



The Development of a Training Process Model For Four-Star Hotels in Pattaya City

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Abstract

The purposes of this study are to explain the steps in developing a training process and to develop a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City. Constructivism was chosen as the research paradigm. Qualitative research with a constructivist grounded theory was the most suitable for the research strategy of this study. Data was collected by semi-structured interviews, audiovisuals, and document reviews. Semi-structured interviews with 25 participants, including 4 GMs/hotel managers and 21 heads of department of four-star hotels in Pattaya City by video call interview using the Google Hangout Meet Program and data analysis was conducted following the steps of constructing grounded theory. The research findings discovered 10 steps in developing a training process that was applied by four-star hotels in Pattaya City as follows: Step 1: Training needs analysis; Step 2: Design and develop the training program; Step 3: Submit to the HR department; Step 4: Adjust and revise; Step 5: Final approval from the GMs/hotel managers; Step 6: Prioritize; Step 7: Announce the annual training program; Step 8: Implement; Step 9: Support and monitor; and Step 10: Training evaluation. A training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City was presented as a guideline for the hotel industry for them to achieve competitive advantage. The researcher also recommends the implications for practices and theoretical implications for the hotel employees, hotel management, GMs/hotel managers, and four-star hotels.

Keywords: Steps in a training process, Training process model, Four-star hotel

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Introduction

Thailand is one of the top-ranking world-famous tourist destinations due to competitive room rates and reasonable prices (Lunkam, 2021, pp. 1). Training is essential for the hotel industry to thrive and compete in an intense business environment, which is heavily dependent on their human resources (HR). The hotel industry is labor-intensive, making the training process particularly important (Mohan & Arumugam, 2016, pp. 268). Well-trained hotel employees can deliver quality service to the hotel customers and create good memories during their hotel stays which are the critical aspects of achievement for the hotel industry (Malonza & Walaba, 2015, pp. 2132).

The increasing importance of the training process in the hotel industry is growing for many reasons. Training is a crucial activity in the hotel industry because the training process can increase morale and employee retention and decrease turnover and hiring costs (Jaworski et al., 2018, pp. 1). The success of each hotel business is due to the complete and continuous development and training of its HR until the service quality is satisfied by the customers (Jongkolnee, 2016, pp. 116-117). Training is a process to prepare the hotel employees for efficient service work to support the expansion of the hotel industry. It is the tool for the HR department in the hotel for achieving competitive advantage and drives the hotel performance (On-nom, 2016, pp. 190).

Providing an appropriate training process to the hotel employees, increases performance and motivates the employees (Malonza & Walaba, 2015, pp. 2132). The training program helped increase the hotel employees' competencies in service mind, personality, emotion control, and problem-solving. They were more satisfied with the training program and gained greater knowledge and skills, improving job performance and job satisfaction (Thaithong et al., 2018, pp. 41-42).

Moreover, training is integral to a hotel's growth and success. Suppose the hotel is not providing the training to their hotel employees. In that case, they cannot offer some help and support to the customer in the way they should, which leads to unsatisfied customer emotion, the employees will become frustrated from an unknown task that they are not familiar with, the hotel quality service as a whole will drop to a minimum (Prasanth, 2015, pp. 29-30).

The hotel industry requires a skillful workforce. However, the problems and obstacles that occur in the hotel are caused by the lack of an effective training process that significantly affects the low quality of service, incompetence, and failure in performance (Ashton, 2018, pp. 175). Moreover, the training outcomes did not meet the training objectives because the hotel employees did not clearly understand the importance of the training. There is also an absence and inefficiency to identify the training process by training needs, design, implementation, and evaluation (Al-Raggad, 2017, pp. 98).

To avoid these kinds of problems, a training process can be one of the ways to reduce work errors (Al-Raggad, 2017, pp. 97). With the training, the hotel employees will put their best effort into their tasks and become fully functional (Sharma & Gupta, 2017, pp. 809). The training process is essential to develop HR in the hotel industry. However, studies of the training process are rarely found. Most of the training research in hotels focusses on finding out the training needs in the hotel (Chen, Zhang, & Li, 2021, pp. 109), designing the training program (Khemthong & Ngamvichaikit, 2018, pp. 38), the training curriculum development (Kasetiam et al., 2020, pp. 169; Kruerattanaphaiboon & Onthanee, 2018, pp. 1; Ratchanet & Onthanee, 2018, pp. 251), measuring the effectiveness of the training program (Ho et al., 2016, pp. 184; Samar et al., 2016, pp. 92), and the importance of the training program (Malik & Vivek, 2018, pp. 11). Even though many studies show the benefits gained from the training program, unfortunately, the first thing to go for the hotel undergoing cost-cutting is always training (Suhag, 2017, pp. 24).

Pattaya City is located on the east coast of Thailand, the world-famous and favorite tourist destination city of all time (Hotelworks, 2018, pp. 1). Four-star hotels in Pattaya City are the main key business and generate more income. However, there is a lack of research on the training process in four-star hotels in Pattaya City. Most of the hotel research found in Pattaya City only mentioned the training methods, courses, and activities (Chanakot, 2020, pp. 161; Chankit & Rinrattanakorn, 2018, pp. 32), training development and training evaluation (Chantarathong, 2011, pp. 69), and training motivation (Srisakultiew et al., 2020, pp. 110). When no studies identify the training process in hotels in Pattaya City, it could be claimed that the training process in four-star hotels in Pattaya City is not standardized. All hotels conduct their training process with no guidelines and are unsystematic and inconsistent, which leads to employee incompetence, failure in employee performance, and high turnover. A significant research gap presented the researchers with the opportunity to explain the steps in developing a training process and developing a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City.

To best explain the development of a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City, the researcher developed two research questions including 1) What steps are applied by four-star hotels in Pattaya City in developing a training process? and 2) How could a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City be presented?.

Research Objectives

1. To explain the steps in developing a training process applied by four-star hotels in Pattaya City.
2. To develop a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City.

Literature Review

Training process: Training is the process of developing the knowledge and expertise of an individual (Swanson & Holton III, 2001, pp. 208). The training process was a short term focus with the purpose of improving the employee performance in their current job (Saks & Haccoun, 2007, pp. 6), to develop the employees to perform their jobs better, and to create positive attitudes about their work (DeSimone & Werner, 2012, pp. 10).

Several theories have been used to explain the steps of the training process. Saks and Haccoun (2007, pp. 19) described the 3 steps to follow by conducting training needs analysis, training design and delivery, and evaluating the training, as well as, Bhattacharyya (2015, pp. 49), DeSimone and Werner (2012, pp. 27), and Lim, Werner, and DeSimone (2013, pp. 25) also suggested the steps of the training process with 4 steps including training needs analysis, training design, training implementation, and training evaluation. Moreover, Swanson and Holton III (2001, pp. 210) presented the training process and divided it into 5 steps. They start with training needs analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. However, the training process could not ignore the ADDIE model, which includes analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating (Branch, 2009, pp. 2).

On the other hand, there are different ideas proposed for the training process. Pinitdee (2015, pp. 43) suggested the following activities start by conducting training needs survey and analysis, planning the training program, training operation, training evaluation, following up the training program, recording the training program, and writing the training report. At the same time, Noe (2010, pp. 7) also described the training process telling that it needed to include the following steps: Conducting a training needs analysis, preparing employees' willingness to attend the training, ensuring a learning and development environment, transfer the training, designing an evaluation plan, choosing the training methods, and monitoring and evaluating. Since this study involves the training process in four-star hotels in Pattaya City, the steps of the training process are explained below.

Step 1: Training needs analysis (TNA): TNA reflects the difference between the desired and achievable level of the actual employee performance. It determines the nature of the problem and current situation and whether the training can be the best solution to solve the problem by placing those needs in sequence and prioritizing the requirements based on the organization's situation. It needs to identify the source of needs information, such as needs of employees (Person analysis), job/tasks needs (Task analysis), environmental needs, and organization needs (Organization analysis) (DeSimone & Werner, 2012, pp. 111; Noe, 2010, pp. 110; Saks & Haccoun, 2007, pp. 19).

Step 2: Training design and development: DeSimone & Werner (2012, pp. 141); Lim, Werner & DeSimone (2013, pp. 25-26) suggested the following activities typically carried out during the designing and developing step by setting the objectives, developing the lesson plans, preparing the training materials, determining the trainer, selecting the training methods, and scheduling the



program. At the same time, Noe (2010, pp. 165-178) and Saks and Haccoun (2007, pp. 235) suggested the main issues covering the step by developing the lesson plans, deciding on the trainer, deciding on the trainees, selecting the training materials and equipment, setting the training location and site, scheduling the training program, training administration, and delivering the training program.

Step 3: Training implementation: Various training methods, courses, and activities can be used when implementing the training program. While DeSimone & Werner (2012, pp. 224); Lim, Werner & DeSimone (2013, pp. 194) highlighted that the training methods that could be considered when implementing a training program might include on-the-job training (OJT), rotation, coaching, mentoring, lecture-based training, discussion, case study, simulation, role-playing and e-learning. Pinitdee (2015, pp. 87) pointed out that the way which the courses and activities could be offered can be made through orientation, basic skills training, technical skill training, information technology training, functional job training, soft skill training, in-house training, outside activity, and oversee training, On the contrary, Lynton and Pareek (2011, pp. 142) argued that the training methods used were not only conducted in-house but can also provide seminars and other activities outside the organization.

Step 4: Training evaluation: The training evaluation is the process to measure its training results, the training efficiency, and the success in achieving the training objectives (Bhattacharyya, 2015, pp. 208). The critical point is to focus on the use of feedback to help the trainers in making wise decisions and measure the training results to meet the training objectives, the way the trainees apply the new knowledge and skills on their job, and the way to keep continuing or ignoring it or redesign the training program (Noe, 2010, pp. 218).

Research methodology

The researcher chose constructivism as the research paradigm for this study. To best explain the steps in developing a training process and to develop a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City, the researcher considered that qualitative research is the most suitable approach to use. This is because it could best guide the researcher to understand behaviors, beliefs, and experiences of the participants and learning processes shared by the participants (Lapan, Quataroli, & Riemer, 2012, pp. 8-9). The constructivist grounded theory of Charmaz (2006, pp. 2-3) was selected to be the research strategy for this study, as it can utilize many data collection methods and is flexible through the entire research process with the data collection and data analysis to construct theory from the data.

Setting and participant selection: Purposive and theoretical sampling was applied for the participant selection. The researcher used purposive sampling by selecting the participants based on the objectives of their involvement in the study, and theoretical sampling of the data happened when the researcher did not identify ideas, themes, or large constructs as new data was collected or no new themes and categories emerged from the study (Corbin &

Strauss, 2008, p. 7). The setting in this study included four-star hotels in Pattaya City that were certified as four-star hotels from the Thai Hotels Association (2020, pp. 1-28). There were 25 participants in this study, including 4 GMs/hotel managers and 21 heads of department of four-star hotels in Pattaya City (1 from Hotel A, 3 from Hotel B, 6 from Hotel C, 5 from Hotel D, and 10 from Hotel E). The researcher set the criteria that they all must work as a GM/hotel manager and head of department of four-star hotels in Pattaya City, having at least 3 years of work experience in the hotel business, being involved in the training process in their hotels, and who volunteered to join the research project. The researcher conducted data collection together with data analysis and followed with the grounded theory study approach until no new information emerged from the study; theoretical saturation occurred after semi-structured interviews with 25 participants.

Table 1: Participants' demographics (P1, P2, P3, ... for Participant No. 1, 2, 3, ...)

No.	Job position	Hotel
P1	GM/Hotel Manager	A
P2	GM/Hotel Manager	B
P3	Head of Department	B
P4	Head of Department	B
P5	Head of Department	C
P6	Head of Department	C
P7	Head of Department	C
P8	Head of Department	C
P9	GM/Hotel Manager	C
P10	Head of Department	C
P11	Head of Department	D
P12	Head of Department	D
P13	Head of Department	D
P14	Head of Department	D
P15	Head of Department	D
P16	GM/Hotel Manager	E
P17	Head of Department	E
P18	Head of Department	E
P19	Head of Department	E
P20	Head of Department	E
P21	Head of Department	E
P22	Head of Department	E
P23	Head of Department	E
P24	Head of Department	E
P25	Head of Department	E

Data collection: Data collection methods in this study included semi-structured interviews, audiovisuals by using a tape recorder, and document reviews by looking at the hotel information on their website, hotel reports, and training documents. The semi-structured interview guide was used and developed by studying the literature review, research related

to the study and conducted according to the processes provided by Joungtrakul, Sheehan, and Aticomswan (2013, pp. 140) and Maykut and Morehouse (1994, pp. 84).

Some of the interview questions in the interview guide were shown as follows: What is the objective of the training process in this hotel?; How has the concept of the training process been used in managing hotel performance?; Can you explain how the hotel is developing the training process?; What kind of training courses and activities aimed to increase hotel performance?

Semi-structured interviews were conducted from 90 to 120 minutes by video call interview using the Google Hangout Meet Program, a tape recorder and short note memo were used for recording the data with the permission of each participant. The researcher sent the interview guide to 5 experts to make recommendations for improvement. Then, revised by the advice and suggestions of the experts and tried out with 3 GMs/hotel managers, then revised again for improvement.

Data analysis: The researcher followed the steps of constructing grounded theory by Charmaz (2006, pp. 47-66) as, Step 1: Initial coding, stayed close to the data and tried best to utilize everything that was found in the data; Step 2: Focus coding, linked and synthesized codes to subcategories; Step 3: Axial coding, related subcategories to categories.; and Step 4: Theoretical coding, linking the categories to themes to integrate into a theory.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research: To ensure the quality of the study, the researcher used a variety of trustworthiness techniques by using previous studies as a guideline to design the study, used a variety of data collection methods for triangulation, let the participants check the accuracy of their provided information, asking for help from peers to check the correctness of the research findings, presented the conclusions revealing similar outcomes shown in previous related studies, used 6 types of interview questions to ensure the quality of the given information, and used direct quotations in the final report to present the opinions and ideas of the participants.

Ethical concerns: The researcher got approval from the University Research Ethics Committee before starting the data collection. The researcher explained every detail to ensure a more precise understanding and ensured that their interview record was not presented in any place. All information was kept confidential, only the researcher could gain access, and there was no effect on their work or life. If the participant did not want to answer the question; they could skip to another question or refuse to answer. If the participants felt it was not convenient to answer a question or quit the project, they had the right to refuse or discontinue at any time. The researcher used only a number to represent each participant. The information was kept for 3 years.

Research findings

The researcher did data analysis starting from initial coding and establishing codes, then grouped all codes with the same concept into the same group and got subcategories, grouped subcategories into categories by grouping the same ideas together, lastly, the researcher linked the categories with the same ideas into themes and established the final theme with the 10 steps in developing a training process that was applied by four-star hotels in Pattaya City as follows:

Step 1: Training needs analysis (TNA):

1) Decide data collection methods: Hotels used paper-based surveys, job descriptions, observations, interviews, hotel management meetings, feedback and complaints from the involved parties, hotel policies and strategies, feedback and complaints from the customers through paper-based questionnaires, online questionnaires, social media, face to face or direct feedback for the data collection methods on the training needs analysis (mentioned by 14 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *I consider much information, whether it is an observation, interview of both formal and informal inquiries, reviewing the hotel's policies, as well as feedback and complaints from all involved parties (P16).*

2) Identifying training needs by obtaining information sources: from 1) Employee's needs, 2) Hotel needs, and 3) Environmental needs.

Employee's needs: It included **1) Employee skills:** Skills needed for their work to improve the hotel service (mentioned by 21 participants); **2) Employee weaknesses:** Hotels look at the weakness of employees to provide training to improve their job performance (mentioned by 19 participants); **3) Employee needs:** Employee needs regarding a foreign language for communication skills, management skills, standard operating procedures (SOP) skills, multi-skilling, personality training, skills needed on the job description, and updated on the hotel information, etc. (mentioned by 19 participants); and **4) Employee request:** Employees requested to attend an outside training or special topics they are interested in (mentioned by 15 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *He is not good at languages for communication, we sent him to do more training so that he has more skills (P3).*

Hotel needs: It included **1) Department needs and requests:** The heads of department requested their needs to improve their team performance (mentioned by 14 participants); **2) HR department needs and requests:** The HR department requested their needs on the hotel general training (mentioned by 9 participants); **3) GMs/hotel managers needs and request:** The GMs/hotel managers requested their needs to improve the hotel performance (mentioned by 10 participants); **4) Owner needs and request:** The owners requested their needs through the GMs/hotel managers (mentioned by 7 participants); **5)**



Feedback and comments: From the customers, heads of department, HR department, GMs/hotel managers, and owners (mentioned by 10 participants); **6) Product knowledge:** The hotel employees want to know and update the hotel product and service knowledge (mentioned by 14 participants); **7) Standard operating procedures (SOP):** The hotel employees need to do their job following the hotel SOP (mentioned by 14 participants); **8) Working problems:** Hotels put more consideration to solve the problems on the working errors and problems (mentioned by 5 participants); **9) Hotel income:** Hotels allocate the training budget appropriately by looking at the hotel income (mentioned by 13 participants); **10) Hotel policy:** Used the hotel policy to be the direction to follow when developing a training program (mentioned by 12 participants); **11) Hotel situation:** Hotels updated the hotel situation to adjust and revise the training program to respond with the situation changes (mentioned by 10 participants); **12) Customer target:** Hotels gave a first priority to look at the customer target needs (mentioned by 10 participants); and **13) Customer complaints:** Hotels pay more attention to the customer complaints and take them into account to deal with and handle the customer complaints (mentioned by 15 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *We look at the feedback from TripAdvisor and then summarize and report to the GM/hotel manager, to use this information to plan for the training program (P24).*

Environmental needs: It included **1) Hotel industry and market:** Hotels update this information and prepared their employees to respond to these changes and requirements (mentioned by 21 participants); **2) Customer trends:** Hotels prepare their readiness for the hotel quality service by providing the training on the customer trends (mentioned by 16 participants); **3) Laws and regulations:** Hotels provide the training program required by Thai hotel laws and regulations (mentioned by 15 participants); and **4) Technology:** Hotels keep the technology knowledge updated to meet the ever-changing needs of technology (mentioned by 11 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *We develop the employees to be competitive in the hotel industry. We must provide new information to our employees (P25).*

3) Summarize training needs and send information to all departments: After the hotels have collected the data on the training needs using a variety of methods and successfully analyzed the training needs, then a summary of the training needs report was generated for each department to design and develop an appropriate training program (mentioned by 12 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *Hotel has a TNA form by using a questionnaire, the employees need to answer this form and return it to the HR department to arrange an appropriate training plan (P25).*

Step 2: Design and develop the training program: It included **1) Training topic:** Each department designs and develops their own training topics, such as, quality services, dress code, product knowledge, foreign language, safety, etc. (mentioned by 21 participants); **2) Training objective:** Set a clear training objective for each training topic (mentioned by 10 participants); **3) Training content:** Added detailed information on the training content with all training program details such as the short brief information regarding each training program to be a good source of information to all involved parties (mentioned by 15 participants); **4) Training method:** By both formal and informal training as OJT, classroom training, morning brief, role play, simulation, games, exercises, discussion, case study, experience sharing, workshops, demonstration, online training, activity-based training, coaching, mentoring, assignments and tasks, and sharing and discussion through reflection by the colleagues (mentioned by 24 participants); **5) Trainer:** By using both internal and external trainers. The internal trainer will be the supervisors or heads of department, and the external trainer someone who has particular expertise, knowledge, and ability (mentioned by 23 participants); **6) Trainee:** Encouraged all employees to attend the training program (mentioned by 20 participants); **7) Training material:** By using paper-based training documents, equipment, or things needed to demonstrate the training, etc. However, hotels are now trying to control the training budget and promote a green hotel environment by using online training materials (mentioned by 19 participants); **8) Training period and duration:** The period and duration varied based on training by needs, training when tasks changed, training on the work skill, avoiding high occupancy periods. Hotels set the period and duration in proper time to make sure that most of the employees can join because they work in shifts and cannot attend at the same time. Hotels are responsible for making sure that all employees have equal chances to participate in the training program (mentioned by 21 participants); **9) Training venue:** Using both inside and outside the hotels but most took place at the hotels because they had their meeting rooms which are convenient for the hotel employees to attend (mentioned by 21 participants); **10) Training budget:** Set the budget for each training program. However, to control the training budget effectively, hotels encourage the employees to join and participate in the free training course or online (mentioned by 21 participants). These could be seen in the following examples of direct quotations: *In the training course, training topics are clearly stated (P19)...//...The training plan must specify the training objectives (P4)...//... The training content must be clearly stated (P22)...//...Classroom training and workshop (P4)...//... There are internal and external training. If it is the internal training, they will do the training themselves, but for the external training, the HR department will be responsible for finding the trainer (P16)...//... All employees must attend the training program (P5)...//... The training design must clearly state the training material (P11)...//... Impossible to train all employees simultaneously. We have several training sessions on the same topic (P4)...//... Internal and*



external training venues (P2) ...//...We also support full training. The department training is free. But the external training may be free or paid (P1).

Step 3: Submit to the HR department: Each department designs and develops an annual training program and then sends it to the HR department. The HR department combines and then summarizes the annual training programs (mentioned by 23 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *All department send the annual training programs to the HR department, then we are responsible for collecting them for the GM/hotel manager's approval (P25).*

Step 4: Adjust and revise: The HR department summarizes and completes the annual training program by considering whether some details may need to be adjusted and changed. Possible additions or reductions of the training programs are made to optimize the hotel services and maximize the training efficiency. By doing this, the HR manager called for several meetings with the heads of each department and hotel management (mentioned by 25 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *The HR department looking at the appropriateness and calls for a meeting to adjust and revise before submitting it to the GM/hotel manager (P2).*

Step 5: Final approval from the GMs/hotel managers: The GMs/hotel managers look at the appropriateness of the training programs to make sure that all training programs are aligned with the hotel policies and strategies. They also consider if these programs could increase the employee performance, which will then improve overall hotel performance and service quality, then final approval (mentioned by 19 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *Forwarded it to the GM/hotel manager for final approval (P24).*

Step 6: Prioritize: Before announcing the annual training program, hotels prioritized the training program based on the employee needs, department needs, HR needs, GMs/hotel managers needs, owner needs, hotel policies, customer needs, and the changing situation to ensure the effectiveness of conducting the training process (mentioned by 25 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *Training program priorities must also look at the needs of the employees, the heads of department, the HR department, hotel management and the hotel policies (P25).*

Step 7: Announce the annual training program: After prioritizing, the hotels announced an annual training program (mentioned by 18 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *The annual training program will be announced after being revised, approved by the GM/hotel manager, and prioritized (P9).*

Step 8: Implement: Using different training methods through a variety of training courses and activities including service quality, foreign language for communication, product knowledge, SOP, technology, hotel knowledge, food safety, cleaning and sanitizing, room inspection, guest experiences, operational development, sales, and guest relationships, management and leadership, and so on (mentioned by 13 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *There are different training methods used, but the hotels focus on OJT, especially on cleaning and sanitizing and room inspection for the housekeeping employees (P7).*

Step 9: Support and monitor: Hotels promoted the concept by assigning a supervisor, head of department, HR department, and GM/hotel manager to support and monitor during the training implementation (mentioned by 25 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *The HR department will join on training day and observe to see how the training is going (P21).*

Step 10: Training evaluation: Utilized 1) Looking at feedback from the customers, colleagues, heads of department, HR department, GMs/hotel managers, and owners, 2) Looking at working performance, 3) Seeing working behavior change, and 4) Extending knowledge and skills to others (mentioned by 18 participants). The following direct quotation could well present the idea: *We evaluate training in many ways, such as feedback from the heads of department, employees, or customers (P10).*

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that 10 steps were applied by four-star hotels in Pattaya City in developing a training process. **A training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City** is proposed and illustrated in Figure 1.

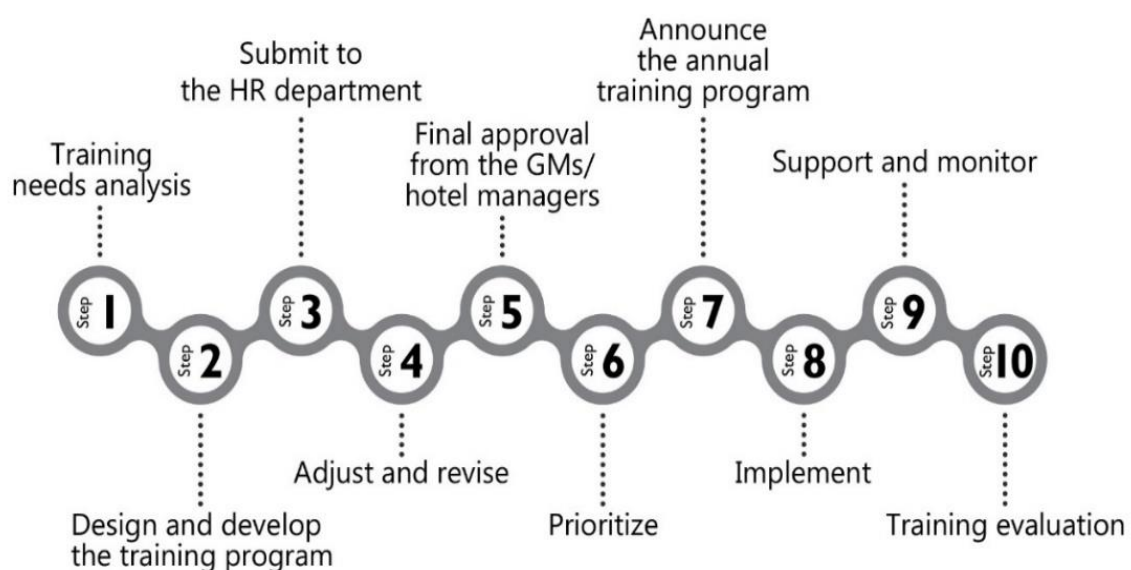


Figure 1: A training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City

Discussion

In responding to the first research question, "*What steps are applied by four-star hotels in Pattaya City in developing a training process?*". 10 steps were found in developing a training process in four-star hotels in Pattaya City as follows below.

Step 1: Training needs analysis (TNA): Hotels conduct TNA by used a variety of data collection methods to find the needs of employees, hotel, and environment. As suggested by Khattak, Rehman, and Rehman (2014, pp. 176), training needs should analyze the individual, team, and organization needs. Then combine, summarize, and send the needs information to all departments. Four-star hotels in Pattaya City start their training process with TNA because it can be a good source of information in developing a hotel training process. The findings show that hotels put more interest in TNA as they mentioned that it is the most essential step in conducting the training process in their hotels. It was supported by Malonza and Walaba (2015, pp. 2132). They stated that the hotels focus on TNA because it is the most crucial step in the hotel training process to ensure the effectiveness of the training programs. Hotels use different methods such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires to collect needed information, as supported by Samar et al. (2016, pp. 102). However, TNA in hotels often found ineffective data collection, which was complicated, difficult to understand, and informal with no chance to express actual needs (Putra, 2000, pp. 1). Moreover, the findings also showed that hotel management is aware of and promotes the TNA process. TNA can serve all those needs by putting needs information into the consideration of the training design and development. On the contrary, Al-Raggad (2017, pp. 104) study argued that hotel management was not aware of the importance of identifying the training needs.

Step 2: Design and develop the training program: It included **1) Training Topic:** Most of the hotel training topics are about the routine work of each department. Hotels must clearly define the training topics so that each department knows what training topics are being held each month. These results are in agreement with Khattak, Rehman, and Rehman (2014, pp. 174), Ratchanet and Onthanee (2018, pp. 257), and Rathore (2017, pp. 54), who proposed that a variety of training topics was put into the hotel training program. However, it could not judge which training topics were best suited for four-star hotels in Pattaya City. Hotels should use a mix of training topics to ensure the training quality because different topics have particular benefits. To select it wisely could be the best way to enhance the employee competency and increase the hotel performance; **2) Training objective:** Even though the hotel employees did not mention much on the training objectives. However, it was imperative for the hotels to set the training objectives to be a guideline for the training evaluation. Hotel management can measure the training effectiveness by seeing whether it reached and achieved the training objectives or not. It was supported by Samar et al. (2016, pp. 101) who highlighted that some hotels design a training objective according to the actual needs and

training needs information; **3) Training content:** Hotels are always explaining more details on the training content to let all involved parties understand the training information and be a guideline to manage the training program. Wangchuk and Wetprasit (2019, p. 409) suggested that the training content should be reviewed ensuring whether it is related based on the work of the trainees or not. However, Chantarathong (2011, pp. 73 commented that it should be cautious to not overload the training content and communicate briefly and straight to the point; **4) Training method:** There are a variety of training methods used in the hotels, both formal and informal training, which is in line with Kleefstra, Altan, and Stoffers (2020, pp. 179-180), Martyn and Anderson (2018, pp. 11), Sertpunya (2020, pp. 11-12), Tangsukeesiri and Nonsiri (2021, pp. 311-313), and Tansakul and Kanjanataveekul (2020, pp. 35). By using various methods, hotels can benefit from the training program. Because different topics require different methods to support training delivery. Moreover, it can attract more interest for the trainees who have different needs. However, this research found one interesting training method used in four-star hotels in Pattaya City, which was not shown in another hotel research that the hotels always encourage sharing and discussion through reflection by the colleagues and allowed to open the floor to sharing and discussion because they believed that listening to the colleague's ideas can be a self-reflection for improvement and make for a good relationship among employees; **5) Trainer:** Hotels use both the internal and external trainers. However, the internal trainer was always selected to be a hotel trainer. By choosing the internal trainer, hotels encourage all hotel management to train their employees by themselves, because they are experts in their area and know best about the practical knowledge of the training topics. The supervisors or heads of department are the best internal trainers that all hotels used to deliver the training program (Thakre, Chaudhari, & Dhawade, 2019, pp. 503). On the other hand, some topics also need to use an external expert because the biggest challenges in the hotel industry was a lack of specialized and full-time expert trainers (Suhag, 2017, pp. 26); **6) Trainee:** Hotels encourage all employees to attend the training program. The selection of trainees are an important part of the training design and development because the trainees are the ones who need to be trained directly. The best trainee should get involved, be willing to participate, engage in team contribution, express the issues, raise some problem points, ask questions, and enjoy the training activities as much as possible (Yamashita, 2004, pp. 30). On the contrary, Al-Raggad (2017, p. 104) found that some hotel employees could not continue the training program because their working hours were not suitable to allow them to participate in the training; **7) Training material:** Hotels focus more on the documents and equipment used in the training delivery. However, to save costs, online documents were also used. It was consistent with Lakornsri and Namwong (2019, pp. 202), who pointed out that effective training programs depend on the training equipment and facilities. To best understand the training contents, hotels should update the training materials to ensure training effectiveness with the best training results; **8) Training period and duration:**

The period and duration of training can be adjusted and flexible according to the needs and situation. Working in the hotel involves shift work, and sometimes it must provide more than one training course to ensure that all employees can attend and not affect the service hours and should also try to avoid training during high occupancy. Chun-Chieh and Hsiao-Ping (2013, pp. 773) stated that hotel management must minimize obstacles to attend the training. As seen, the hotel industry involves shift work that cannot assign all hotel employees to attend training simultaneously. Hotel management must organize the training schedules to ensure all employees benefit from the training programs. If training is during working hours, it should adjust and support the work to ensure that all employees can participate; **9) Training venue:** Most training venues take place at the hotel because they are big hotels and have their meeting rooms. Moreover, the hotels had more experience managing the training venue for the customers. The results further support the findings from a previous study that the best place to conduct the training programs is at the hotel itself because they have convenient places for the hotel employees to participate in the training program (Al-Raggad, 2017, pp. 104). However, Lei and Chong (2008, pp. 7) argued that hotels should not only conduct their training programs in-house, but they should also provide more opportunities to offer external training to gain more knowledge and skills; and **10) Training budget:** The training budget should be in line with the budget that the hotel has set for the maximum training efficiency. To control the training budget effectively, hotels encourage the employees to join and participate in the free course training provided from outside or online. Even though the hotels had set their training budget, some hotels had insufficient training budget, which might affect the implementation and lead to incompleteness and to the effectiveness of the training program. It was congruent with Jongkolnee (2016, pp. 127) who found that if the hotel had a limited training budget, it affected the training delivery and implementation quality.

Step 3: Submit to the HR department: The HR department in the hotel industry plays an essential role in the training process. They had their part to play to combine each department's training plan and summarize the annual training programs. Moreover, Khattak, Rehman, and Rehman (2014, pp. 174) highlighted that the key roles and responsibilities of the hotel HR department were to encourage the training motivation by the trainees to attend the training programs and promote the employees to increase their knowledge and skills to improve their job performance and service quality.

Step 4: Adjust and revise: Additions or reductions to the training programs were made to optimize the hotel services and maximize the training efficiency. The HR manager calls for several meetings with the heads of each department and hotel management to adjust and revise the training programs to ensure the training effectiveness. Moreover, Chueasraku (2015, pp. 58) pointed out that so many issues should be raised because over training and irrelevancy will cause a higher training budget, and insufficient programs lead to an ineffective training program and poor work performance.

Step 5: Final approval from the GMs/hotel managers: The training program required the GMs/hotel managers approval before being implemented. The GMs/hotel managers look at the appropriateness of the training program to ensure that all training programs are aligned with the hotel policies and strategies and promote increasing the employee performance, which leads to an increase in overall hotel performance and service quality. It was supported by Samar et al. (2016, pp. 104-105) pointing out that a successful training process needs more support from hotel management. Moreover, Wangchuk and Wetprasit (2019, pp. 406) stated that hotel management pays more attention and prioritizes the training process because it is critical for competitiveness in the hotel industry. On the other hand, even though the training process was vital in improving the hotel service, but some hotel management was often unaware of it's importance (Rathore & Maheshwari, 2013, pp. 128).

Step 6: Prioritize: Prioritization is one of the essential steps in the hotel training process. Before announcement and implementation, their most critical needs must be prioritized and sequenced to ensure the training effectiveness. This was supported by Samar et al. (2016, pp. 101), who demonstrated that hotel management should review and prioritize the training programs based on the training needs information and current situation.

Step 7: Announce the annual training program: The HR department is responsible for announcing an annual training program. All departments will be informed that the next year will concentrate training on what topics and details information can be derived from each training program.

Step 8: Implement: Hotels use various training methods through the training courses and activities. Albiter et al. (2021, pp. 6) presented that there are opportunities for the hotels to offer the employees to apply and develop their skills and knowledge by allowing them to attend training courses and activities. This study was supported by Malik and Vivek (2018, pp. 16), who revealed that the hotels deliver their training through particular training methods.

Step 9: Support and monitor: Hotels promote the concept of supporting and monitoring by assigning the supervisors, heads of department, HR department, and GMs/hotel managers to help and monitor the training implementation. Hotels provide support for the employees and see how the training is going. Most of the hotel training is based on OJT. Supporting and monitoring is how hotel management sees what is going on, what should be improved and recommended, and listens to the employee comments. To support and monitor, hotels can provide feedback and reflect on the mistakes (Kleefstra, Altan, & Stoffers, 2020, pp. 180), solve the problems that occur during the training program (Al-Raggad, 2017, pp. 99), supervise and provide advice and assistance periodically (Kasetaeim & Sriwongwana, 2017, pp. 146), in pairs or in groups and train with the trainer and provide feedback ensuring improvement (Sertpunya, 2020, p. 8), and allowing opportunities to express opinions and discussion (Srisakultiew et al., 2020, pp. 115).

Step 10: Training evaluation: There are many methods used in the hotel training evaluation. This finding was consistent with Chun-Chieh and Hsiao-Ping (2013, pp. 773), who summarized that hotels evaluated the training results by looking at the skills and knowledge obtained, the way they are applied in their jobs, and allowed them to present ways to improve their work performance. Hotels always use these methods because it is easy to observe and measure and most suitable for the hotel taking account of shift work. On the other hand, Al-Raggad (2017, pp. 104) found that hotels face problems lacking effective training evaluation methods. Only post-test after the training is impossible to evaluate all aspects. However, it was surprising that all hotels conducted their training evaluations by promoting extending knowledge and skills to others. They encourage all employees who attend the training to share their knowledge and skills with their colleagues both by formal and informal methods. They believed that sharing is one of the best ways to learn and improve and this method was the practical training evaluation that all hotels should implement.

In responding to the second research question, *"How could a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City be presented?"*. Many studies mention the training process in a variety of business industries. However, there are less focusing on the hotel industry. This study presents a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City, including the 10 steps as mentioned in Figure 1. 10 steps in developing a training process applied by four-star hotels in Pattaya City were derived from the interview information. The researcher followed all steps by listening to the participants' voices. However, the researcher found much research indicated similarities and differences in certain details. This study was also supported by Amirtharaj and Cross (2011, pp. 49), who proposed the steps of the training process in hotels including training needs analysis, training plan, training objective, training design, training method, training content, training implementation, training evaluation, and planning further training. On the contrary, Kruerattanaphaiboon and Onthanee (2018, pp. 2), Ratchanet and Onthanee (2018, pp. 251), and Suwan and Tantakool (2020, pp. 35-36), presented the hotel training process by identify training needs, design and develop the training program, training implementation, and training evaluation. Moreover, Jongkolnee (2016, pp. 127-128), and Samar et al. (2016, pp. 100) add more hotel training processes by training needs analysis, training program's objectives, design and development, implementation and evaluation.

It was found that this study presented the different steps from another research that is not solely conducting training needs analysis, training design and development, training implementation, and training evaluation, this study found new steps that four-star hotels in Pattaya City performing their training process, which included Step 1: Training needs analysis; Step 2: Design and develop the training program; Step 3: Submit to the HR department; Step 4: Adjust and revise; Step 5: Final approval from the GMs/hotel managers; Step 6: Prioritize; Step 7: Announce the annual training program; Step 8: Implement; Step 9: Support and monitor; and Step 10: Training evaluation. This research is different from other hotel training process

research because the research was based particularly on the training process implemented in four-star hotels in Pattaya City only. The additional context may vary the results. It showed that the hotels paid more attention to adjusting and revising, prioritizing, and supporting and monitoring which indicated that it is an important step for the hotel training process to be successful. Four-star hotels are the primary type of hotel in Pattaya City, which relies mainly on the 10 steps to ensure the effectiveness of the training process. Hotels should recognize that during the training process, it could not ignore the steps of adjusting and revising, prioritizing, and supporting and monitoring as seen by all hotels mentioned in these steps.

Recommendations

Four-star hotels must provide and guide all hotel employees about the training program's benefits to urge them to attend. The hotel employees should communicate their training needs to hotel management and have their wishes reflected in the training's actual benefits. Hotel management and the GMs/hotel managers must be involved in and be outstanding advocates of the training process to urge all employees to have a positive attitude about it. They must verify that all training programs were carried out in accordance with the 10 steps of a training process model. Step 1: Use a reliable source of information to conduct TNA. Step 2: Use TNA information to design and develop the training program. Step 3: Consult with the HR department to ask for assistance and support. Step 4: Attend a few hotel management meetings together to adjust and revise the training program. Step 5: Get the GMs/hotel managers' complete support. Step 6: Priority is determined by the hotel's situation and training requirements. Step 7: Notify all involved of the annual training program. Step 8: Utilize various training methods, courses and activities and put them into practice during training sessions and other activities. Step 9: Supporting and monitoring are essential to maximize the effectiveness of the training program. Step 10: Utilize a mix of training evaluation approaches to determine the effectiveness of the training program.

Because four-star hotels rely significantly on HR, which lacks automation to replace the service providers, hotels must invest more effort in the training process and continual development of their HR to maintain a competitive edge in this business. This study recommended 10 steps of a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City. As a guide and checklist for four-star hotels to follow, they should ensure that they do not ignore them when completing their training process. Furthermore, hotels should offer the training program to all heads of department and hotel management on the details of every step in the training process while conducting the training process to ensure training efficacy. They must all comprehend each step because they are the main persons in running the training program.



The conclusions of this study reveal some basic steps that can help run a hotel's training process. As illustrated in Figure 1, the researcher offers a training process model for four-star hotels in Pattaya City. However, because it involved several contexts, it may be called a training process model or theory. The researcher proposes new steps in a training process model that can be utilized in four-star hotels for competitive advantage in terms of theoretical implications.

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