

การวัดผลของผลการปฏิบัติงานของพนักงานในอุตสาหกรรมโรงแรมในประเทศไทย

MEASURING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN HOTEL INDUSTRY IN THAILAND

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บทคัดย่อ

อุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวและธุรกิจบริการในประเทศไทยได้มีการขยายตัวอย่างต่อเนื่องด้วยอัตราการเติบโตที่สูง อุตสาหกรรมโรงแรมได้เผชิญกับช่วงเวลาที่มีความท้าทายที่สุด ปัจจัยหนึ่งที่สำคัญของความสำเร็จนั้นคือการเพิ่มผลปฏิบัติงานของพนักงาน เพื่อให้มีประสิทธิภาพมากขึ้น และมีความพร้อมมากยิ่งขึ้นเพื่อที่จะรองรับกับสิ่งแวดล้อมของธุรกิจโรงแรมที่มีการแข่งขันในรูปแบบใหม่ๆ วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษานี้คือเพื่อสำรวจและตรวจสอบความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างความรู้ของพนักงาน ความคิดสร้างสรรค์ของพนักงานและ ผลการปฏิบัติงานของพนักงานในอุตสาหกรรมด้านการโรงแรม ข้อมูลของการศึกษานี้ได้เก็บข้อมูลมาจากพนักงานโรงแรม 461 คน จากโรงแรมต่างๆ ในประเทศไทย ผลการศึกษพบว่าความรู้ของพนักงานและความคิดสร้างสรรค์ของพนักงานและผลการปฏิบัติงานของพนักงาน มีอิทธิพลเชิงบวกกับผลการดำเนินงานของพนักงาน

คำสำคัญ: ผลการปฏิบัติงาน อุตสาหกรรมโรงแรม ประเทศไทย

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Abstract

Tourism and hospitality in Thailand continues to expand at the high growth rate, hotel industry has faced the most challenging period. One of the major keys to success is to enhance the employee performance to be more effective and ready to deal with the new competitive hotel environment. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationships among employee knowledge, employee creativity and employee performance in the context of hotel industry. The data was collected from 461 employees of several hotels in Thailand. The results indicated that both employee knowledge and employee creativity had significantly positive effects on employee performance.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Hotel Industry, Thailand

Introduction

In the knowledge economy, the development of many parts of the economy is on learning and creativity. Driven by competitions and the pursuit of business growth, companies are striving for new knowledge, assets, and novel competitive advantages in order to outperform their business rivals. Hotel industry of Thailand is one of the most important sectors to the Thai economy. The relationship between tourism and hospitality is highly positively correlated (Hon & Liu, 2016). When the tourism industry expands, the number of customers of companies in hospitality increase. However, in the time of poor economic difficulty and political instability, hotels and others contribute as the main driver of the service industry. The hotel industry is the service-based industry where people play crucial roles in delivering satisfactions of customers. While hospitality industry evolves, there are many changes occurring in the environment, including the new trend of customer behaviors, new demand for better products and services, and new ways of using and providing services. Therefore, employees in the hospitality industry need to be well aware of such changes. All organizations rely heavily on the employee productivity and performance (Birasnav, 2014). It is very important for companies to seek for the way to improve performance of their employees.

One of the areas that only few researchers conducted is the area of employee creativity (Wong & Ladkin, 2008). Employee creativity is affected by many motivators, including employee benefits, such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivators (Dewett, 2004). Moreover, employee creativity is the basic core competency for new products and service development. The importance of new product and service development in hospitality industry is significantly well aware by many top managers in hotels and airlines (Birasnav, 2014). Therefore, to enhance and improve the level of employee creativity for the hospitality firms, managers must ensure their products and services. This can result in gaining more market shares and

maintaining growth in their businesses. In this study, the relationships among employee creativity, employee knowledge, and employee performance were investigated and analyzed.

The objectives of the current research were twofold. Firstly, it is to explore the relationships among employee creativity, employee knowledge and employee performance as the main factors. Secondly, it is to investigate the effects of employee creativity and employee knowledge on employee performance in the hospitality industry

Literature Review

Hotel Industry Background

Tourism and hotel industries are highly important to not only hospitality industry but also to Thai overall economy. Tourism industry has played significant role to the economy and the hotel industry grows to support the increasing number of visitors from around the world. According to Business Monitor International (2011), Thailand is known to tourists as the destination for an exotic, natural, friendly and exciting place with important infrastructure including a great number of five-star hotels, fine dining restaurants and famous Thai spas. Since 1990s, Thailand has liberalized the regulations on hotel industry and allowed more foreign investors to contribute to the hotel and tourism industry, leading to the fast growing number of hotels around the country, including major tourism destination cities such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Phuket (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2017). In addition, the competition in the hotel industry has increased the demand for more effective and efficient performance of their employees.

Employee Creativity

The importance of employee creativity has been emphasized in several research studies in wide variety of organizations (Zhang & Gheibi, 2015; Dewett, 2004; Woodman et al., 1993). Creativity can be source of new ideas and knowledge. Previous studies showed that employee creativity highly contributes to the strengths of the organization in terms of innovation and effectiveness (Shalley et al., 2004). Madjar et al., (2002) referred the term “creativity” as the construction of new and valuable ideas offered by one person or a group of persons or employees. In order to have creativity, organizations, especially top managements must involve in providing supports and encouraging their employees to be creative since they have all resources and incentives to help employees to become more creative in the workplace (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Creativity of employees is a complex factor highly important for the organization in three levels, including individuals, groups and organizations (Hon & Lui, 2016; Yang, Lee & Cheng, 2016). In addition, employee creativity plays the crucial role in high service quality and customer satisfaction (Wang, Tsai & Tsai, 2014). Moreover, in the perspective of employee creativity and employee performance or outcome (Janssen et al., 2004), employee creativity plays important roles in the level of individual

outcomes or performance in their works. In addition, creativity of employee can also lead to career satisfaction of each employee. In the aspects of new comers of the organizations, employee creativity can help these new employees to cope effectively with the new working environment and help them focus on their work goals much faster. Furthermore, employee creativity can help improve job satisfaction because these employees can find the new ways of managing things (Zhou and George, 2001). Creativity is also the context that important for service and hospitality industry due to the increasing competitive and changes within the industry (Hon & Lui, 2016). Furthermore, employees with creative ideas create positive psychological and business effects towards the hotels and working environments (Hon, Chan & Lu, 2013; Wang & Tsai, 2014).

Employee Knowledge

In order to perform any task successfully, one must acquire sufficient knowledge of relevant tasks in order to undertake the activities needed to finish the tasks. Knowledge can be defined as the mixture of intangible assets, such as experience, values, contextual information, expert insights (Sousa & Loureiro, 2016; Hau, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2014). In addition, employee knowledge can be categorized into four types (Sousa & Loureiro, 2016), including the innovator, the organizer, the integrator and the facilitator. Firstly, innovator employees are those who develop new knowledge and innovation through the experimentation process. Secondly, the organizer is the one creating the structure to transform the tacit knowledge into the explicit knowledge for future usage. Thirdly, the integrator is the employee who integrates the developed and shared knowledge within the organization. Lastly, the facilitator is the person ensuring that right skills are being used when the knowledge is applied into the process. Knowledge is known as one of the valuable intangible assets in the organizations. Learning organizations are those where all employees routinely acquire, create and share knowledge among members of the organizations (Senge, 1990). Therefore, knowledge of employees is one of the key factors to build up the core competency to achieve their goals. Firms in service industry regard knowledge as one of the most crucial resources to achieve superior performance. It can be said that knowledge in each organization is complex, hard to imitate and unique as it is embedded within the organizational culture, policies, routines, documents and employees (Jayaram & Xu, 2016). Moreover, the support of organizations to develop unique employee knowledge provides the competitive advantage of the firm over its competitors (Birasnav, 2014).

Employee Performance

The results of the assigned tasks can represent the performance of each employee. There are still many dimensions to evaluate the performance of each employee. Both quantitative and qualitative methods may be applied to measure the employee performance.

Employee performance can be categorized into three dimensions, including Employee In-Role Performance (EIRP), Employee Extra-Role Performance toward Customers (ERPC), and Employee Extra-Role Performance Toward the Organizations (ERPO) (Maxham III et al., 2008). This perspective fits significantly well with the hospitality organizations where the expectation of customers can be endless and often employees have to performance more than just in their job descriptions to meet the expectations of customers and finally deliver customer satisfaction. In the service industry, employee performance affects the customers' perceptions towards the service quality. The employee performance reflects the employee knowledge for his/her specific task to implement organizational strategies in order to meet the customer's needs. The effective employee performance is reached when the employee capability can deliver the service at the lowest possible cost, but with the highest possible level of productivity (Jayaram & Xu, 2016). Furthermore, effective performance of employees can be attained by the employee creativity. The creative employees tend to have more ability in providing and developing the new services in the dynamic environment (Yang, Lee & Cheng, 2016). Many service organizations develop new services to cope with the changes of customers' demand. With the employee creativity, the firms can achieve greater performances (Yang, Lee & Cheng, 2016). Employee creativity provides new ideas and offers flexibility to deal with complex service demand in the hospitality industry. In hospitality business, the pool of knowledge is required, and creativity of employee enhances the opportunity to deliver the innovative service performance (Fraj, Matute & Melero, 2015).

Research Methodology

The author used statistical techniques, including descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling. The quantitative techniques can help testing the existence, the strengths, and the direction of the relationships of all factors of study. To study the relationships among factors in the areas of employee creativity, this study applied cross-sectional method as suggested by Dewett (2004). The strength of quantitative method is to help test the relationships and identify the strengths and directions of relationships among factors. The author applied Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In this study, the author collected data from hotel employees working in the four-star and five-star hotels in three major cities for tourism in Thailand, including Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Phuket. The data was collected from 461 employees from hotel industry. All data collection was completed with no missing values. The period of collecting data was three months. The author conducted the reliability analysis and found that all factors met the acceptable reliability with Cronbach's alpha greater than .8.

Results and Discussion

The return for each industry is calculated as in equation 1. The period of data collection used in this study is during January 2004 to September 2015. The descriptive statistics of the return for each industry is reported in table 1.

Table 1 reports the descriptive statistics of monthly return for each industry. The Stock Exchange of Thailand has classified all stocks into 8 industries. The descriptive statistics of monthly return for overall market is also reported. The industry with the highest average return is Agro & Food Industry with the average return of 1.3845% per month or around 16.614% per year whereas the industry with the lowest average return is Industrials Industry with the average return of 0.3673% per month or around 4.4076% per year. Meanwhile the average overall market return is 0.7696% per month or around 9.2352% per year. Table 1 provided the details of items used to measure each construct with reliability test, using Cronbach's alpha. All three constructs (e.g. employee creativity, employee performance and employee knowledge) met the acceptable levels of reliability test ($\alpha > 0.8$). In addition, the measurement items of each construct were developed and adapted from the past research studies.

Table 1 Reliability Analysis (n=461)

Factor	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items	Adapted from
Employee creativity	.935	10	Maxham III et al., (2008);
EC1. I find the new ideas for work.			
EC2. I create new ways to solve problems.			Zhou & George, (2001); Hon & Lui, (2016);
EC3. I usually think about how to improve my task.			
EC4. I look for new approach to be efficient at work.			
EC5. When there is a new problem at the workplace, I can find the way to deal with such a problem.			Hon, Chan & Lu, (2013);
EC6. I often think differently from others.			Wang & Tsai, (2014).
EC7. I think there are many ways to achieve the same goal.			
EC8. I usually find the way to achieve the creative outcomes.			
EC9. I have the ability to deal with any new problem in my workplace to achieve the expected outcome.			
EC10. My supervisor trusts my ability to solve a difficult problem.			

Table 1 Reliability Analysis (n=461) (Con.)

Factor	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items	Adapted from
Employee performance	.886	6	Sousa &
EP1. I can support my organization to achieve its goals.			Loureiro,
EP2. I can perform my duties to meet the job description.			(2016);
EP3. I can perform my task in any work environment.			Hau, Kim,
EP4. I perform better than my peers.			Lee, & Kim,
EP5. My work can satisfy the demand of the customers.			(2014);
EP6. I have received good feedback about my performance from my supervisor.			Jayaram & Xu, (2016);
			Fraj, Matute & Melero, (2015).
Employee knowledge	.910	9	Zhang &
EK1. I understand my scope of work.			Gheibi,
EK2. I know the overall process of my work.			(2015);
EK3. I understand how my work is important for the organization.			Dewett,
EK4. I know the responsibility of my roles in the organization.			(2004);
EK5. I know the basic requirements of my work.			Woodman et al.,
EK6. I understand the impact of my work to other colleagues.			(1993);
EK7. I have adequate knowledge about my work.			Birasnav,
EK8. I usually update new knowledge about my task.			(2014).
EK9. I know about the new developments in the external environment that may affect my work.			

The details of demographic factors of hotel employees were shown in the table 2. 65% of the respondents were female. The largest age group was between 31-40 years old, accounted for 40%, followed by the age group between 18-40 years old (37%). About 60% of the respondents earned Bachelor's degree and approximately 90% of the employees worked in the operational positions.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Respondents (N= 461)

Demographic factors	Percent
Sex	
Male	35
Female	65
Age	
18-30	37
31-40	40
41-50	18
>50	5
Education	
High school	30
Bachelor's degree	58
Master's degree or higher	12
Positions	
Top management	2
Middle level management	9
Operation staff	89

Prior to testing the proposed model, the author performed the tests of validity of the data to ensure that the data collected was proper to structural equation modeling technique. Therefore, the author of this study reported the fit indices, as follows: CFI, RMSEA, NFI and NNFI in order to indicate the model fit.

Table 3 Measures of the Structural Model Fit

Items	Index	Criteria
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.983	>0.90
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.974	>0.90
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	.981	>0.90
Chi-Square/degree of freedom	2.61	<3.00
Goodness of fit (GFI)	0.93	>0.90
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.062	<0.08

Source: Hair et al. (2006), Hu and Bentler (1999)

According to Hair et al. (2006), convergent validity means the ability of some measures to have convergent validity when they are highly correlated with different measures of similar constructs. Anderson and Gerbing (1988) suggested that good convergent validity

exists when standardized factor loadings of each item exceeded .40 (Lin & Germain, 2003) and all t-values were higher than the significant level (i.e. t-value is higher than 2). With acceptable fit indices, the model had CFI of .983, NFI of .974 and NNFI of .981 and RMSEA of .062. The standardized factor loadings of all items were higher than .40. The lowest factor loading was .698 and the highest was .816, indicating that all the constructs meet the criteria of acceptable convergent validity.

To measure that a construct is truly distinct from another construct, discriminant validity is used to provide evidence that a construct is unique from the other.

Table 4 Discriminant Validity Assessment

Average of Variance Extracted		Squared Correlations between Constructs	
Employee knowledge	0.543	Employee knowledge and Employee creativity	0.475
Employee creativity	0.593	Employee knowledge and Employee performance	0.487
Employee performance	0.572	Employee creativity and Employee performance	0.484

All the constructs had average of variance extracted higher than the squared correlation between all the two constructs, indicating sufficient discriminant validity for all the constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Research hypotheses

As mentioned in the introduction, the current study aimed to test the effects of employee creativity and employee knowledge on employee performance of hotel employees.

Therefore, there are two main research hypotheses as the followings.

H1: Employee creativity has a positive influence on employee performance

H2: Employee knowledge has a positive influence on employee performance

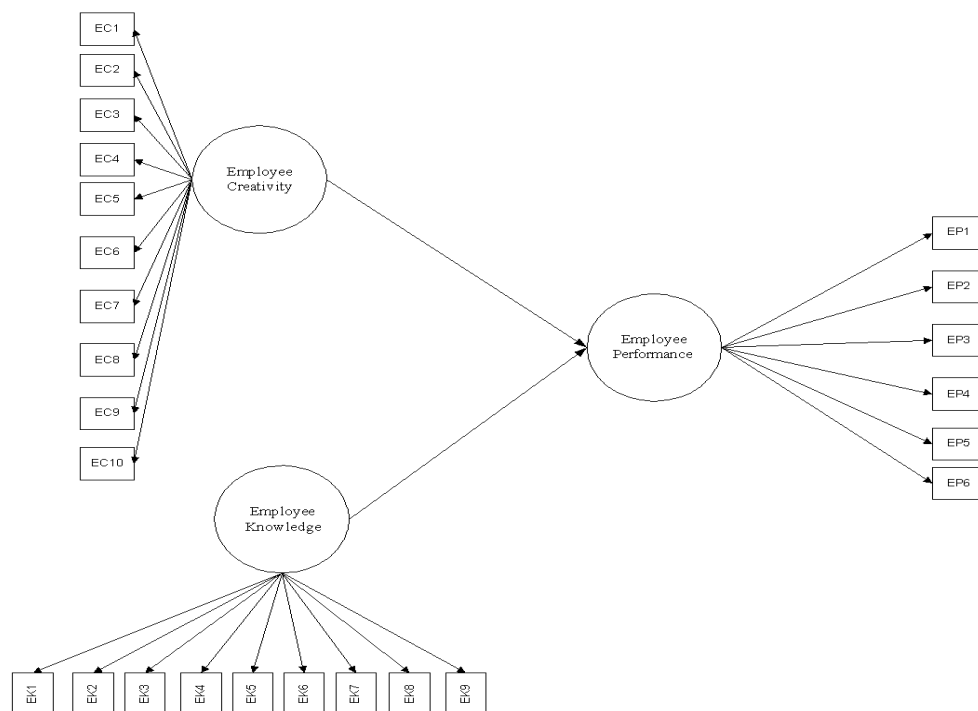


Figure 1 The Proposed Model

The results of the model testing provided that both employee creativity and employee knowledge had positive influence on employee performance. In addition, employee creativity had the higher influence towards the employee performance.

Table 5 showed the fit indices of the proposed model with the results achieving the acceptable criteria.

Table 5 The Results of Proposed Model

Items	Fit Indices	Criteria
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.976	>0.90
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	.967	>0.90
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	.974	>0.90
Chi-Square/degree of freedom	2.50	<3.00
Goodness of fit (GFI)	0.91	>0.90
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	.073	<0.08

Table 6 The Relation of Parameters and Parameter Estimates of Proposed Model

The Relation of Parameters	Standardized Estimates
Employee Knowledge → Employee Performance	.380* (8.586)
Employee Creativity → Employee Performance	.598* (10.473)

* indicated statistical significance at .05 and t-values are shown in parentheses.

The results showed that both employee creativity and employee knowledge had significantly positive influence on employee performance. In addition, the standardized estimates indicated that employee creativity had higher positive influence on employee performance (Table 6).

Discussion

The findings indicated the relationship among employee creativity, employee knowledge and employee performance. For the relationship between employee creativity and employee performance, several past studies had confirmed the relationship of both factors. Hon and Lui (2016), Yang et al. (2016), Wang et al. (2014), and Yang and Choi (2009) reported that creativity of employee can lead to the improvement of performance of employees in the team context and can enhance the performance of the organization. Moreover, Gong, Huang and Farh (2009) also found that employee creativity has a positive relationship with employee performance measured by the perception of supervisors and measured by sales volumes generated by each employee. In addition, Zhang and Gheibi (2015) noted that employee creativity has impact on creative employee outcomes or performance.

The significant relationship between employee knowledge and employee performance, supported by a number of other researchers as well. For the relationship between employee knowledge and employee performance, Jayaram and Xu (2016), Birasnav (2014) and Motowidloa and Beiera (2010) found that both specific and general employee knowledge about their jobs could affect the performance of the employees. Additionally, another research finding of (Basagliaa et al., 2010) provided that the process of knowledge generation of employee, including knowledge sharing among their colleagues, provided positive influence on the performance. Furthermore, Zhu & Chen (2014) stated that when the firms support knowledge within the organizations, employee knowledge would promote the employee performance.

Conclusions and Directions for further Research

This study had achieved its objectives in that the author found the significant relationship between employee knowledge and employee creativity on employee performance. In addition, the results indicated that employee creativity has higher positive influence than employee knowledge on the performance of employee. For theoretical contributions, based on the past literature, this research has provided the newly developed constructs of employee creativity, employee knowledge and employee performance. The researchers in related fields can adopt these constructs to be applied in their research studies to extend the new body of knowledge in the employee research field of work.

Based on the findings, a number of practical contributions can be provided to hotel managers. Firstly, the development of new knowledge is crucial for the employees and, the

hotels should continue providing opportunities for training and learning, to enhance essential knowledge to their staff. Secondly, hotels should encourage their employees to suggest new practices or new set of activities to improve the work quality. Thirdly, the managers should ensure that exchanging and sharing knowledge among employees are promoted because knowledge sharing can help develop knowledge flows and strengthen relationships among colleagues, leading to higher performance of employees.

More studies should focus on the relationship between employee learning, employee benefits and employee creativity as well as their effects on employee performance. Employee benefits can be the motivator for the employees effectively and this should lead to higher employee performance (Ko & Hur, 2014).

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Assistant Professor Dr. Chanin Yoopetch, a full-time lecturer, College of Management, Mahidol University. His research interests include employee performance, corporate finance and tourism research.

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