

การพัฒนาสมรรถนะการจัดการด้วยรูปแบบวิธีสำรวจประเมิน
สภาพการณ์และสำรวจเชิงพรรณานแนวคิดเพิ่มพูน
กรณีศึกษาโรงแรมคอนราดกรุงเทพ
Using Evaluative and Generative Approach to Improve
Management Competency: A Case of Conrad Bangkok Hotel

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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อหาวิธีปรับปรุงความสามารถในการจัดการของผู้บริหาร การศึกษาเริ่มต้นจากการตรวจสอบและประเมินระดับความสามารถในการจัดการของผู้บริหาร จากนั้นสร้างวิธีแก้ปัญหาโดยใช้การฝึกอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการผ่านการแบบสุนทรียปรัชญาในสอบถามเรื่องปัญหา และหาวิธีการแก้ปัญหาเพื่อปรับปรุงศักยภาพของความสามารถในการจัดการของผู้บริหาร ผู้ให้ข้อมูลคือผู้บริหารในแผนกและพนักงานของโรงแรมคอนราดกรุงเทพซึ่งทำงานในแผนกปฏิบัติการในสามแผนก ได้แก่ แผนกอาหารและเครื่องดื่ม แผนกต้อนรับส่วนหน้า และแผนกแม่บ้าน การวิจัยนี้ประกอบด้วยสี่ขั้นตอน คือ การวิเคราะห์สถานการณ์เบื้องต้นเพื่อประเมินผลก่อนการฝึกอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบสุนทรียปรัชญา การเก็บข้อมูลจากแบบสอบถาม การออกแบบและการนำเสนอการฝึกอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบสุนทรียปรัชญา และการประเมินผลหลังการฝึกอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบสุนทรียปรัชญา แบบสอบถามเชิงโครงสร้างเป็นเครื่องมือที่ใช้ในวิจัยนี้เพื่อใช้ในการตรวจสอบระดับความสามารถในการจัดการของผู้บริหาร จากมุมมองของผู้บริหารเองและจากพนักงาน ผลการศึกษาพบว่า สามเดือนหลังจากการฝึกอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการแบบสุนทรียปรัชญา มีประสิทธิภาพกับการแก้ปัญหาและปรับปรุงศักยภาพของความสามารถในการจัดการของผู้บริหารในสามแผนกนี้ในโรงแรมคอนราดกรุงเทพ

คำสำคัญ: ความสามารถในการจัดการ การสื่อสาร แรงจูงใจ การทำงานเป็นทีม ความน่าเชื่อถือ การตัดสินใจ วิธีการประเมิน สถานการณ์และวิธีการปริวรรตเพิ่มพูน

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ARTICLE HISTORY: Received 5 September 2019, Revised 6 September 2019, Accepted 9 September 2019

Abstract

This study aims to find ways to improve management competency. The study started from examining and evaluating the areas of improvement needed for management competency. The solution was then generated by using appreciative inquiry workshop (AI) on strength-based management competency. AI workshop provided potential solutions for those problems while excelling the level of management competency for the organization. The informants of the data were the team leaders and staffs of Conrad Bangkok Hotel who work in these three operational departments: Food and Beverage, Front Office and Housekeeping. The research consisted of four phases. Phase I: Preliminary Data (situation analysis), Phase II: Pre- Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Workshop (data collection form quantitative method), Phase III: Design and Implement Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Workshop and Phase IV: Post Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Workshop (data collection form quantitative method). Structured questionnaire was used to examine the level of management competency from the viewpoints of leaders and staff. The findings of comparison between the difference of before and three months after AI workshop showed that there was the improvement on all variables after the AI workshop implementation.

Keywords: *Management competency, Communication, Motivation, Teamwork, Trust, Decision making, Appreciative inquiry, Evaluative and generative analysis*

Introduction

In Thailand nowadays, hospitality and tourism industry was considered as one of the most important industries bringing high income to the country. Specifically, this industry could create many jobs while reducing unemployment problem. Among this competitive hospitality business, hotelier emphasized on customer satisfaction rather than the expertise of employees' satisfaction. With many exit interviews, unhappiness with the leaders was the answer from staff. Additionally, research findings from Clark (2016) suggested that the effective leadership were essential and could influence the staff' perceptions. Especially in hospitality industry where service came from human beings, some of the most prestigious companies, such as Borg-Warner, Merck, and Marriott have recognized that managing humans is a unique strategy for human resources, leading to the organization's competitive advantage (Ulrich & Lake, 1990). Hence, the leadership competency will influence on the relationship among leaders and staff. Therefore, leadership or management competency is important in influencing effective staff performance. While discussion to others hotel human resource professionals, Conrad hotel showed their enthusiasm of learning about the importance of management

competency. As a Hilton Worldwide property, Conrad Bangkok Hotel has been using the original survey since 2010. Later on, Conrad human resource director (HRD) started having internal brainstorming sessions to design their own employee survey which including the measurement of management competency: communication, motivation, teamwork, trust and decision-making. From their recent internal survey, the results showed the unsatisfactory scores for those competencies especially in three operational departments of Front Office, Food Beverage and Housekeeping. Therefore, this study had started and Conrad hotel was invited to be a case of study.

As appreciative inquiry (AI) is a model for studying and changing social systems effectively and peacefully for individuals, groups and organizations, the AI expert recommended that using AI will be a good response to problem-based learning in managerial work without resistance of changes. (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros. 2008) emphasizes that AI helps to discover what could be, rather than try to fix what they are.

Research Objectives

- 1) To analyze the company's current situations on management competencies from views of leaders and staff.
- 2) To compare the experience between pre and post AI workshop and how AI knowledge helps the participants after 3 months.
- 3) To propose an improvement plan on management competencies.

Research Hypothesis

H1o – There is no difference between Pre-AI workshop and Post-AI workshop with regard to the perception of leaders and staff regarding management competency in terms of motivation, communication, teamwork, trust and decision-making.

H1a – There is a difference between Pre-AI workshop and Post-AI workshop with regard to the perception of leaders and staff regarding management competency in terms of motivation, communication, teamwork, trust and decision-making.

Scope and Limitation of Study

The focal areas of study were Food and Beverage, Front Office and Housekeeping Department of Conrad Bangkok Hotel, Thailand. The limitation of independent variables are the five competency: Motivation, Communication, Teamwork, Trust and Decision-making.

Literature Review

Table 1 shows the related previous studies which researcher had reviewed. And the keywords of study were also reviewed accordingly.

Table 1: Review from Previous Works

Authors, Year	Findings
Attributes of Entry- Level Employees: Hospitality and Tourism Managers Seeking More Than Knowledge and Skills Tesone, Dana V; Ricci, Peter, April 2005	Operation managers, human resource professionals and hospitality educators try to reduce turnover rate by identifying job competencies for future managers
Communication In Multinational Hospitality Organizations Barbara D. Alexander, 2018	Leaders could improve communications between leaders and subordinates within by implementing strategies that promote knowledge sharing, empowerment, teamwork, face-to-face communication, redundancy, and respectful tone of voice.
Constructing career competency model of hospitality industry employees for career success Yao-fen wang, 2013	Management Competency demonstrated the influence of employability on the career development and career success (De Vos ,2011). The “communication and networking” competency dimension includes some interpersonal interaction abilities such as effective communication skills and the ability build social networks are important.
Competencies for a career in the hospitality industry: an Indian perspective Vinnie Jauhari, 2006	Employee satisfaction would lead to a higher degree of customer satisfaction. Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) mentioned that link between leadership competencies and future hospitality leaders is important.
Hotel and Restaurant Entry-Level Job Competencies: Comparisons of Management and Worker Perceptions Dana V. Tesone, Peter Ricci,2009	Once training in the areas of knowledge, and skills and abilities are straightforward, attitudinal learning requires affective outcomes with the values and beliefs.
Hotel Leadership for The Future Kimberley E. Simms, 2003	Because the hotel industry is a ‘people industry’, communication skills play a important part. Whether verbally or written, communication affects everything we do. The ability to deal with different types of people in different ways. The different audiences need different way of talks.

1. Management Competency

Competency models had firstly created by David McClelland (1973) as descriptive tools using to build human resources capability toward a basic personal characteristic for performing successfully in a job or in a situation. It is not only supporting the human resource management (HRM) in term of developing the individual level but the company level (Cummings and Worley, 2014). In hospitality and tourism education, competency models have become a useful method for identifying requisite skills (Chung-Herrera et al. 2003). Katz (1974) defined a skill as “An ability that can be developed, not necessarily inborn, and which is manifested in performance, not merely in potential”; those skills are technical skills, human skills and conceptual skills. The idea had supported that as competency can be developed through training and experience, leaders should be trained to coach well so that they can effectively impart technical or relevant skills to subordinates (Tan. 1998).

2. Motivation

According to Robbins dan Judge (2007), “Motivation is a process explaining the intensity, direction and persistence of an individual to achieve a goal”. An effective motivation mechanism should be addressed to every employee, aimed at their personal needs correlating with the overall objectives of the organization (Makrinova & Grigorieva. 2015). In the service industry, service excellence is at the core of customer satisfaction, whereas motivated employees are essential for improving the quality of service. Georgellis, Iossa, & Tabvuma (2011) mentioned that motivated employees tend to have high levels of commitment, productivity and performance then they tend to engage more at work for the organization. Moreover, Spinelli & Canavos (2000) emphasized that an effective management empowers and motivates employees and enhances their employee satisfaction levels, leading to positive customer satisfaction. Uzonna (2013) mentioned, “Leaders who can motivate employees assist the organization by improving employee retention and reinforcing positive behaviors, and consequently, an enduring ability to motivate their team members to achieve the highest result for the organization’s success”.

3. Communication

The interpersonal communication between leaders and staff has been consistently viewed as a central component of the leadership process (Bennis & Nanus, 2003; De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, & Oostenveld. 2010) while Hendricks & Testa (2012) stated, “Interpersonal communication is one of the most common competency areas that a leaders should have”. Communicative leaders provide guidelines, and create

workable structures and processes that enable employees to accomplish their work, be responsive and be willing to change (Dí as-Sa'enz. 2011). Similarly, Barge (2004) called communication as a form of reflexivity that represents a form of relationally responsive communication that fosters the connection between leaders and staff. Leaders who possess communication awareness are able to plan and adapt their communication to individuals and teams effectively. Therefore, the importance of communication competence to leadership and effectiveness should include attention, interpretation and message” (Steers, Nardon & Sanchez-Runde. 2013).

4. Teamwork

“Team is a group of people with either mixed or complementary skills working together for an agreed purpose”, mentioned by Gordon (2003). Valentini Kalargyrou (2011) mentioned, “Teamwork is represented by a puzzle, where putting together every single piece was imperative for completion”. It is critical for organizations to realize that teamwork could be translated to “the willingness to help team members and improve team performance while helping to lessen absenteeism and turnover”. Evans and Lindsay (2007) said that team orientation is also important for the leadership model, which refers to leaders ‘efforts toward developing the team. Then having a successful team, leaders need to integrate teamwork within the organization, and to look for strategies for improving teamwork activities in order to achieve organizational goals (Manzoor et al. 2011). In hospitality business, hotel management and Human Resources Director need to take care of it and look for mechanisms to solve any problems, team meetings are used as a mechanism for downward information transfer and weak attempts at team building (James Richards, 2012).

5. Trust

Russell & Stone (2002) agreed that trust is a leadership function and a correlation between leaders and staff; trust in leaders is inherent in interpersonal acceptance and a close relationship between leaders and staff (Van Dierendonck et al. 2014). Supporting idea by Den Hartog (2009) who argued that trusted leaders are more effective in extracting higher performance from staff. Gibbons (2006) addressed the fact that trust is one of factors that relates to company performance, relations among coworkers and manager-employee relations. Trust in leaders holds great promise for enhancing employee performance dedicated to the success of the organization. It is an emotional link between staff and their leaders. In hospitality industry, level of organizational trust is important in defining the service climate (Chathoth et al. 2007). As the perceived trust is the extent to which service employees perceive their leaders

are trustworthy, honest, and concerned about employee welfare during their supervision, trusted leaders need to set clear guidelines and goals while being able to offer rewards for staff' attainment (Moorman & Grover. 2009).

6. Decision Making

Decision-making refers to the ability to use all possible resources in making the decision, including the behaviors of viewing problems strategically, using unique methods to solve problems and involving others in decision-making (Testa & Sipe. 2012). Robinsons, Perryman, & Hayday (2004) suggested that leaders should involve their employees in decision-making, and also listen to and value the employees' ideas and contributions. The idea supported by Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) mentioned about in the hospitality industry, leadership model sees strategic decision-making as a component of critical thinking, as is systems thinking. Walters & Raybould (2007) and Yavas, Karatepe, & Babakus (2013) also stated that a hotel business that provides support for their employees' well-being and offers them opportunities to make meaningful decisions tends to generate higher levels of job satisfaction. Schermerhorn, Hunt, & Osborn (2011) concluded that the benefits of group decision-making were more knowledge and expertise to solve the problem; more alternatives to be examined; final decisions that were better understood and accepted by all group members; and more commitment among all group members to make the final decision work.

7. Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

Appreciative inquiry model (AI) was the most appropriate model to make change in the organization without resistant. It is a process where studying and changing social systems effectively and peacefully for individuals, groups and organizations. Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros (2008) emphasized that AI helps to discover what could be, rather than try to fix what is. AI focuses on positive emotion, happiness and strength towards a more desired future stage. Therefore, the critical and adaptive approach of the AI model in organization intervention can result in less resistance while creating an effective contribution to change in the organization. Hence, it referred to planned change that was an aim of the organization development process.

8. Evaluative and Generative Analysis

Evaluative research defines and analyzes the problems which researcher would use to design solutions and improvement plan. The goal is to look around and find the opportunity for solution and innovation. Researcher can identify the problem and develop the best solution from evaluative research. The cooperation within the

tested organization allowed researcher to discover the mindset of their employees regarding the specific problems and later translate it into feasible solutions (Anonymous. 2009). At the same time, generative research is the process of determining whether the designed workshop or training have produced the effective results. The generative analysis will help to define the effectiveness of them that was designed from the situation analysis from the evaluative analysis. Therefore, evaluative and generative analysis will make research study getting the answer of hypothesis.

Theoretical Framework

According to figure 1, five main variables of management competency were selected to examine. The selection of variables was based on recommendations from Director of Human Resources with the analysis of the recent employee surveys; the researcher framed them together as the theoretical framework. These selected competencies will be used to examine the effectiveness of leadership competency, and define the need of change in order to improve the organization effectiveness. Ideal leaders who are groomed in the five selected competencies are significantly needed by healthy organizations where organization success can be an automatic outcome.

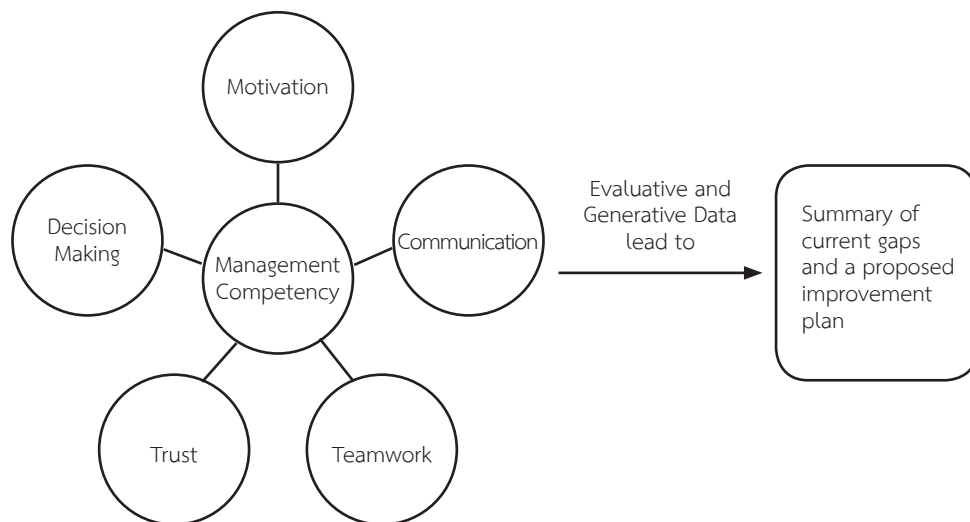


Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

Research Framework

Figure 2 shows the research framework which illustrating four phases; Phase I: Preliminary Data (situation analysis), Phase II: Pre- Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Workshop (data collection form quantitative method), Phase III: Design and Implement Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Workshop and Phase IV: Post Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Workshop (data collection form quantitative method).

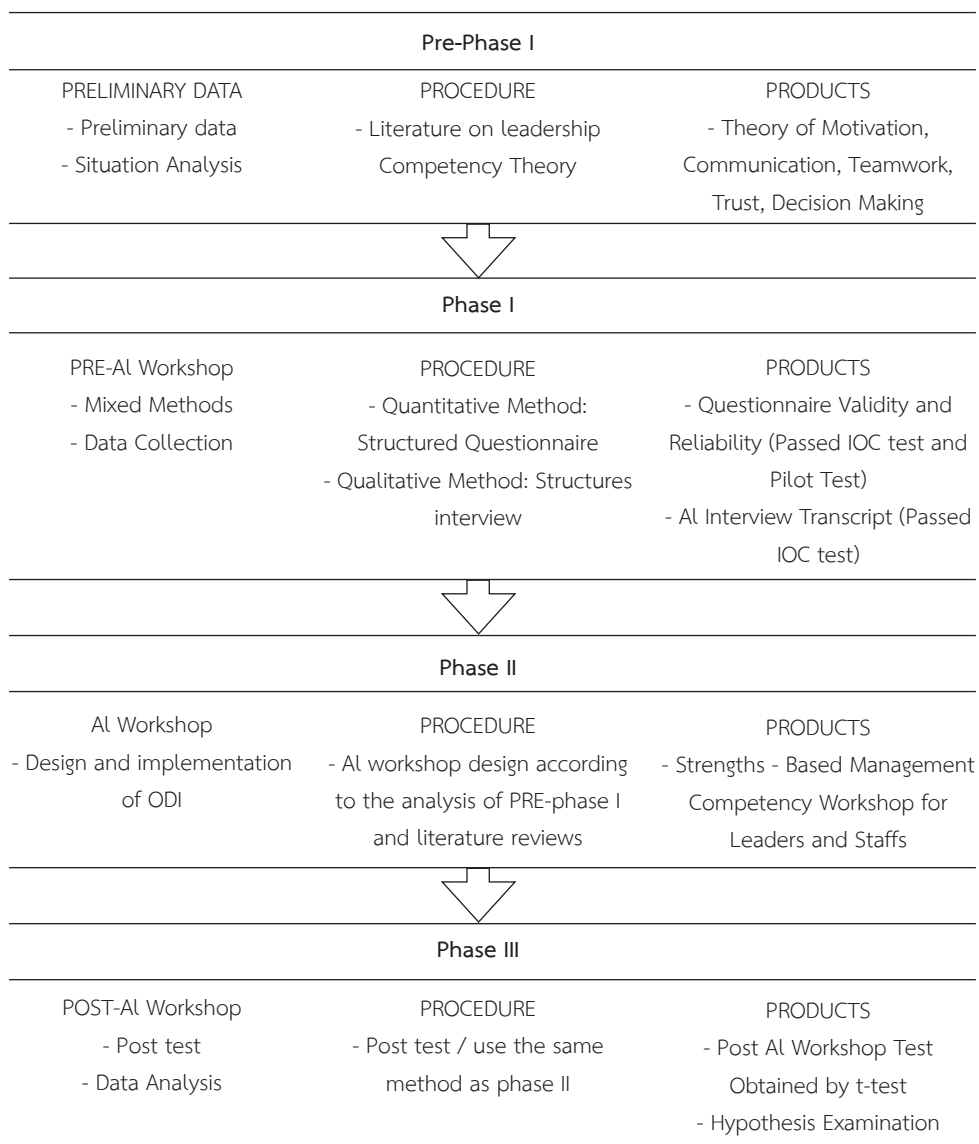


Figure 2 Research Framework

Methodology

1. Data Collection

Since the number of the total population is finite and less than 500, the Krejcie and Morgan formula (1970) was applied to this study in order to determine the appropriate sample size for quantitative method. The maximum sample size of respondents which was recommended in Krejcie and Morgan (1970)'s table was used in this research study. A total data collection of questionnaire respondents were 288 employees which was 79% of total population of 362. The 123 employees were from Food and Beverage, 53 employees from Front Office and 112 employees from Housekeeping Department.

In questionnaire, the researcher used a four-point Likert scale of 4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree and 1-Strongly Disagree for the purpose of getting a definite choice rather than neutral or intermediate positions from respondents. Worcester & Burns (1975) included a balanced four-point Likert scale without a midpoint in their major examination of the precision of verbal tags. The collected data were used to determine the reliability of questionnaire. Their Cronbach's Alpha for 20 questionnaire items were greater than a value of 0.7 which was acceptable for a measurement scale and a value of ≥ 0.70 reflects good reliability (Hair et al. 2006). The similar sets of structured questionnaire for leaders and staff was used in both Pre-AI workshop phase and the Post- AI workshop phase. To help shape the questionnaire validity, IOC (Index of Item-Objective Congruence) was employed by three external experts in the field of organization development and the hospitality & tourism industry.

2. Data Analysis

In this study, two main methodologies were employed for data analysis:

1) SPSS descriptive statistics of frequency distribution, percentage for bio data treatment and mean, standard deviation, significant value, qualitative rating and ranking for independent variables of each competency.

2) Paired-Sample t-test was used to analyze to compare the difference of Pre-AI workshop and Post-AI workshop.

Results

The findings of the changes after three months of AI workshop implementation. The results revealed that AI workshop showed the effectiveness on the changes of management competency.

Table 2: Paired Samples T-Test Statistics for Pre AI Workshop and Post AI Workshop

Pair	Variable	Mean	Pair Difference	Standard Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
1	Post-AI workshop motivation Pre-AI workshop motivation	3.37 3.26	0.11	0.46 0.49	0.48	0.00
2	Post-AI workshop communication Pre-AI workshop communication	3.58 2.57	1	0.39 0.81	9.05	0.00
3	Post-AI workshop teamwork Pre-AI workshop teamwork	3.42 3.42	0.00174	0.52 0.52	0.07	0.945
4	Post-AI workshop trust Pre-AI workshop trust	2.71 2.53	0.17	0.43 0.55	0.27	0.00
5	Post-AI workshop decision-making Pre-AI workshop decision-making	3.55 3.41	0.13	0.42 0.5	0.3	0.00

Source: Data analysis from the study

According to table 2 shows the change of 3 months after AI workshop. Communication competency were improved the most. The mean score went up from 2.57 to 3.58. The pair difference was 1. Other competencies: motivation, trust and decision-making were improved in the similar pair difference. The mean score of motivation moved from 3.26 to 3.37. And mean score of trust and decision-making moved from 2.53 to 2.71 and 3.41 to 3.55 respectively. Teamwork showed less improvement; nevertheless, it was in the very strong level in Pre- AI workshop. Referring to table 3 of arbitrary level and descriptive rating from Likert scale. Table 4 showed the improvement from Pre- AI workshop and Post – AI workshop for each competency which had been improved form lower level to higher level.

Table 3: Arbitrary Level and Descriptive Rating

Level	Arbitrary Level	Descriptive Rating
4	3.26 – 4.00	strongly agree
3	2.51 – 3.25	agree
2	1.76 – 2.50	disagree
1	1.00 – 1.75	strongly disagree

To answer the hypothesis, with the changes in mean scores after the Post- AI workshop and the results of the level of significance (two tailed) at a 95% confidence level ($p < 0.05$), it can be confirmed that the AI workshop (strengths based management competency workshop) made a difference to the level of management competencies. Therefore, hypothesis H1o: There is no difference between pre- AI workshop and post- AI workshop with regard to the perception of leaders and staff regarding management competency in terms of motivation, communication, teamwork, trust and decision-making, was rejected. On the other hand, hypothesis H1a: There is a difference between pre- AI workshop and post- AI workshop with regard to the perception of leaders and staff regarding management competency in terms of motivation, communication, teamwork, trust and decision-making, was accepted.

Conclusions

Based on the research results and findings, the researcher was able to conclude that appreciative inquiry (AI) workshop had a significant effect on management competency improvement. The best improvement was seen in communication. According to the results from the Pre- AI workshop stage, communication was in the first rank with regard to improvement needed. During AI workshop, researcher had been told that employees communicated with leaders and among themselves happily. It made them get to know each other better in terms of work and personal. Trust was an automatic outcome from effective communication. Moreover, an improvement in decision-making was brought in. Form AI workshop, employees expressed that the feeling of trust creating a good working environment making them more comfortable in sharing ideas and thoughts to bring about a better decision-making process. The improvement in management competency has a strong influence on working motivation in the organization. Leaders had learned and understood their important role with regard to the improvement of competency while staff had the opportunity to express their ideas about the effectiveness of management competency on their work. Statistically, the least improvement was seen in teamwork. It was also the management competency where least improvement was needed according to the Pre- AI workshop results. There was a clear explanation by leaders and staff during AI workshop that teamwork in the organization was good, even though there were many types of employees working in the organization. However, it could not be improved since hiring outsourced staff was the organization's normal practice. It sometimes demotivated permanent staff and created some difficulty in communication but in the end, teamwork was usually great within the organization.

The challenges of this research were the changes within the tested organization during the research process. Staff resignation was an uncontrollable factor. It made the researcher having to readjust the pre- AI workshop data before using the SPSS software for the paired-sample t-test analysis. The other challenge was the change in the management team who had agreed to conduct the study. The researcher needed to make an effort and spend additional time explaining everything to the new management team in order to get continued permission to carry out the study.

Recommendation to the participating organization

To answer research objective no. 3, from the research results and findings, the researcher analyzed from the answers of questionnaire and would like to recommend some actions or strategies for management competency improvement as follows.

Motivation: Employees responded that long hours of work effected their motivation. Leaders can motivate them by rewarding the staff who have the maximum monthly hours. It is necessary to consider productivity together with work efficiency.

Communication: Hotel should provide new updated computers and other communication devices in order to allow the flow of communication more effectively. Moreover, providing Wi-Fi to employees while they use their personal devices during work in the organization will be a great bonus.

Teamwork: Hotel should allocate some of the budget for department activities in order for staff relationship strengthening.

Trust: Leaders should encourage autonomy by not micromanaging. The best way to encourage productivity is to encourage individuals to take ownership of how they manage their own time and resources.

Decision-making: Leaders should seek as much as ideas and options before making decisions. However, it may not be possible to wait for all staff' ideas due to the 24/7 work schedule. It will be good if leaders can keep all staff updated about the decisions that have been made.

The recommendations will assist human resources professionals as well as leaders of those participating departments to implement some possible and potential strategies in order to improve management competency for leaders. Once the management competency increased, staff satisfaction will be increased then the customer satisfaction which is the organization goal will be automatically derived.

Recommendations for the Hospitality Industry

From the broad perspective of the hotel industry, the research study contributed as a sample model of the effectiveness of improvement in management competency within the three most important operational departments. The recommendations can be adjusted to match the characteristics of each organization for human resources management to reconsider employee training programs as well as talent management programs. The understanding and improvement of management competency will help the best team to excel for the benefit of a healthier organization. The last important recommendation to the hotel industry is to see the extent and advantages of having a research study which can be the second set of eyes and ears for organization improvement.

Recommendations for Further Study

From the findings of this research study, there is an issue with regard to hiring casual staff from an outsourced company. It is a practice of lean management, where the organization needs to save on some costs while expecting better customer satisfaction. It may not be an easy practice in the hospitality industry, where service is a core value. The further study should cover:

Lean management toward competitive advantages in the hotel industry

Employee satisfaction in lean organizations, especially in the hotel business, where the core value is employee care

Quality management in lean organizations (hotel organizations)

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