

## An Evaluation of a Motivational Training Model in a Four-Star Hotel in Pattaya City

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**Abstract:** *The purposes of this study were to examine the underlying features of a motivational approach to hotel job training and to evaluate the effects of a motivational approach to training on staff performance and job satisfaction. The researcher developed a motivational training model for hotel management in a four-star, non-chain hotel in Pattaya City. The researcher's methodology was research and development (R & D). The process for the development of the training model was the Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluation (ADDIE) model. The motivational training model was implemented with a purposive sample consisting of thirty hotel staff from three departments: front office, food and beverage, and housekeeping at the Pattaya City hotel. The data were generated by administering two sets of questionnaires to the thirty participants. The first set was the Job Satisfaction questionnaire, while the second set was the Report of Employee's Behavior. Both questionnaires were administered before and after the five-day training program. The data completed by the thirty participants were analyzed by descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations and percentages, and inferential statistics tests. Comparisons were made of employee job satisfaction with work benefits between the pretest and posttest, or before and after the motivational training program had been implemented. The results of this study showed that a motivational training model for hotel management contributed to job satisfaction, as well as changing the hotel staff's behavior and attitudes. Employees responded more to supportive guidance from their supervisors, rather than instructions. It was recommended that hotel managers should engage in training their staff, not only on hotel standard operating procedures, but also with a motivational emphasis on sustaining employees' development.*

**Keywords:** Hotel Management, Job Satisfaction, Motivation, ADDIE Model, Evaluation, Thailand.

### Introduction

The tourism industry is an important part of the progress, stability and economy of Thailand. It accounts for 6% of Thailand's gross domestic product or GDP (BBC News, 2004). The hotel industry is one of the major sources to support tourism. Because of a high level of competition, most of the hotels have changed their previous service, making their service unique and a strong point in order to offer the greatest experience for their customers. Human resources development (HRD) becomes the key issue in the service process by establishing good training programs for their employees in order to add more value to their service or product.

Business is now more unpredictable, with many unexpected events which have occurred to affect the hotel business, such as the global financial crisis of 2008 and the political issues since 2009. These crises have harmed the tourist industry. The Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI) announced recently that the economy has been severely impacted by the national economic crises (Shumchaivej, 2010). Quite a number of service industry businesses are concerned of these particular reasons. In order to keep the hotel business running smoothly, some hotels are decreasing their workforce (Human Resource Association of Eastern Region, 2010) by engaging employees to do multiple tasks, leading to overload work and sometimes employees may be laid off from their work for a certain period of time without receiving money, bonus and other benefits.



### **Statement of the Problem**

A crucial aim of hotel management is to give the most satisfactory service to their customers. Working under the pressure creates various problems to the hotel image. When employees lack self confidence, they may perform unsatisfactorily. Starkey (1998) stated that the organization's ability to be trained and distribute new in sequence is critical to its long-term success. Training is one possibility that hotels can use to improve their performance services and make change possible. A positive attitude is not a product of genetics and heredity, but, with proper training, it is trait acquired with proper training (Harrell, 2000).

### **Research Questions**

The two research questions are:

1. What are the major features of the motivational training model for hotel staff?
2. How effective is the motivational training model upon the hotel staff's behavior change and attitude change?

### **Literature Review**

This provides a broad overview of motivation associated with the purposes of this study. Motivation was conceptualized based on two theories: Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory of job satisfaction.

### **Motivation**

The word motivation is often defined as "getting someone moving." Motivation theory breaks down these forces that energize and sustain human behavior into internal or intrinsic motivation, and external or extrinsic motivation. If anyone is in a leadership role, it is important to understand how employees are motivated, and what he or she can do as a leader to keep them motivated (Money-Zine.com, 2010). Motivation is the step between passive satisfaction and active engagement. Motivated people put their minds to work as a matter of course (Terez, 2007).

Motivation is the concept which describes the forces acting on or within an organism to initiate, direct and sustain behavior. A highly motivated individual will often be persistent, even though the intensity of the behavior may be low. Deci & Ryan (1985) stated that motivational theories are constructed on a set of assumptions about the nature of people and about the factors that give impulse to action. To the degree that such a concept increases one's ability to understand and predict behavior, the concept is useful.

Mechanistic theories seem to view the human organism as being passive, that is being pushed around by interaction of physiological drives and environmental stimuli, whereas organismic theories tend to view the organism as being active, that is being volitional and initiating behaviors (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

### **Motivation in Thai Context**

The researcher reviewed many studies from multiple perspectives and in different contexts, but all related to the concept of serving people. Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's (1959) motivation-hygiene theory of job satisfaction were selected as the most appropriate motivational theories to explain hotel needs in Thailand.

### **Two Theories of Motivation**

#### **1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory**

The structure of the needs hierarchy from the bottom to the top is: 1) Physiological needs: These cover most of the functions and maintenance of the body at its most basic level for survival; 2) Safety needs: This refers not just to physical safety and protection from harm, but also to continued well-being, such

as financial security, or all the infrastructure that keeps employees secure; 3) Belonging needs: Needs for human contact, family friends, relationship, love, acceptance, teams, a social life and society; 4) Esteem needs: recognizes the need for status, power, prestige, acknowledgement, respect, responsibility, mastery or dominance; and 5) Self-actualization needs: The highest set of needs deals with each person's desire to become the best that they can be through personal growth and by achieving their potential; to be fulfilled by existing out their individual destinies (Robertson, 2009).

Wiley (1999) studied Maslow's hierarchy of needs as employees moved up Maslow's pyramid. He found that they began to take action over issues other than money, which suggests that they were motivated by forces other than monetary benefits. An example of this source of motivation has been the growth of so-called ethical mutual funds in both the USA and the UK.

Once employee's physiological needs have been met, employers can meet their security needs by providing clear-cut criteria under which employees may keep or lose their jobs. The third level of human needs, according to Maslow, is the social needs. This is the need that individuals have for social interaction-love, friendship and belonging (Bateman & Snell, 2002). Social needs are fulfilled inside the workplace with a congenial atmosphere where social relationships are developed. Esteem needs are fostered when employers value their employees as individuals and members of a team, working towards the common goal of providing excellent service to the hotel's customers. Self-actualization needs are evident when employees develop themselves to become self-discipline and proactive to serve customers' needs.

## 2. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory of job satisfaction

Herzberg's (1966) motivation hygiene theory focuses on the effects of certain types of job facets on job satisfaction. He claimed that every worker has two sets of needs or requirements: motivator needs and hygiene needs. Herzberg proposed the following theoretical relationship between motivator needs, hygiene needs and job satisfaction:

1) When motivator needs are met, workers will be satisfied; when these needs are not met, workers will not be satisfied;

2) When hygiene needs are met, workers will not be dissatisfied; when these needs are not met, workers will be dissatisfied.

To apply Herzberg's theory to real-world practice, the researcher begins with the hygiene issues, even though hygiene issues are not the basis of satisfaction. An example of a hotel's hygiene policy is to create a safe environment for all employees. On the other hand, a motivator policy is to have a clear career development path that applies to all employees.

An organization's policies can be a great source of frustration for employees, if the policies are arbitrary or if not everyone is required to follow them. HR managers overcome these problems by developing and implementing policies that are fair and apply equally to all.

As motivation influences productivity, the hotel supervisor needs to have knowledge of motivational theories which help him introduce policies and practices which increase the motivation and productivity of the employees.

### Job satisfaction

Averie and McLane (2002, p.89), "job satisfaction refers to an employee's general affective evaluation of his or her job". Spector (1997, p.2) defined the concept more simply as "how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs". Lambert, Hogan, and Barton (2002, pp.116-117) referred to job satisfaction as "a subjective, individual-level feeling reflecting whether a person's needs are or are not being met by a particular job".

In summary, job satisfaction is a compilation of positive mind-sets or an emotional state that a person perceives about his or her job, based on wide-ranging aspects of the work itself or the work environment. Low job satisfaction has been cited as a possible cause of the poor recruitment and retention levels of teachers in the UK (Evans, 1998).

Arnett, Laverie & McLane (2002) found that employee satisfaction is linked to positive employee behavior. Job satisfaction can be a leading contributing factor to productivity. It has been demonstrated that satisfied employees tend to lead to satisfied customers.



Hygiene factors are the environmentally correlated factors that are related with a negative approach to one's job. If the workplace is not clean and safe, then employees become dissatisfied. On the other hand, the motivation factors are the factors related with a positive approach (Hodgetts & Hegar, 2005). Although hygiene factors usually do not motivate employees, their absence boosts dissatisfaction. Motivation factors persuade effort. Nevertheless, an absence of these will not enhance dissatisfaction as will the hygiene factors. Rather, it will lead to dissatisfaction (Hartel et al., 2007).

As a result, the vital principle of the Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory is that the effective manager is trying to boost the job satisfaction and eventually the job performance of the employees. Those factors which may affect one's job satisfaction need to be addressed. The most direct approach is to work on the intrinsic, job content factors. Giving support and appreciation to the employee helps them to feel more valued within the company, as well as sense of accomplishment and responsibility (Riley, 2005).

### **Research Design.**

The researcher's methodology was research and development (R & D) (Cates, 1985). The process for the development of the training model or program was the Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluation (ADDIE) model (Tubsree, 2009).

### **The research method comprised the following steps:**

#### **1. Analyze**

The researcher interviewed the staff from eight departments and their managers, conducted a document analysis by studying the vital roles of the hotel's efficient operation, their benefits, and also studied the rules and regulations which may affect employees' attitudes. The researcher endeavored to match the organization's goals with her training goals. The skill, knowledge and attitude analysis of staff was undertaken in order to compare their baseline performance with the expected result. Rutherford & O'Fallon (2007) stated that the strength of a hotel's functional organizational design is the resulting efficiency within individual departments. At the end of the analysis phase, the training goals had been identified.

#### **2. Design**

The researcher designed the motivational training model by identifying the objectives from the stated goals. Then she designed the training model by applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, combined with Herzberg's theory in the training activities, as both theories are well known and are influenced by environmental conditions, employee attitudes and an employee's performance (Maslow & Herzberg, 2010). Consequently, the hands-on experiences during training and application of the motivation theory were also a part of this design. Variations in the ratio of theory to practice occurred throughout the training sessions. This special design was based on an agreement between the hotel owner, the researcher, and the researcher's advisors to limit the vital period of training to a full 5 days of six-hour training sessions per day. The contents of the model are composed of the following curriculum components.

Day 1: Service industry: Service mindedness; Readiness to change: To help hotel staff behave congruently with their espoused values; Distinguishing between customer needs and hotel staff needs; Delivering customer service happily; Workshop on Speaking with the client's language.

Day 2: Job security; Good working environment; Working is fun; Challenging ways of achieving a career path, and how to achieve your goals effectively; Enhancing the hotel's mission statement; Benchmarking/ Best Practice; Workshop on safety at work and fostering family life.

Day 3: Encouraging word-of-mouth communication; Teamwork and a sense of family; Building Motivators into the Context of Work; Being a fully fledged member of the team; Constructing the team direction to those staff who have direct contact with customers; Client-centered approach to service: Focusing on the needs of the client. Workshop on determining how to work as an effective team.

Day 4: Monitoring the appropriate use of motivation; Challenging the task and meeting with staff to determine how to provide essential support; The art of high-quality service with value; Aiming to be a developing, learning organization known for service excellence. Workshop on fuelling the sense of self-esteem.

Day 5: Potential staff can predict future outcomes; Mission, Vision, and Service Values Development; Developing a sense of “It’s our pleasure to serve you”; Service Delivery and striving to create a sense of professionalism; Attributes of excellent service development policy. Workshop on acknowledging “motive capital” as the life blood of service.

### 3. Development

The researcher grouped the participants from three departments (Front Office, Food and Beverage, and Housekeeping). The participants were selected from staff had been employed full-time for at least two years to work in a hotel, both male and female staff, aged mainly from 20 – 35 years old, whose marital status was single, married or widow/widower. Their educational level ranged from primary school to bachelor’s degree, and their rank was between attendant and supervisor. Staff were selected for training from the individual with the lowest scores on the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire and their Report of Employees’ Behavior in each department’s ratings a week before training, serving as a pretest. The sample consisted of ten participants from each of the three hotel departments.

These two instruments were developed by interviewing the staff and managers from eight departments, studying the vital roles of the hotel’s operation and to match the organization’s goals with her training goals. The reliabilities were that; Discrimination of Job Satisfaction Questionnaire and report of employee’s behavior (try-out on the first hotel or main field test) was 0.853. Discrimination of Job Satisfaction Questionnaire and report of employee’s behavior (try out on the second hotel or operational field test) was 0.878.

The developed prototype training model was tried out at a Thai four-star non-chain hotel in Pattaya City hotel which was similar, but not identical, to the target hotel.

The dynamics of being a team member were noticeable; they seemed to trust and were willing to help each other. The researcher revised the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, and a Behavioral Check List. All content of the training model was revised according to the feedback from the small group try out. Additional efforts were made to validate the content of the training program by consulting three experts.

### 4. Implementation

The motivational training model was implemented with a group of thirty hotel staff. A total of thirty hours was devoted to the training program, conceptualized according to Maslow’s and Herzberg’s theories.

All the employees’ reactions were closely observed and recorded as reflexive notes. Their major concerns were: not too overloaded content; a short and straight to the point communication style were useful. Staff preferred to listen to easy, colloquial language, and they must have been able to access the essential meanings and, for those who cannot read English, the actual Thai translation must be provided immediately. Body language was responded to by the trainer from time to time, especially when conducting workshops. Staff was happy to respond to questions or any other participation issues, such as games, role plays, demonstrations and brainstorming activities. A sense of humor was an essential skill of the trainer. Motivated movement was required to maintain their attention.

Several underlying features of the motivational training approach were prominent, but the major observed feature of the training effects was that staff performed well in their jobs, provided they understand the situation clearly, with supervisors not using verbal commands. They seemed to dislike being told what to do, but they cooperated well when they were recognized as a good team member. At the end of the training session, it was found that money was still an important motivator, but not the most important one. Their consideration to engage effectively in their jobs depended on other

factors, some of which were related to Maslow's and Herzberg's theories. Examples of these factors were disliking being told what to do, but giving willing cooperation if they were recognized as a valuable team member.

Self-esteem was also important in terms of contributing to their efforts to achieve organizational goals. This finding is consistent with Maslow's belief that esteem needs are important higher-level human needs.

### 5. Evaluation

The job satisfaction questionnaire and behavior observation scale were administered as the pretest and posttest by the researcher, in order to evaluate the effects of the motivational training model on the hotel staff. The hotel staff's behavior observation scale was administered and assessed by their managers, to ensure the effectiveness of each hotel employee's ability to form an effective working team and was associated with the research questions of this study.

### Results

Table 1. Comparison of employees' behavior between before training and after training

Report of Employee Behavior	Pre (N=30)		Post (N=30)		t	p	$\bar{D}$	SD $\bar{D}$
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD				
1. Product	1.53	0.63	2.63	0.49	-11.00*	.000	- 1.10	0.55
2. Accuracy	1.40	0.67	2.07	0.45	-4.82*	.000	- 0.67	0.76
3. Readiness	1.80	0.48	2.80	0.40	-12.04*	.000	- 1.00	0.46
4. Discipline	1.97	0.56	2.83	0.38	-7.55*	.000	- 0.86	0.63
5. Job Responsibility	2.03	0.56	2.90	0.30	-9.36*	.000	- 0.87	0.51
6. Self-Developed	1.90	0.61	2.73	0.52	-7.05*	.000	- 0.83	0.65
7. Attitude	2.43	0.82	2.90	0.40	-3.50*	.002	- 0.47	0.73
8. Co-operation	2.23	0.77	3.00	0.00	-5.43*	.000	- 0.77	0.77
9. Punctuality	2.37	0.85	2.93	0.25	-3.80*	.001	- 0.56	0.82
10. Ethics	1.70	0.47	2.93	0.25	-11.89*	.000	- 1.23	0.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.94</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>-17.86*</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>- 0.84</b>	<b>0.26</b>

\*  $p < .05$

Table 1 shows that the comparisons of employees' behavior with their behavior before training and after training, both their total behavior and individual subscales of behavior were significantly different at the  $p < .05$  level of significance. On all ten sub-scales of behavior, they had significantly higher mean scores after training than before training.

**Research Question 1:** What are the major features of the motivational training model for hotel staff? As this study was implemented in a Thai four-star non-chain hotel in Pattaya City, Thailand, the researcher designed a Research and Development (R & D) training model by applying Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, combined with Herzberg's hygiene-motivator factors theory, into the training activities.

The major feature of the training effects, observed by the researcher, was that staff performed well, provided that they understood the situation clearly, they cooperated well when they were recognized as a good team member.

The highlight which contributed to a major feature of the motivation training model was that the package of thirty hours training was able to change the employees' focus on delivering an



unforgettable experience to hotel customers from their hearts. Staff had a mutual understanding of the physical needs of customers and themselves, they felt safe and ready to change. At the end of the training sessions, it was found that money was still an important motivator, but not the most important one. Their consideration to engage effectively in their jobs was depending on other factors, some of which were related to Maslow's and Herzberg's theories. They gradually developed themselves to perform to a higher standard to meet the customers' needs and, as a result, extra money, such as "tips" was likely to increase.

**Research Question 2:** How effective is the motivational training model upon the hotel staff's behavior change and attitude change? Based on the statistical result of Table 1, which compared of employees' behavior before training and after training, it was found that, before training employees' Attitude (Mean = 2.43), Punctuality (Mean = 2.37) and Co-operation (Mean = 2.23) were the highest means. After training, employees nominated Cooperation (Mean= 3.00), Ethics and Punctuality (Mean =2.93) at the top of their behaviors, followed by Attitude (Mean = 2.90) and Job Responsibility (Mean = 2.90). While all measures of behavior increased from the pretest to the posttest, certain measures of job satisfaction appeared to be higher than others as a result of training.

In addition, employees after training seemed to have increased their motivational sensitivity, as mentioned in the finding for research question 1. Personal satisfaction was found to be a key issue in terms of energizing staff's behavior change and attitude change. The result drawn from Table 1 was related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs: employees are motivated by earning money and depending on the people they work with (Physical and Safety needs), meeting other people (Belonging needs), and helping other people (Self-esteem and Self-actualization needs). In accordance with Herzberg's theory, motivator issues, in terms of achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement, made a difference in the daily work performance of hotel employees.

To answer the research question 2, "How effective is the motivational training model upon the hotel staff's behavior change and attitude change?", it was found that, despite the fact that personal satisfaction was a key issue in term of energizing staff's behavior change and attitude change, if a motivational training model has been carried out effectively, the hotel employees responded to the effort they made in the training course by increasing the efficiency of their performance on the job. McLean (2006) argued that the outcome of successful training is commitment to an action plan based on the values of those involved in the process.

Based on the results from the present study, it was concluded that there were significant differences in the comparisons of employees' job satisfaction on work benefits from the pretest to the posttest, which was administered after the motivational training program. Each of the individual working conditions or benefits had significantly higher mean scores after training than before training. Benefits, such as organizational culture, had improved as a result of their training experiences.

## Discussion

The research findings are discussed here in terms of the major features of the motivational training model for hotel staff and the effectiveness of the motivational training model upon the hotel staff's behavior change and attitude change. It is well documented that the frontline hotel employees have a significant role in the delivery of service quality (Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Hsieh & Yen, 2005; Kilic & Okumus, 2005), as customers are always looking for quality and value for money in their hotel experience (Miller et al., 2002).

Furthermore, in the business world these days, an enormous amount of the money is spent on training in organizations, especially on those who are newly hired or are replacement employees (Forrier & Sels, 2003; Prais, 1995). However, in the context of training and development, job content and job context, and organizational and environmental context, the effects of training on staff motivation and on-the-job performance are well known (Werner & DeSimone, 2006; McLean, 2006). Therefore, this important issue has been examined in this article. It is especially important when



demand for employees exceeds the supply of labor. Hotel businesses need to run smoothly with their own workforce, and appropriate training may lead to lower employee turnover which reduces costs significantly and improves customer service quality.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There were several limitations in the present study. The first limitation was the difficulty in gaining the cooperation of the hotel owners in order to arrange the training program in their hotels. Hotels operate twenty four hours a day and seven days a week, so that a five-day training program was the maximum allowed time. No matter if it was the high or low season, if an unexpected customer group arrives, business comes first. Although the actual training dates were already set up, the training program had to be postponed. In addition, some of the target participants cannot attend the course. Hence, unfamiliar participants, such as newly hired staff from other departments who were not members of the original purposive sample were allocated by the HR manager's clerk. A second limitation was that there was sometimes a disturbance of participants' attention during the training session due to staff shortage. Third, the possible lack of trustworthy data arising from being observed closely by HR officers seemed to prevent some participants from answering questions frankly. Therefore, a personal interview to probe into the honest answers was used from time to time. The final limitation was that there was no control group to check whether the attitude changes were actually produced by the training program, rather than other influences.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Job satisfaction and self-esteem seemed to be the major motivating factors to establish a strong organization dedicated to providing effective services to customers. Organizational stability enables a hotel to consistently deliver high-quality service and effectively control its daily operation. A hotel's strategic service vision must be consistent within important long-run demand on the manager's job related to the capital needs and the organizational stability of the hotel (Rutherford et al., 2007, p. 95). As a result of this study, it was apparent that a motivational training model for hotel management contributed to job satisfaction, in addition to influencing the hotel staff's behavior change and attitude change. Hotel managers should engage in, not only training on hotel standard operating procedures, but also with an emphasis on employees' sustained development. Managers should be conscious that employees usually give the impression of regarding their managers as role models. Employees desire managers who can communicate to employees about the importance of their outcomes and work with them on how to accomplish successfully those outcomes. Managers should support their employees both in the work context and on personal issues, and be responsive to employees' individual differences in terms of needs and aspirations.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

Based on the results of this study, several recommendations for future research are proposed for the purpose of further increasing the practitioners' and academics' understanding of the major features of the motivational training model for hotel staff. In addition, further research is needed to evaluate a motivational training model in terms of the hotel staff's behavior change and attitude change as longer term outcomes.

First, the management team should consider implementing this or a similar training program throughout the whole organization, in order to motivate their whole staff to increase their performance on the job. Providing quality service to hotel customers needs to be a constant focus of training throughout the organization.

Second, manager should extend this experience from the training context to staff evaluation of on-the-job performance. Effective evaluation of both training and on-the-job performance must be addressed, such as by developing a check list to measure the criteria of a service-mindedness hotel.

Third, research needs to be conducted on how to develop an organizational culture for supervisors to maintain themselves as good role models for their staff. It is important for future

research to focus on what skills and attitudes of staff generate the highest satisfaction to customers without the staff being inhibited in their desire to provide such high quality service.

Finally, the influence of the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, as well as the Report of Employee's Behavior after Training should be investigated to find out if staff workload affects the staff's perceptions of their performance and job satisfaction. In conclusion, the findings of this research study are proposed as the preliminary recommendations for other researchers to conduct research on how to integrate Thai hospitality into a more effective and efficient hotel industry.

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