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Selection Principles of Human Resources in the Service Industry

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Abstract

The objectives of the study were (1) to analyze the selection principles of human resources in the service industry via service industry documents and literature synthesis, and (2) to obtain information on the existing selection principles of human resources via interviews with fifty voluntary participants with work experience in the service/ hospitality industry. Organizations need qualified personnel to work toward their goal and help create good standards and corporate image. The researcher found via literature synthesis and interviews four main competencies as indicators in human resources selection in the service industry: (1) employee relationship performance, (2) professional competencies, (3) self-management performance, (4) legal knowledge and expertise in required areas. The candidates should have good knowledge of the job, language skills, good personality, professional ethics, and entrepreneurship. Each employee should be able to access systematic and clear evaluation criteria. The organization's main capabilities navigation should enable users to choose who can match specific performance and thus help reduce the turnover rate. Human resource management should focus on the corporate social responsibility by employees' involvement. These four indicators are guided by Thailand's seven key components in measuring and training employees in the service industry: (1) Objectives, (2) Advertising and public relations, (3) Personnel, (4) Budget, (5) Planning, (6) Operation, and (7) Achievement. The identified indicators were used to analyze and select candidates' personal characteristics, particularly knowledge of language, personality, human relations and service-mindedness for specific job descriptions. It was expected that the obtained findings can benefit organizations in preparing their human resources for desirable human and professional aspects.

Keywords: *Selection, capabilities, quality, personnel, human resource management*

1. Rationale of the Study

Organizations in the service industry generally need good and practical selection principles for human resources to meet their needs in accordance with the organizational goal. This is to create standards and good image for the organization, as well as to understand the selection criteria of desired personnel for the organization to operate effectively (Sukiam & Likitsarun, 2021).

The hospitality industry has its focus on services provided by personnel. Competency on the job as selected by the management in human resources is required of each candidate, namely knowledge, skills and desirable attributes. It is also possible to classify the desirable characteristics of personnel according to the needs in each organization (Thasaplert, 2007; Pengboon, 2012; Kalya, 2015; Suksamran & Namwong,

2018). This includes using such classification as a guideline for recruiting and determining compensation to achieve the goals of that organization. Obviously, desirable attributes would be an important factor in selecting the most competent personnel as needed.

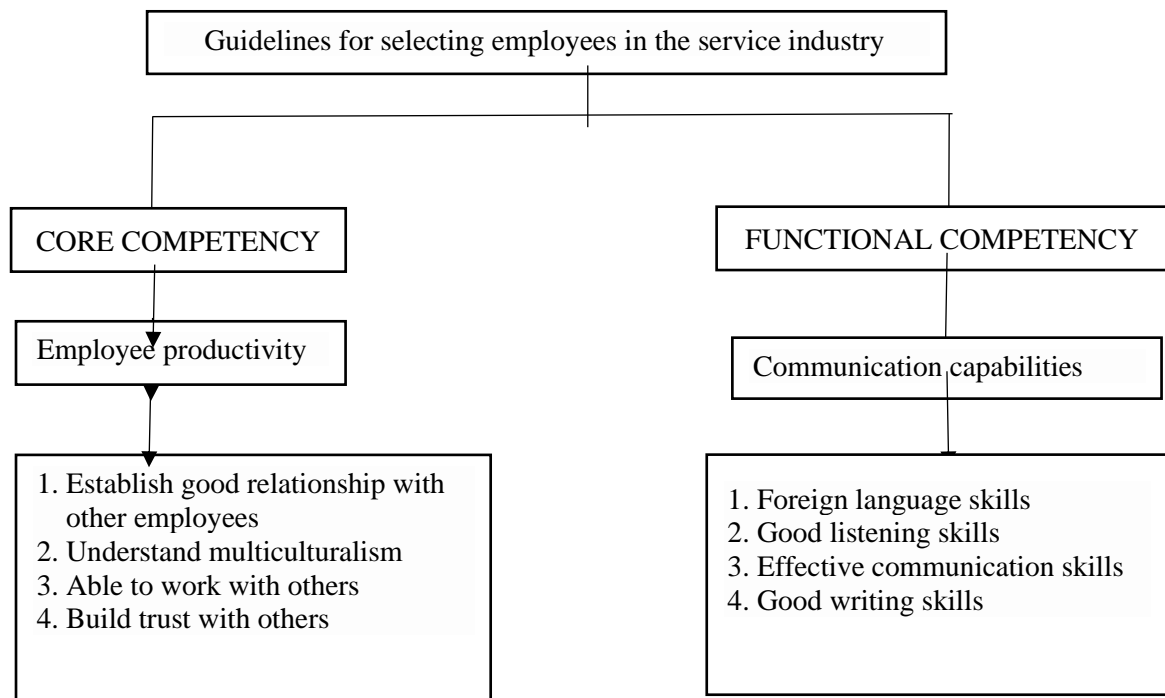
Selection plays an important role in the competitive advantage of the organization, not least in other processes. Specifically, selection criteria will help organizations get qualified personnel to attend events or complete specific tasks. However, many organizations have experienced recruitment problems that are inconsistent with the organizational culture and perceived the negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the organization (Charoenvanich, 2017; Sukiam, 2020). This is mainly due to the lack of expertise and clarity in selection criteria for candidates, leading to such mistakes as rejecting qualified candidates for positions and organizations, or accepting incompetent candidates. Therefore, in order to solve the problems that arise, organizations need to identify desired performance as the target in the selection process. In this regard, valid and practical selection criteria can help reduce mistakes in recruiting personnel, as well as support the organization to acquire the most qualified personnel for the designated position and organizational goals.

Those previous studies on human resource selection principles in the service industry often reported problems in recruiting unqualified employees for positions, under the circumstance of unsystematic selection criteria and procedures (Supakitkosol, 2016; Charoenvanich, 2017; Sukiam, 2020). The researcher therefore would like to find out empirically selection principles for personnel recruitment in the service industry. It was expected that the obtained findings from experienced service industry informants would shed light on a set of practical criteria to select quality service staff in providing good services to customers in the service industry.

2. Conceptual Framework

The concept of personnel selection is primarily based on capacity specified in job descriptions or job specifications or job competency. KPI (performance scorecard or job achievement) is used as a zero-evaluation indicator because it represents the most standardized vision and norms. This method uses a wide range of techniques, including the use of highly specialized observers and assessors to reduce bias or prejudice caused by human decision-makers. It is imperative for human resource recruiters to organize information systematically, interpret and verify the obtained profile data for the accuracy of the findings (Thasaplert, 2007; Sriboonnark, 2020).

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The researcher considered both core and functional competencies with emphasis on employee productivity and communication capabilities as determinants in the selection principles of human resources. Particularly, in the service/ hospitality industry, the core competency is on employees' work capabilities the organization depends on in four aspects: (1) establish good relationship with other employees, (2) understand multiculturalism, (3) able to work with others, and (4) build trust with others. As for the functional competency, communication capabilities are essential: (1) foreign language skills, (2) good listening skills, (3) effective communication skills, and (4) good writing skills (Supakitkosol, 2016; Yabushita, 2016; Charoenvanich, 2017; Sukiam, 2020; Sukiam & Likitsarun, 2021; Wetsanarat, 2021). This competency framework could serve as a good platform for a human resource management team in developing selection criteria of candidates for a particular service organization. It would also be possible for employees to access the established selection principles used by the human resources management team in their organization to get themselves prepared and trained in the target core and functional competencies, followed by self-development of desirable attributes for a good fit with the assigned duties.

3. Research Scope

The researcher identified the research scope with service industry documents, synthesized literature and interviews with fifty voluntary participants with work experience in the service/ hospitality industry regarding the selection principles of human resources. It should be noted that this present study was meant as a pioneering investigation for further research into human resource management issues concerning recruitment, selection criteria, staff professional development, performance appraisal system, and talent retention in the service industry in Thailand.

4. Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were (1) to analyze the selection principles of human resources in the service industry via service industry documents and literature synthesis, and (2) to obtain information on the existing the selection principles of human resources via interviews with fifty voluntary participants with work experience in the service/ hospitality industry.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Participants

The main informants in the study were fifty voluntary front-end service managers, human resources officers and managers in the service industry who had duties related to the recruitment of service personnel in accordance with the standards set by the Foundation for The Standard Development and Personnel in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry (2004): (1) Objectives, (2) Advertising and public relations, (3) Personnel, (4) Budget, (5) Planning, (6) Operation, and (7) Achievement.

5.2 Research Tool

The researcher constructed a set of four interview questions on four aspects of the selection principles of human resources based on service industry documents and the literature synthesis in the service industry: (1) employee relationship performance, (2) professional competencies, (3) self-management performance, (4) legal knowledge and expertise in required areas. The questions were open-ended for the participants to provide information freely on the selection principles of human resources from their work experience as seen appropriate. The questions were validated in content by five human resource recruitment experts in the service industry.

6. Data Collection Procedure

The interview time for the data collection procedure was set at 15-30 minutes depending on the participants' availability. For confidentiality, the participants were able to reserve their personal information as preferred; they were only requested to verify their work experience of not less than three years. The participants' responses were recorded with their consent and later transcribed for a pattern analysis of four aspects of the selection principles of human resources under investigation. In addition to the four main interview questions, the researcher also asked the participants about their assumptions on service workers currently recruited in the service industry in terms of strengths and limitations as well as points of observation on the selection systems from their work experience. The additional points, if provided, could give a complete picture of selection principles of human resources as currently practiced by decision-makers in the service industry.

7. Results of the Study

7.1 Literature Synthesis Results

Based on Research Objective 1, the researcher analyzed and synthesized from official documents and literature in the area of human resource management pertinent to selection or recruitment in the service/ hospitality industry. It was found that the main aspects

of the selection principles of human resources in the service industry were in four: (1) employee relationship performance, (2) professional competencies, (3) self-management performance, (4) legal knowledge and expertise in required areas. These four aspects or indicators were created in accordance with by Thailand's seven key components in measuring and training employees in the service industry established in 2004: (1) Objectives, (2) Advertising and public relations, (3) Personnel, (4) Budget, (5) Planning, (6) Operation, and (7) Achievement.

7.2 Interview Results

From the interviews required in Research Objective 2, the participants responded to the four questions based on the four aspects of the selection principles for human resources in the service industry identified early in the literature synthesis. It was found that their responses fell into the pattern of the four aspects: relationship performance, professional performance, self-management performance, and legal knowledge and expertise in required tasks.

In addition, some participants volunteered information from their work experience that a good recruiting system with clear-cut criteria and desirable personnel attributes should be transparent and accessible to managers, current employees and candidates for clear understanding of all stakeholders concerned in working toward the organizational goal as well as for newcomers before joining the organization.

To the majority of the interviewees, the most appropriate selection method should prioritize the test of candidates' knowledge on the job and core/functional competencies, followed by their perceived ability to learn new things and catch up with changes at work. About half of the interviewees asserted that there should be involvement of a potential supervisor, colleague, and support personnel (logistics personnel, if possible) in more than one round of interviews to ensure fairness, transparency and accuracy in decision-making by the authorized human resource executive. Fairness and transparency in the interview process could help the organization match candidates with the job and in turn could reduce the rate of resignation due to the lack of core fitness of employees later on the job.

8. Discussion of Results

The findings on the four aspects of the selection principles of human resources in the service industry as confirmed by the interview results indicated that the literature in the area the selection principles projected a picture in line with reality in recruitment practices in the service industry (Pengboon, 2012; Supakitkosol, 2016; Charoenvanich, 2017; Suksamran & Namwong, 2018; Sukiam, 2020; Sukiam & Likitsarun, 2021).

The obtained findings appeared to fall in line with the results reported by Sukiam & Likitsarun (2021) who asserted that employees' competency development in hotels or the hospitality industry include personnel development strategies and abilities to handle problems or obstacles and cope with changes encountered in the work process. In this regard, recruitment and personnel work competency development definitely help create good products quality services for organizations to achieve their business operations and goals. Sriboonnark, (2020) also emphasized the significance of employees' professional competencies, and abilities to create innovation (professional competencies) and self-manage in coping with changes in business operations.

The interview results that signified candidates' relationship performance, and legal knowledge and expertise in required tasks are very interesting in that employees in the service/ hospitality industry need to interact well with customers as well as to be sensitive to verbal and nonverbal communication features--not to offend or mislead customers that could unintentionally lead to any legal action against them and their organization. This point on human or soft skills competency was highlighted by Wetsanarat (2021) who reported that the service industry currently values soft skills, particularly communication skills and positive interactions in rendering service activities to satisfaction of customers.

Most people involved in resource management are well aware that new recruits need to be assimilated into the organization's culture and some problems at work could arise. As stated by Yabushita (2016) on the quality of work life, new employees' personal skills and positive attributes with support from the supervisor and existing colleagues could ease up newcomers into their expected roles, duties and achievements. It is therefore vitally important for an organization to establish its selection principles well to gain creativity/ productivity from qualified candidates or talents who decided to join and expect to grow with their selected organizations.

9. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the researcher would like to recommend two points for consideration of business organizations in the service industry and academic institutions that prepare graduates for the employment market as follows:

- As emphasized by the interviewed participants, a service organization needs to establish fair and transparent selection principles accessible to all stakeholders concerned. Despite recruitment confidentiality required as part of the human resource policy, the organization could take the transparency issue as a positive image of its social responsibility in being responsive to qualified candidates who wish to join their organization for good. Moderation in disclosure of the selection principles of human resources, interview process and performance assessment could be sufficient to serve the organization's purpose in communicating with the public.
- Academic institutions need to have their study programs and internship activities responsive to the four aspects of the selection principles in human resource management in the service/ hospitality industry. Also, these four aspects should be taken up in the perspective of Thailand's seven key components in measuring and training employees in the service industry: (1) Objectives, (2) Advertising and public relations, (3) Personnel, (4) Budget, (5) Planning, (6) Operation, and (7) Achievement. The identified four selection principles could be integrated into the existing curriculum in technical knowledge skills, human/ soft skills in the practicum or internship, work-related activities and workshops, and current updates from the service industry. Such practical integration would add value to the graduates to enter the employment market with confidence in their core and functional competencies.

10. The Author

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