the Performance
Success of Hotels in the Southern Region

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บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาแบบจำลองความสัมพันธ์เชิงสาเหตุการพัฒนาทุนมนุษย์ที่ส่งผลต่อความได้เปรียบทางการแข่งขันและความสำเร็จในการดำเนินงานของโรงแรมในเขตภาคใต้ เป็นการวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ (Quantitative Research) ใช้แบบสอบถามในการเก็บข้อมูลจากผู้ประกอบการหรือฝ่ายทรัพยากรมนุษย์ของโรงแรมใน 14 จังหวัดภาคใต้ อัตราส่วนจำนวนหน่วยตัวอย่างต่อจำนวนพารามิเตอร์ 20 ตัวอย่างต่อ 1 พารามิเตอร์ การวิจัยมีจำนวน 16 พารามิเตอร์ จำนวนขนาดของกลุ่มตัวอย่างที่เหมาะสมเท่ากับ 320 ตัวอย่าง (Steven, 1986) ผู้วิจัยเก็บตัวอย่างจำนวน 350 คน

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า การวิเคราะห์แบบจำลองมีความสอดคล้องกลมกลืนกับข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ $\text{Chi-square} = 57.339$; $\text{df} = 42$; $p = 0.058$; $\text{CFI} = 0.995$; $\text{GFI} = 0.976$; $\text{AGFI} = 0.948$; $\text{TLI} = 0.990$; $\text{RMSEA} = 0.032$; $\text{CMIN/DF} = 1.365$ ทดสอบสมมติฐาน พบว่า การพัฒนาทุนมนุษย์มีอิทธิพลทางตรงต่อความได้เปรียบทางการแข่งขัน และมีอิทธิพลทางอ้อมต่อความสำเร็จในการดำเนินงาน ส่วนความได้เปรียบทางการแข่งขันมีอิทธิพลทางตรงต่อความสำเร็จในการดำเนินงาน ควรพัฒนาทุนมนุษย์ในทุกด้านเพื่อเตรียมความพร้อม สร้างความได้เปรียบทางการแข่งขัน ส่งผลต่อความสำเร็จในการดำเนินงาน และพัฒนาองค์กรอย่างยั่งยืน

คำสำคัญ: แบบจำลองความสัมพันธ์ พัฒนาทุนมนุษย์ ความได้เปรียบทางการแข่งขัน ความสำเร็จในการดำเนินงาน

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to study the causal relationship model of human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and performance success of hotels in the southern region of Thailand. A quantitative research methodology was applied, using questionnaires to collect data from business operators and human resources departments of hotels in 14 southern provinces. The sample size ratio follows the guideline of 20 samples per parameter, with 16 parameters in the study, resulting in a suitable sample size of 320 samples (Steven, 1986). The researcher collected data from 350 participants. The findings indicate that the model analysis aligns well with empirical data: Chi-square = 57.339; df = 42; p = 0.058; CFI = 0.995; GFI = 0.976; AGFI = 0.948; TLI = 0.990; RMSEA = 0.032; CMIN/DF = 1.365. Hypothesis testing indicated that human capital development has a direct influence on competitive advantage and an indirect influence on operational success, while competitive advantage has a direct influence on operational success. It is recommended that human capital be developed in all aspects to enhance competitive advantage, leading to operational success and fostering sustainable organizational development.

Keywords: Causal Relationship Model, Human Capital Development, Competitive Advantage, Performance

Introduction

The recovery of the tourism sector has had a direct positive impact on the hotel business, which plays a key role in driving the country's economy. The hotel business not only creates jobs and generates income for local communities, but also plays an important role in stimulating the overall economy through spending in many related businesses.

Government enterprises and the private sector have made preparations to deal with increasingly fierce competition. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic obliged all affected sectors to plan and manage their organizations to remain of, and act, according to current situations. (Announcement on the 13th national economic and social development plan (2023 - 2027), 2022) the “resilient” business requires three levels of development, namely 1) Readiness, at least at the “survival” level, to rectify existing limitations or weaknesses, causing people’s hardships in their livelihood or the country’s vulnerability in dealing with changes, both internal and external. 2) Adaptation, at least at the “sufficient” level, to change necessary factors to achieve the objectives of economic,

social, and environmental security at the family, community, area, and country levels, as well as changes in development directions, patterns, and guidelines to align with changes in the new global era, and 3) Change for sustainable growth, at least at the “sustainable” level to drive the structural change in various dimensions to build capability of individuals and society in continuous development.

The hotel sector is important to the country’s economy. The sector was significantly affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in a substantial decrease in the number of tourists, both domestic and international, of approximately 39.9 million in 2020 when compared with tourist numbers in 2019. In particular, the southern region of Thailand was greatly affected as it was a popular destination, for foreign tourists, with many provinces having a diversity of marine attractions, a natural environment, and cultural interests as popular tourist destinations, that were top destinations in the global rankings, Also, Thailand was competitive with hotel prices and costs of living not being very high, providing value for money, and with the convenience of numerous modes of transportation. Compared to other countries in Asian region, Thailand had a tourism growth rate that was continuing to grow. (Lunkam, 2023)

In the hotel and service sectors, human capital development is a very important factor that will drive the organization to reach its goals and to be ready for business competition. The researcher’s purpose was to study the importance of causal relationships in a model of human capital development that affects the competitive advantage and the success of hotel performance in the southern region to see if there were effects on those relationships that determine the direction and policy on planning human capital development and management to ensure sustainable efficiency in work performance of employee.

Research Objectives

1. Study the relationship between human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region.
2. Study the direct and indirect effects on human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region.

Research Hypothesis

1. Human capital development is positively related to competitive advantage and operational success of hotels in the southern region.
2. Human capital development affects the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region through the factors of competitive advantage.

Research Scope

The purpose of this research was to study the causal relationship model of capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region of Thailand and to southern region use the results of this research to support and promote the national the national economic and social development plan, which includes strategies for Thai labor development which is the policy of the country. This research leads to a personnel skills development plan for hotels in the southern region, to create business strength, and positively affect the country's economy. The scope of research has been determined as follows:

The ratio of the number of sample units per parameter should be 20 samples per parameter. In this research, there were 16 parameters which had the appropriate sample size of 320. (Steven, 1986) To prevent the loss rate of the sample collection, the researcher collected the sample according to the actual population through the distribution of 350 questionnaires.

The research period was June 2023 to May 2024, and the locations sampled Included.

Hotels in the 14 provinces of the southern region, (Krabi, Chumphon, Trang, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Narathiwat, Pattani, Phang Nga, Phatthalung, Phuket, Ranong, Satun, Surat Thani and Yala)

Literature Review

The spread of the COVID-19 virus resulted in a large number of personnel losses. In addition, many hotel businesses that could not return to normal operations. Preparing and developing human capital to meet the needs of service recipients is an important factor for operational success and creating a competitive advantage. The researcher has reviewed the related literature as follows:

Concepts and Theories of Human Capital Development

Human resource development is the first important factor for businesses to create sustainable profits in the organization. (Mondy & Noe, 1996) Mentioning about human capital development, comprising: 1) Individual learning 2) Organization's focus on learning 3) Creation of vision 4) Development of emotional intelligence, and 5) Strategic capability. The important components of human capital are as follows: (Chakkaphak, 2021) 1) Intellectual capital refers to knowledge and ability to learn, specialized expertise, skills and experiences that individuals have accumulated, including internal knowledge called tacit knowledge. 2) Social capital refers to capital that requires networks, working relationships and communication that requires social interaction with other people. It is capital that helps create opportunities that will lead to the creation of value in social relationships, such as trust, reliability, etc. 3) Emotional capital refers to capital related to emotional intelligence, consisting of various characteristics such as self-awareness, integrity, and resilience.

Concepts and Theories of Competitive Advantage

Competitive Advantage is the ability to create competitive advantage in an organization, customer satisfaction, advantage over competitors, prepare for changes. In order to create strengths and opportunities for the organization's competition with four elements as follows: (Matchuang et al., 2015) 1) Efficiency is the ability of an organization to use fewer resources than competitors in the same production of goods or services, acquire equal or superior goods or services to competitors, reduce the rate of loss or use new technologies, as well as develop employees to ensure their full potential of knowledge and ability to achieve the organization's ultimate goal. 2) Equality is the process to assess an individual responsible for one's own work to ensure that goods and services comply with the standards and customers' needs by achieving the organization's goal. 3) Innovation is an invention that creates goods, products, services, and technology, new methods or processes in the production of goods and services, as well as new pattern of management to ensure creativity and value to the organization's goods. 4) Responsiveness is goods or services that meet customers' needs in terms of quality, pattern, appropriate prices, and rapidity for the maximum customer satisfaction.

Concepts and Theories of Performance Success

Performance success is the completeness of the work, the ability to solve problems clearly and tangibly in the work. Success is measured by the ability to perform

the work to achieve the set goals, on time, create satisfaction for people in the organization, customers and the success of the business. The characteristics can be elaborated in four dimensions as follows: (Lalitsasivimol, 2016) 1) Financial perspective is the operation of a profit seeking organization that uses performance, taking into account finance as a main indicator of success such as net profit, rate of return on investment, increased revenue, etc., based on financial statement including profit and loss statement, balance sheet, and cash flow of the organization. 2) Customer perspective is customer satisfaction as customers have direct impact on the success of work management. When customers are satisfied with goods, products, or services, the sales will increase, enhancing income and profit. 3) Internal process perspective is the process of organizational development. It is the indicator of the success and shows the efficiency of management, quality of work, as well as innovation in the organization. 4) Learning and growth perspective is the activity that an organization performs and achieves the goal and objective to develop the potential of the organization's efficient and effective internal operation which will produce quality products and services that meet customers' needs, resulting in customer satisfaction and aligning with financial performance or action plan.

In addition, (Haseeb et al., 2019) stated that Competitive advantage influences performance. Creating competitive advantage is related to performance, financial performance and non-financial performance. However, financial performance is the ability of the company to make a profit in all aspects. Non-financial performance is creating satisfaction and retaining customers by offering quality products and services. Small hotel operators focus on creating competitive advantage strategies. Especially for non-financial performance, it focuses on creating satisfaction and retaining customers with quality and standard services rather than focusing on profits but not creating customer satisfaction, which will affect customer loyalty and long-term operations. It is necessary to maintain and improve market conditions and methods that can create competitive advantages for sustainable operations.

The development of the organization's human capital will help improve performance, demonstrate the potential of human resources in the organization, and can add value to the organization, create competitive advantages, and develop the organization sustainably.

Related research

The researchers have studied the following related research: (Khaosung, 2017) who studied the innovation of human resource development that affected the success of hotel business in the three southern border provinces. The findings revealed that the variables of knowledge and ability in human resource development that affected success of hotel business in the three southern border provinces comprised technology, skills, knowledge, and ability in hotel business. As a result, human resource in the hotel business had more knowledge and ability and contributed to the success of hotel business in the three southern border provinces. At the same time, the variables of human capital innovation comprising competency, experience, and expertise could affect human resource development in terms of management potential comprising decision-making, coordination, and management that affected success of the hotel business in the three southern border provinces. The research found that communication potential with clear cultural and linguistic differences has an impact on the development of human resources of hotels in the 3 southern border provinces. Thanapatra and U-on (2019) study on the model of competitive advantage for small hotel in Thailand, the competitive advantage model of small hotels in Thailand is consistent with empirical data, affecting business performance. Customer focus helps to maintain good relationships, making customers satisfied in the long run, creating customer loyalty. Businesses have strength in good relationships, which positively affects the overall performance of the business. Developing human capital knowledge and capabilities will create a competitive advantage for the service industry. Peetiwan (2021) study on the development of human capital in international hotel chains after the COVID-19 outbreak, it was found that the strategy for developing human capital in hotels is to upgrade skills and professionalism or develop new skills that are appropriate for the changing work. It can show the highest efficiency, especially social capital that arises from people in the organization interacting and accepting each other. There is learning and exchanging useful information. There is a sense of joint ownership of the organization.

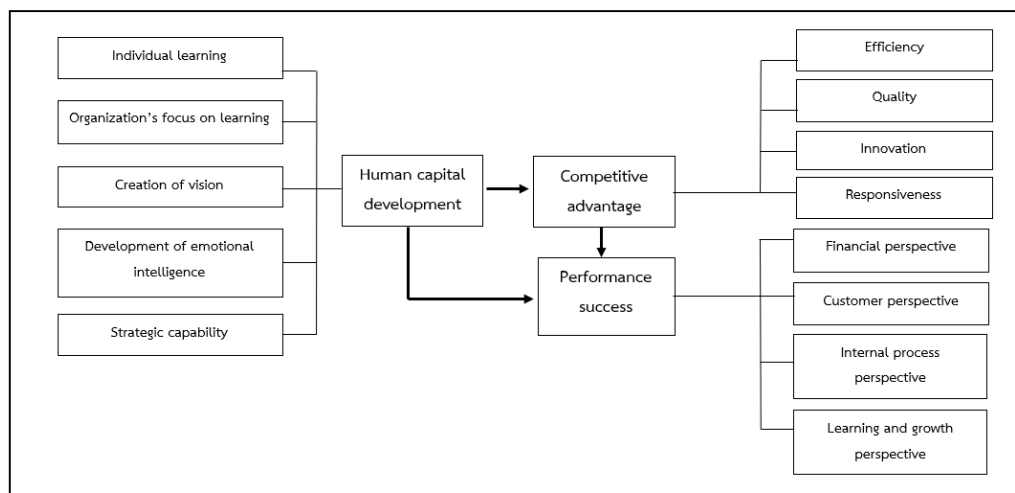


Figure 1 Research Conceptual Framework

From the study of theoretical concepts to create a conceptual framework for this research, the researcher classified the components of human capital development, consisting of 1) individual learning, 2) organizational learning orientation, 3) vision building, 4) emotional intelligence development, and 5) strategic capabilities, which affect the competitive advantage of the hotel business, consisting of 1) efficiency, 2) quality, 3) innovation, and 4) customer response, and affect the success of the business operation, consisting of 1) finance, 2) customer, 3) internal process, and 4) learning and development. To be successful in creating a competitive advantage for the business, it will also affect the success of the operation.

Methodology

The research on the Causal Relationship Model of Human Capital Development Affecting the Competitive Advantage and the Performance Success of Hotels in the Southern Region was based on the quantitative research with the following methodology:

1. Research Population

The population used in this research included 3,096 entrepreneurs, or human resource personnel in hotels in the southern region, and business entities. Which plays an important role in planning the human capital development strategy of the business. (Department of Business Development, 2019)

2. Research Sample

In terms of determining the sample size used in this research, as it involved data analysis with the Structural Equation Model, it required a large sample size. In line with the research objective of finding a causal model, the researcher used the ratio-to-number

parameter determination. (Steven, 1986) indicated that the ratio of the number of sample unit per parameter should be 20 sample per 1 parameter. In this research, there were 16 parameters which had the appropriate sample size of 320. In order to prevent the loss rate of the sample collection, the researcher collected the sample according to the actual population through the distribution of 350 questionnaires.

3. Research Variables comprising

a. Independent variables are human capital development i) Individual learning ii) Organization's focus on learning iii) Creation of vision iv) Development of emotional intelligence, and v) Strategic capability.

b. Intervening variables are competitive advantage, comprising i) Efficiency ii) Quality iii) Innovation, and iv) Responsiveness.

c. Dependent variables are performance success, comprising i) Finance ii) Customer iii) Internal process, and iv) Learning and growth.

4. The research tools included questionnaire and measuring tools.

5. Collection and Compilation of Data

After the researcher had collected concepts, theories, and related research results to be used as guidelines for creating instruments for use in the study according to the conceptual framework of the research, the researcher proceeded to collect primary data, which was data collection from a sample group of 350 samples, form as an instrument to collect data. using questionnaires with closed and open-ended questions. The researcher collected data by contacting the hotels human resources department, sending a link via email, and collecting personal data.

6. Data Analysis

For the analysis and interpretation of the data in this research, the researcher determined the guideline for data analysis and application of relevant statistics as follows:

a. Descriptive statistics used the mean and the standard deviation to interpret the meaning of each variable in 3 dimensions: human capital development, competitive advantage, and operational success, totaling 13 variables. Scores from 5 levels in the questionnaire

b. Inferential statistics focused on the study and description of various characteristics of the target population by compiling data from the sample population, using the Pearson Correlation to explain the relationship of each variable and the influence analysis by using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) AMOS Version 29 program to study the direct and indirect effects of the variables to see their

characteristics and find the shared predictive power of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

7. Funding

The researcher would like to thank the research funding. The research has been funded by Research & Development Institute Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand, granted to Chetsanee Butdam, funding number (No. 126/2566)

8. Institutional Review Board Statement

This research has been approved and certified by Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Ramkhamhaeng University, approved reference no. RU-HRE 66/0122.

Research results

In presenting the research findings, the researcher presented them according to the objectives and the set research hypothesis.

Study findings of the relationship between human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region

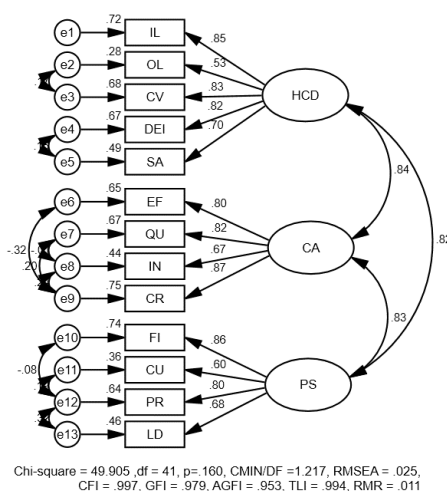


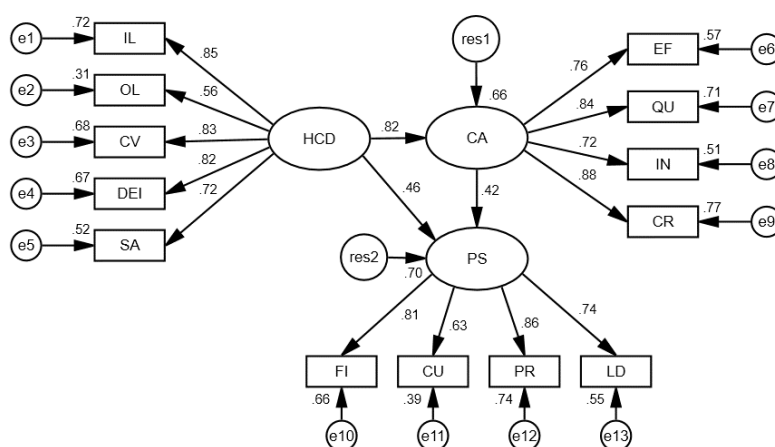
Figure 2 Findings of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis to Inspect the Construct Validity of the Latent Variables in the Model

The findings of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the latent variables in the causal relationship model of human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region revealed that all observed variables had the factor loading of over 0.50. It meant that the model had construct

validity. However, as the model had the Chi-square and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) that did not align with appropriate criteria, therefore, the Confirmatory Factor Model was restructured by connecting the two-headed arrows between the deviation of the variables based on the Modification Indices (MI). After restructuring, the acquired statistics was within the accepted criteria. Chi-square had no statistical significance (Chi-square = 49.905, df = 41, CMIN/DF = 1.217), GFI equaled 0.979, CFI equaled 0.997, RMSEA equaled 0.025, and RMR equaled 0.011. Moreover, the Factor Loading of all observed variables was high (>0.50). All passed the criteria. The Confirmatory Factor Model of the model of human capital development affected the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region.

Study findings of the direct and indirect effects of human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region

The results of the examination of goodness-of-fit of the hypothesis model with empirical information based on the analysis of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) revealed that the hypothesis model did not fit the empirical information, by considering the Fit Index as follows: Chi-square was different from zero with statistical significance at the 0.05 level (Chi-square = 244.569; df = 62; $p = 0.000$; CFI = 0.936; GFI = 0.907; AGIFI = 0.864; TLI = 0.920; AGFI = 0.864; RMSEA = 0.092; CMIN/DF = 3.945). The analytical results of the hypothesis model are shown in Figure 3.



Chi-square = 244.569, df = 62, $p = .000$, CMIN/DF = 3.945, RMSEA = .092,
CFI = .936, GFI = .907, AGFI = .864, TLI = .920, RMR = .024

Figure 3 Model Based on Research Hypothesis

The causal relationship model of human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region after the Modification Model revealed the analytical results of the construct validity based on the analysis of the Structural Equation Model (SEM). It was found that the Chi-square was different from zero without statistical significance at the 0.05 level (Chi-square = 57.339; df = 42; p = 0.058; CFI = 0.995; GFI = 0.976; AGFI = 0.948; TLI = 0.990; RMSEA = 0.032; CMIN/DF = 1.365). It demonstrated that the model fit the empirical information or the construct validity fit the statistics. Consideration was taken for the Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) equaled 0.976, and the Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) equaled 0.948. Both GFI and AGFI were higher and close to 0.90. The closer to 1, it meant that the model fit the empirical information. As for the indicator of the model deviation, it was the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) which equaled 0.032 and was lower than 0.08. It demonstrated that the model fit the empirical information relatively well. Consideration of the Relative Chi-square which was the ratio of the Chi-square per degree of freedom (CMIN/df) revealed to equal 1.365 which was lower than 5 from the Goodness of Fit Index. Therefore, it could be summarized that the Adjusted Structural Equation Model fit the empirical information and the estimate of the parameters in the model was therefore acceptable. The analytical findings are shown in Figure 4 and Table 1.

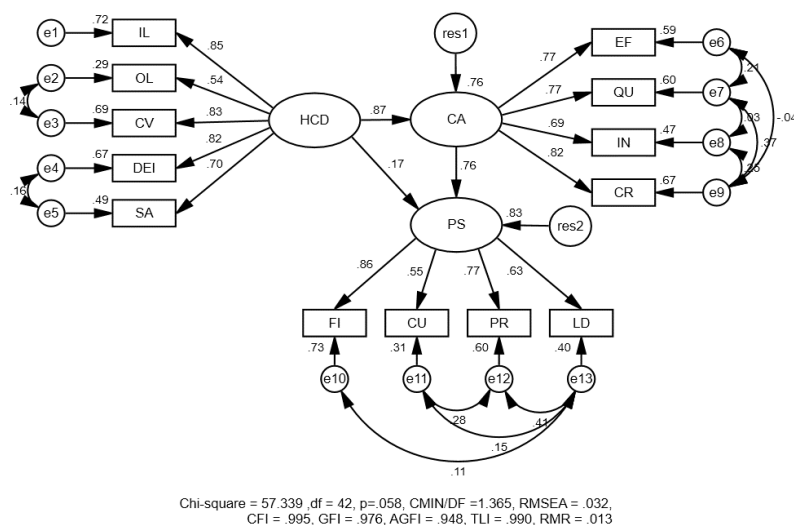


Figure 4 Model Based on Research Hypothesis after Model Adjustment

Table 1 Analytical Results of the Causal Factor Model of Human Capital Development Affecting the Competitive Advantage and the Performance Success of Hotels in the Southern Region

Independent Variables		Dependent Variables	β	b	S.E.	C.R.	P
Human Capital Development (HCD)	---->	Competitive Advantage (CA)	0.87	0.69	0.05	13.459	0.000*
Competitive Advantage (CA)	---->	Performance Success (PS)	0.76	0.72	0.19	3.751	0.000*
Human Capital Development (HCD)	---->	Performance Success (PS)	0.17	0.13	0.13	0.973	0.331

* Statistical Significance at the 0.05 Level

Table 2 Results of the Estimate of Parameters of the Direct Effect, Indirect Effect, and Total Effect of the Adjusted Equation Model

Independent Variables		Dependent Variables	
		Competitive Advantage (CA)	Performance Success (PS)
Human Capital Development (HCD)	Direct Effect	0.87*	0.17
	Indirect Effect	-	0.66*
	Total Effect	0.87*	0.83*
Competitive Advantage (CA)	Direct Effect	-	0.76*
	Indirect Effect	-	-
	Total Effect	-	0.76*

* Statistical Significance at the 0.05 Level.

For the findings of the data analysis based on the Hypothesis Model, the researcher conducted the inspection of the Structural Equation Model developed from the concepts and theories to see if it fit the empirical information. If it was found not to fit the empirical information, the researcher would undertake the Modification Model to ensure fitness with the empirical information by allowing the variance of the standard deviation of some pairs of observed variables to be related until the Adjusted Model fit the empirical information. Then, consideration was made on the relationship path of the causal relationship model of human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and the performance success of hotels in the southern region. The analysis of the Hypothesis Model testing, set up under individual topics, could be summarized as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Human capital development has a causal relationship affecting the competitive advantage and operational success of hotels in the Southern region.

Hypothesis 2: Human capital development (HCD) had direct positive impact on competitive advantage (CA) with the influence coefficient equaled 0.87 and statistical significance at the 0.05 level which aligned with the hypothesis.

Human capital development (HCD) had indirect positive impact on performance success (PS) with the influence coefficient equaled 0.66, with the variable of competitive advantage (CA) as the mediator variable with statistical significance at the 0.05 level which aligned with the hypothesis.

Competitive advantage (CA) had direct positive impact on performance success (PS) with the influence coefficient equaled 0.76 and statistical significance at $p = 0.05$.

Discussions of Results

This research was a study of “The Causal Relationship Model of Human Capital Development Affecting the Competitive Advantage and the Performance Success of Hotels in the Southern Region”. The researchers discussed the results as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Human capital development has a causal relationship affecting the competitive advantage and operational success of hotels in the Southern region. The results of hypothesis testing found that the adjustment of the confirmatory structural component model of the human capital development model affected the competitive advantage and operational success of hotels in the southern region. This is in line with the hypothesis that human capital development, especially in the hotel service business in the southern region, is different from other regions, especially in terms of cultural diversity, religion, language, and way of life. Human capital development is therefore a very important factor in the performance of the hotel business, which can create a competitive advantage. Consistent with the research results of Khaosang (2017) studying the innovation of human resource development that affects the success of the hotel business in 3 southern border provinces, it was found that the variable of knowledge and ability in human resource development that affects the success of the hotel business makes human resources in the hotel business more knowledgeable and affects the success of the hotel business. It can affect the development of human resources in terms of management potential and affects the success of the hotel business. The research found that communication potential with clear differences in culture and language affects the development of human resources of hotels in 3 southern border provinces.

Hypothesis 2: Human capital development affected competitive advantage. The findings of the hypothesis testing revealed that human capital development affected the competitive advantage of hotel employees in the southern region with statistical significance at the 0.05 level that aligned with the hypothesis. We should give importance to human capital development of hotels in the southern region to prepare for all economic situations in creating competitive advantage, develop human capital in all aspects for operational success, and develop the organization sustainably. Currently, hotel business focuses on personnel development to mainly respond to customers' needs in order to maximize competitive services to the customers. Thus, they focus more on the personnel development online, enabling the personnel to undertake their personal development through their smartphones. Consistent with the research of Peetiwan (2021) Study on the development of human capital in international hotel chains after the COVID-19 outbreak, it was found that the strategy for developing human capital in hotels is to upgrade skills and professionalism or develop new skills that are appropriate for the changing work. It can show the highest efficiency, especially social capital that arises from people in the organization interacting and accepting each other. There is learning and exchanging useful information. There is a sense of joint ownership of the organization.

Human capital development affected performance success. The findings of the hypothesis testing revealed that human capital development (HCD) had indirect positive impact on performance success (PS) with the variable of competitive advantage (CA) as the mediator variable with statistical significance at the 0.05 level which aligned with the hypothesis. This might be because the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the hotel business in all dimensions. The hotel entrepreneurs who were ready in terms of human capital potential could save their organization from the crisis. Contrary to the entrepreneurs who did not undertake human capital development to prepare themselves, eroding their competitive advantage. This aligned with the research of Khaosung (2017) who studied the innovation of human resource development that affected the success of hotel business in the three southern border provinces. The findings revealed that the variables of knowledge and ability in human resource development that affected success of hotel business in the three southern border provinces comprised technology, skills, knowledge, and ability in hotel business. As a result, human resource in the hotel business had more knowledge and ability and contributed to the success of hotel business in the three southern border provinces.

At the same time, the variables of human capital innovation comprising competency, experience, and expertise could affect human resource development in terms of management potential comprising decision-making, coordination, and management that affected success of the hotel business in the three southern border provinces.

Competitive advantage (CA) had direct positive impact on performance success. The findings of the hypothesis testing revealed that competitive advantage (CA) had direct positive impact on performance success (PS) with the statistical significance at the 0.05 level that aligned with the hypothesis. This might be because many hotel businesses undertook organizational restructuring to suit their operation under the new format, or prepared themselves for the government's policy on tourism promotion. Therefore, they devised the action plan covering business strategies to increase competitive advantage. This aligned with the research by Thanapatra and U-on (2019) study on the model of competitive advantage for small hotel in Thailand, The competitive advantage model of small hotels in Thailand is consistent with empirical data, affecting business performance. Customer focus helps to maintain good relationships, making customers satisfied in the long run, creating customer loyalty. Businesses have strength in good relationships, which positively affects the overall performance of the business.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The study of the causal relationship model of human capital development affecting the competitive advantage and operational success of hotels in the southern region to help hotel business executives understand the importance of human capital development in the hotel business effectively and efficiently. The researcher would like to suggest the following guidelines for those who want to study the issue of human capital development:

1. Suggestions for applying research results

a. The research findings revealed that the model developed by the researcher was only an initial process of the development of the theoretical concepts. The researcher used the concepts and theories relevant to human capital development of academics, researchers, and human resource development specialists as a framework to construct the model. Therefore, the model should be further developed and tested in other environments where they may be different variables that affect an organization's human capital development to enable the model to explain the phenomena more clearly and appropriately.

b. For the research findings, the researcher conducted a study with hotel Entrepreneur or human resources department in the southern region, whose information was collected by chance only. Thus, it did not cover the characteristics of specific organization with natural environment. The constructed model should therefore be tested with other sample groups to ensure correct and clear research findings, as well as cover wider population.

2. Suggestions for future research

a. Study should be conducted on the pattern of human capital development affecting operational innovation to develop an organization's main competency.

b. Study the development of human capital to create business advantages.

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