KEY FACTORS THAT CAUSE POOR PERFORMANCE OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES

PIMPLOY PLUANGMONTHIN

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………………………..………......
Ms. Pimploy Pluangmonthin
Candidate

....
Asst. Prof. Parisa RungRuanng,
Ph.D
Advisor

....
Asst. Prof. Pornkasem Kantamara,
Ed.D.
Chairperson

....
Assoc. Prof. Annop Tanlamai,
Ph.D.
Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

....
Asst. Prof. Kannika Leelapanyalert,
Ph.D.
Committee member

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KEY FACTORS THAT CAUSE POOR PERFORMANCE OF HOTEL EMPLOYEES

PIMPLOY PLUANGMONTHIN 5749023

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THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASST. PROF. PARISA RUNGRUANNG, Ph.D., ASST. PROF. PORNKASEM KANTAMARA, Ed.D., ASST. PROF. KANNIKA LEELAPANYALERT, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

Performance management in firms became challenges for business owners and management. Most of best practices were found to be unsustainable. Even though, the right persons were hired on the job, their willingness in performing still cannot be controlled because each person had different driving factors in performing well. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to explore factors that lead to poor performance of employees. The results were ranked from most to least influencing factors which caused low productivity of employees in a hotel in Bangkok.

The research used qualitative approach to address questions. In-depth interview was selected to explore beneath the surface of the response in order to investigate employees' subjective experience.

The study found that "conflict of self-personality with colleagues" ranked the first in influencing factors. Manager's unfairness, client's complaints, workload, lack of feedback were the following factors which affected on the employee's performance.

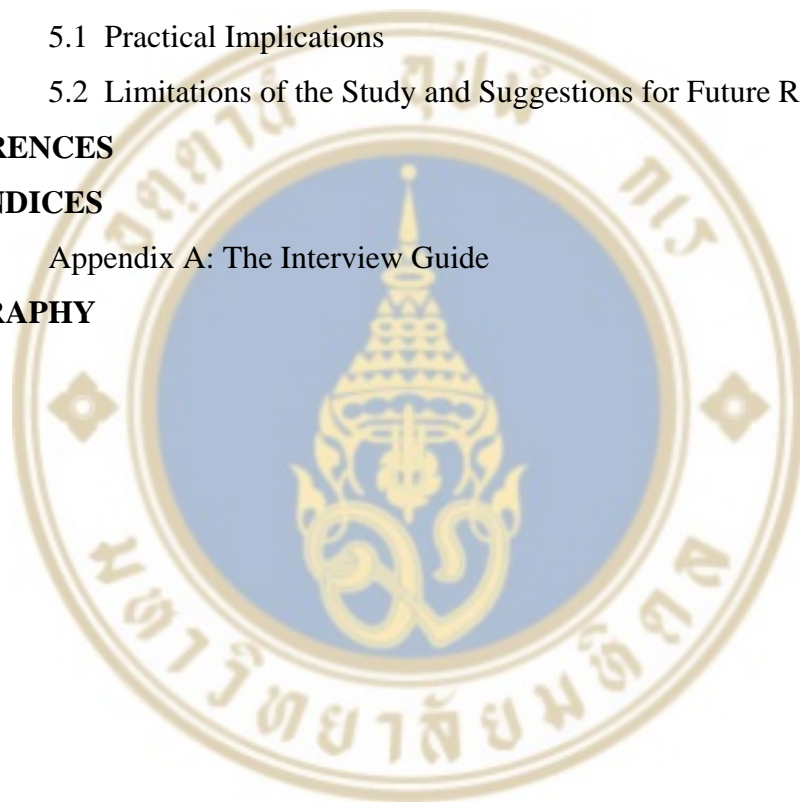KEY WORDS: Performance Management / Human Resources / Motivation / Employees / Hotel

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Most firms use various strategies in improving employee's performance however excellent strategies are likely to fail if firms do not understand the actual factors which cause poor performance. Different firms may have different working nature or factors that impact on employee's perception. How people perceive and judge things mostly based on experience and organizational culture.

Pace (2013) found that 43% of surveyed employees received same negative performance review compared to a year before. It implied that employees were unable to improve performance over a year. Managers of firms started to question why performance level had not been improved even trainings were provided. Many firms also rely on recruiting department, encouraging personnel team to ensure the right persons are recruited for the job (William, 2010). When people are recruited with right qualifications, they are capable to perform the job at the early stage. After a while, many employers found performance to be uncertain. The foundation of good performance does not only consist of job knowledge but also willingness in performing (Pace, 2013). Different employees could perform well at exceptional level according to different driving factors and reasons (William, 2010). Therefore, performance enhancement method needs to be personalized and ensured it worked with a particular person. Managers found it challenging to develop performance of employees. At the same time, they have to maintain the level of standard of job delivering in order to achieve the organizational goal.

Businesses have become more and more competitive everywhere in the world. As the employers, it is to ensure we keep our workforce talented and motivated in order to drive the business in the right direction. In Thailand, hotel industry has played important role in driving the country's economic. The industry accounts for 19% of total Thailand GDP. The fact had ranked Thailand to be number 7th in the world that employment was created by hotel industry (Chen, 2015). Hotel operators give importance to talent

development of their employees, and the salary offered in the sector is also very competitive (Chen, 2015).

1.1 Problem Statement

According to the American Society for Training and Development, companies in the U.S. spend about 56 trillion Baht per year for employee trainings. Without any following up, 90% of the skills trained will be lost within a year (Silverman, 2012). It clearly demonstrated that, most trainings need following up, and they do not result a permanent change of people's behavior. This is because when firms apply the best practices in improving employee performance, they failed to consider the actual factors behind their poor performance. Imagine when a company trains staffs to see the value of their job which could lead to better efforts. One month after the training, they start to act as what they actually are, no matter how much we motivate them. One hotel in Bangkok, is experiencing a difficult situation regarding poor performance result. Average score of performance of all employees was at 56% in 2015, which is below brand standard and benchmark. The hotel was suggested by the corporate office that proper trainings needed to be conducted as soon as possible.

However, most of best practices do not primarily influence human's willingness. Firms have no clue about appropriate emotional state of each person, therefore firms use one strategy to train all staffs. As a result, shortfalls can be found after strategies implementation. People still make judgment and interpretation based on their belief, emotion and experience. This is why performance improvement in this firm is unsustainable because no study has been conducted to investigate the real course which leads to poor performance.

1.2 Research Objective

The aim of this study is to explore factors that lead to poor performance of employees. The level of performance is an important factor that drives an organization towards future success. The result of the research would help in generating effective

performance management which does not only benefit individual's goal but with their sustainable performance improvement, firm will be benefited in a long run.

1.3 Research Scope

This research focuses on key factors of poor performance, and to find out the causes that lead to low productivity. It covers employees in a hotel in Bangkok in various departments. The degree of their performance includes average to poor but does not cover good and excellent levels as these terms would not support the study objective. The result of this study will benefit business entrepreneurs, organization's director and manager who would like to ensure employees perform at their best and work happily to pursue the organizational goal. The research will discuss patterns of poor performance for further action in performance improvement strategy applied for future success.
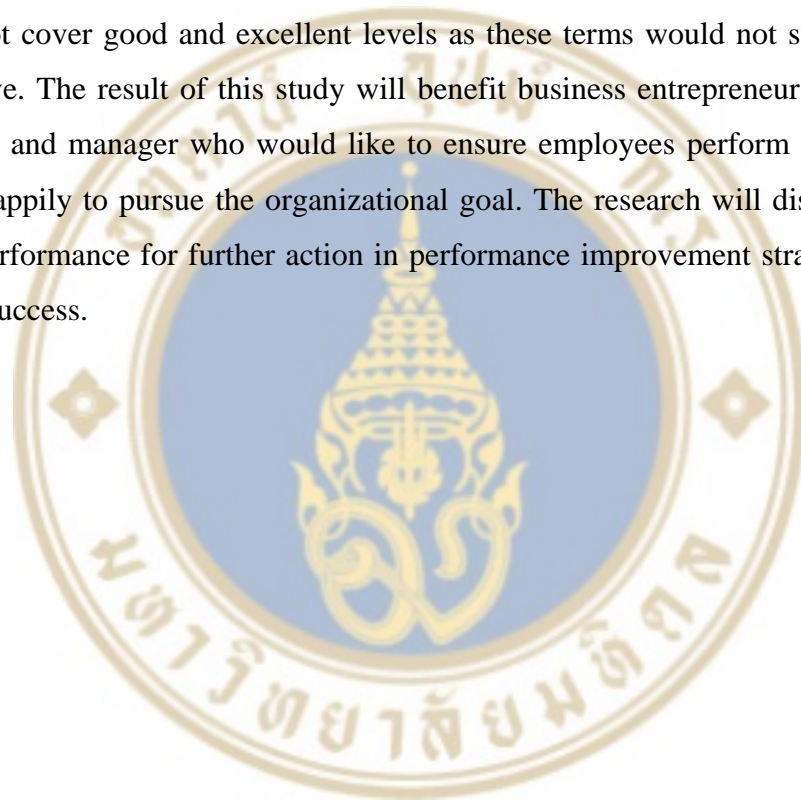
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Various researches had been studied to find out factors that leaded to poor performance employees among SME to large enterprises because firms need to ensure best practices are applied in order to concentrate on people development. This section discusses job performance term and determinants of poor performance of employees.

2.1 Definition of job performance

Job performance refers to behaviors reflected from employees and are evaluated by their organizations. Most people confused the concept with activities done by employees but they have lack of control on them such as results and productivity (Campbell, 1990). Results and productivity are the aspects that employees have limited control over such as manager's support, resources availability, job motivation and working environment. In fact, these aspects are recognized as measurement of the job done. Therefore, performance is different from these measures because it means behaviors shown by the employees regardless to effectiveness and results. Nevertheless, job performance is defined as expected behavior carried out by employees over a certain period of time set by the employer (Bullock, 2013). Performance has direct relationship employment practices, and reflected into a form of employee's contribution towards their firms.

Binning and Barrett (1989) had explained that performance dimensions were varied for particular types of job and occupation, it was developed for stand-alone measurement for specific jobs. Basically, what was counted as proficiency in one occupation may mean nothing to another because of the different expectations of particular jobs (Binning & Barrett, 1989).

Campbell (1996) had developed a research through different applicable model of job performance. Finally, it was defined it into eight components which were: job specific task proficiency, non-job specific task proficiency, written and oral communication task proficiency, demonstration of efforts, maintenance of personal discipline, facilitator of peer and team performance, supervision and leadership, and management and administration. It was explained that these eight components were not represent in every type of job; however, three of them that were essential to every occupation namely; job specific task proficiency, demonstration of efforts and maintenance of personal discipline. The approach suggested that three common components for needs assessment for firms and was relevant to performance appraisal of employees.

2.2 Determinants of poor performance

Poor performance is a situation where employees are unable to perform their assigned tasks up to firm's expectations (Strebler, 2004). The issue was considered as a big concern to managers and executives in firms as it reflected organizational performance as a whole. In order to identify if performance is considered as acceptable or unacceptable, three main methods were used to evaluate performance: objective, judgmental and personal measures (Muchinsky, 2006). Objective approach measures from quantitative count from results of work, while judgmental measures from its effectiveness. Personal measurement is used by evaluating records of behavior of that individual such as absence and accidents (Muchinsky, 2006). The measurement of performance is needed in all firms to ensure employees successfully work according to the organizational goal.

Previous studies have identified different causes that lead to employee poor performance which are inability to manage stress and pressure (e.g., Mani et al., 2010; Park, 2007), lack of job knowledge and skill (e.g., Atan & Raghavan, 2015; Saleh & Ndubisi, 2006), lack of feedback (e.g. Burke & Wilcox, 1969; David, 2013), lack of motivation (e.g. Tampu, 2015; Vagu, 2007) , lack of empowerment (e.g. Hechanova, 2006; Nzuve & Bakari, 2012), and low organizational commitment and culture fit (e.g. Biggs, & Swailes, 2006; Susanty, 2013). The following section discusses each factor in turn.

2.2.1 Inability to manage stress and pressure

Park (2007) explained that job stress led workers to be physically unhealthy and poorly motivated, causing less productivity employees could give. It generally happened when task requirement was not meet the capability of the employee. It was confirmed that job stress resulted in improper emotional responses (Mani, Sritharan & Gayatri, 2010). When they failed to respond correctly, the performance became into a stage where improvement would be needed. Dollard (1999) stated that when employees encountered job demands and workloads, and unable to endure with such situation, aggressive and violent behaviors would reflect as a result of an inability to manage pressure. Lack of control in emotion highly resulted in low participation of decision making, causing wrong choice of response towards job assignment (Mani et al., 2010). Another study of Glazer (2005) explained that stress from work caused job dissatisfaction which made people to have lower intention in self-accomplishment. This implied through their willingness to perform the job. These studies shown that an inability to handle with stress and pressure affected employee performance as a whole.

2.2.2 Lack of knowledge and skill

Atan and Raghavan (2015) demonstrated that the employees who had performances problems were because their lack of knowledge and skill on their assignment. Employees did not understand the correct ways to perform tasks effectively. The lack of right skills would stop workers to boost their productivity and deliver productive result of work (Saleh & Ndubisi, 2006). A research of Yogeesvaran (2005) confirmed that employees were unable to perform according to the expectation unless they had proper knowledge and right skills needed. Possessing right skills did not only allow employees to be productive but also allow them to eliminate loitering of the work as well (Atan & Raghavan, 2015). In this way, knowledge helped them in generating new work concepts and ideas to perform better in their job.

2.2.3 Lack of feedback

David (2013) illustrated that feedback allowed employees to adjust their behavior to be effective in their work. The approach was also used as a guideline and took employees to reach their goals easier (David, 2013). Most employees had ability

to perceive their poor performance. However, they had no improvement due to the fact that they did not know how to adjust their action correctly. It was found that employees once notified on job improvement, without any feedback or direction, they generally focused on the wrong areas (Burke & Wilcox, 1969) leading to the repeating of incompetent job performance. Even goals were set for the employees, most of the time, they failed to learn how to fill the gap during to process of reaching goals, causing them to deliver ongoing mistakes (David, 2013). Feedback from the manager allowed employees to put more effort on their work because they understood what and how tasks needed to be completed. Moreover, feedback which was delivered in considerate manner would boost employee's motivation to be higher, reflecting better performance (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004).

2.2.4 Lack of motivation

Traditional model of Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation indicated that people have different stage of needs, ranging from the basic needs to higher level of needs. It was believed that needs had direct relationship with human's motivation (Tampu, 2015), meaning individuals got motivated because they need to achieve something. A certain behavioral pattern did not occur without reason, there must be supporting motives behind an active action (Tampu, 2015). Motivator in the organization can be external factor such as money, when employees felt that compensation received did not match their contribution, they started to deliver poor performance as they lost interest in putting efforts in their work. Apart from external factors, individuals also got motivated emotionally. For example, praising of achievement, higher job promotion and more difficult assignment (Vagu, 2007). The feeling of achievement and motivation drove employees to deliver better performance (Tampu, 2015) because they saw positive effects from their hard work. Without motivation, people did not see benefits from optimizing good performance for the company (William, 2010).

2.2.5 Lack of empowerment

A study of Hechanova et al. (2006) confirmed on finding of relationship of empowerment with performance. It was found that when employees had ability to make their own decisions, and they satisfied with their job, they then delivered better productivity.

Moreover, empowerment allowed employees to remove conflicts of their role as they had full control on a particular situation. This reduced pressure causing them to make right decisions at work (Nzuve & Bakari, 2012). Another study of Mullins (2005) revealed that when employees had no empowerment, they did not have a sense of involvement leading them to see no goal, and no reason to perform well to achieve organization goal. It was also confirmed that employees did not see their work meaningful when they received high level of supervision and had no power to make decisions. Once work had not been considered valuable, individuals put no effort in performing jobs (Nzuve & Bakari, 2012).

2.2.6 Low organizational commitment and culture fit

A research of Susanty (2013) found that organizational commitment had significant effect on employee's performance. When employees felt that the goal of organization did not match their personal preference or value, they tended to deliver poor performance as they had no interest in achieving the goal (Susanty, 2013). The commitment could be derived from company's manager by rewarding employees for great contribution because in this way, employees would see that they were important and played a major role in the team. It was a form of self-accomplishment which help in motivating active manners. Moreover, a study of a Greek firm by Markovits et al. (2007) confirmed that low job satisfaction was caused by low commitment employees had towards the firms, these employees would only involve with their work without desire.

Apart from commitment, culture fit and personality issued could also be a factor that caused poor performance. Similarly, a study of Biggs and Swailes (2006) indicated that when employees' aims were not match with the organizational goal, they tended to produce low productivity. For example, employees that aimed to gain knowledge from the organization however, the firm did not focus on knowledge enhancement. This particular employees had conflict personality with the culture causing them to be demotivated in performing well. Additionally, it was confirmed that personality fit of employees had direct impact on their working effectiveness. Power distance degree was taken as an example, when firm's and employee's power distance perception

were not aligned, they affected employee's willingness in performing jobs (Adewale, 2013).

From the review of literature, previous studies described the factors that lead to poor performance of employees. These aspects are inability to manage stress and pressure, lack of job knowledge and skill, lack of feedback, lack of motivation, lack of empowerment, and low organizational commitment and culture fit. Despite, the studies were conducted from various business industries such as technological hardware company in India (Mani et al., 2010), food manufacturing in Malaysia (Atan & Raghavan, 2015), general merchandise company in Cameroon (William, 2010) and Nigerian private university (Adewale, 2013). Less research has been conducted to focus on hotel industry in Thailand. Since the hotel industry plays a major part in driving Thai economy, this study may be useful to utilize findings for the trainings and retentions in organizations. This paper aims to discuss on key factors that lead to poor performance in a hotel in Bangkok, Thailand.

CHAPTER III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to identify the presupposition to this study, research methodology needs to be identified. Appropriate research method helps to ensure the elements of this study are addressed. This section describe research design, population and sampling, data collection and data analysis.

3.1 Research design

The core element of this study mainly involves with human's subjective experience therefore, qualitative research is chosen to address the research questions. The qualitative research could provide more understanding towards a particular phenomenon rather than to using numbers received for analysis (Bricki, 2007). The approach is scientific research which investigates answers of specific questions, evidences of findings, new undetermined findings, and application of findings to the area of the study (Mack et al., 2005). Moreover, it determines perception of the chosen population in order to identify patterns of characteristic the group may have. The qualitative research is useful for the study that requires answers related to behavior, beliefs, values, opinion and perception from the particular group of sampling (Mack et al., 2005). It also gives the information of people's perception and attitude towards given issues, allowing the research to address the intangible factors. Moreover, it gives clearer interpretation of complex reality obtained via responses (Mack et al., 2005).

In addition, the answers received from qualitative research allows researcher to explore more and dig deeper into the responses. The responses would help in leading researcher to give appropriate following questions. Upon data collection, the information obtained may help in adjusting questions from what is learned (Mack et al., 2005). Some elements of the study design can be flexible, and questions may be added or excluded for the research. Based on the fact that qualitative questions are open-ended,

participants would be more comfortable in answering questions as they can use their own words to respond. Therefore, it gains involvement and engagement resulting in meaningful responses collection.

3.2 Population and sampling

The population of this study is employees who work in a hotel in Bangkok. The method used is purposive sampling whereby the information can be effectively identified via the limited resources (Hoagwood, 2014). The participants have direct experiences of the interest of phenomenon. The technique helps to focus on particular characteristics that could generate the best answers of research questions (Tongco, 2007). All of 16 participants are mixed between average and poor performance levels. Excellent and good performing group would be ignored as this research would not focus on these patterns. The identification of their performance levels are based on performance appraisal of their direct reports. They will be interviewed in depth in order to explore their perceptions and experiences towards various situations. The group aged from 21-50 years old, both male and female. Designated levels are from management to rank and files staffs. The chosen sampling group comprises of six different departments to ensure outcome is appropriate and could represent major behavioral patterns of the whole organization. The aim of this mix of level is to find out if they have shared any similar character for the different level. Those patterns may be beneficial to use in exploring the study elements.

3.3 Data collection

The selected sources of data for this qualitative research are an interview because the aim of this research explores beneath the surface of the responses. It is a study of root cause of incompetency and poor performance of employees. Therefore, it requires to investigate further for the true meanings of particular actions, it gives information insights the topic. Moreover, population's experiences, behavior, attitudes of the respondents may be complex, and require interpretation (Crinson, 2006). The interviews not only

allow interviewees to identify what is important to them, but it also helpful in gathering real stories that actually occurred (Finn & Jacobson, 2008).

The interview can be done in several ways including one-on-one interview, group interview and focus group. However, the most common type which is widely used is the one-on-one approach (Jerry et al., 2015). The semi-structure interview is applied to this study whereby major questions are used to focus on the areas of the topic. However, questions may be added or excluded during the interview session in order to obtain best possible and essential data (Gill, 2008). In order to ensure interviewees feel comfortable to provide information and express their thoughts, the interviewer needs to build good relationship before starting the session so both persons can feel comfortable with each other (Crinson, 2006).

Questions asked will be open-end and allow interviewees to express their ideas and encourage them to share underlying attitudes and beliefs (Crinson, 2006). Key questions for the interview are as follows;

1) What do you like about your work and why?

2) What do you dislike about your work and why?

3) What could have been done in order to improve your performance?

4) What make you stress and pressure?

5) Please rate your knowledge you have on your job. (Rating is in percentage 1-100%).

6) Do you think feedback on your performance is important?

   6.1) How does feedback help you?

   6.2) For no answer, why feedback does not help you?

7) Your motivation at work

   7.1) What factors motivate you to perform well?

   7.2) What factors demotivate you from performing well?

8) What challenges do you find in your work?

9) Do you like to make decision on your own and why?

10) What is your ideal type for your boss and why?

11) Your personality comparing to your team members and colleagues.

   11.1) Please describe similarity you have comparing to your team members and colleagues.

11.2) Please describe difference you have comparing to your team members and colleagues.

12) What make you continue to work here?

The interviewer is to ensure participants understand the question and aware of the information. Moreover, it is important to make sure with the respondents that all information received will be kept confidential and will be used for this study only. During the session, additional questions may be asked depend on the answers and explanation of each person. Most of the stated questions allow interviewer to explore further into their inner thoughts and reasons behind their performance.

3.4 Data analysis

As the data collection uses interview approach, and questions are open-ended, the result will be determined in content analysis approach. Contents of the interview will be systematically evaluated. The information gathering will be done by audiotaping as well as note taking. The audiotape is used to ensure information is not missed because most of the time, when we process information from what we are hearing, we could miss important points or some issues can be mistaken. The tape recording will allow researcher to replay once information needs more clarification. The first step to be done after information is obtained, is to make preliminary observation of the transcript to ensure information is clear for analysis. The following step is to identify potential patterns received from the respondents (Bricki, 2007). Answers received may be varied, but make a list of similar patterns and reactions participants had from their experience, this method is known as coding (Gill, 2008). Once answers are grouped, reaction towards those causes are to be analyzed and discussed.

CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter shows results of data collection, and characteristics of interviewees will be determined. The data are used to analyze key factors that lead to employee poor performance. The data were collected by in-depth interview of employees of a hotel in Bangkok. The total of respondents are 16 persons whose performance were at average to improvement needed levels.

4.1 Demographics Profiles of the Respondents

As indicated in Table 4.1, total respondents are 16 persons who are current employees of a hotel in Bangkok. The sample size comprises of 69% of male and 31% female. The highest percentage of respondents aged between 31-40 years old which is at 51%. 21-30 years old is at 31%, and 41-50 at 13% respectively. The representation of largest age group of 31-40 years old is considered appropriate because around 80% of employees of this hotel aged between 31-40 years old. The larger percentage of respondent earns income at 10,001 – 20,000 Baht at 63%, while 6% owns more than 30,000 Baht. This is in line with their job group whereby 63% are line staffs, 31% are supervisors and 6% are manager respectively

Table 4.1 Respondent characteristics

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	11	69%
Female	5	31%
Total	16	100%
Age		
21-30	5	31%
31-40	8	50%
41-50	3	19%
Total	16	100%
Monthly income		
10,001 – 20,000	10	63%
20,001 – 30,000	5	31%
30,001 – 40,000	1	6%
Total	16	100%
Job group		
Manager	1	6%
Supervisor	5	31%
Staff	10	63%
Total	16	100%
Department		
Engineer	2	13%
Food & Beverage	4	25%
Front Office	1	6%
Housekeeping	4	25%
Human Resources	1	6%
Kitchen	4	25%
Total	16	100%

4.2 Factors That Lead to Poor Performance of Hotel Employees

During the interview, all respondents were allowed to share their experiences and feeling towards their jobs. Patterns had been found and information from them was quite clear for further analysis.

The study resulted in four significant findings that had not been identified in the literature review. Some behavioral patterns that were found in the interview supported previous studies, while some were incompatible with the other researches. Conflict of self-personality with colleagues was the first rank. The second rank that caused poor performance was client's complaint. The third rank was manager's unfairness which was, followed by workload respectively. Apart from these four new findings, lack of feedback was considered to be an important factor which over 90% (15 out of 16 respondents) of respondent confirmed of its importance. Although, previous researchers found that lack of empowerment leaded to poor performance, but this study shown the contrast result, whereby 63% (10 out of 16 respondents) confirmed that it was not important to be empowered by managers.

4.2.1 Conflict of self-personality with colleagues

Most of respondents or 69% (11 out of 16 respondents), had concern about their colleagues' personalities and attitudes. Majority had mentioned that they had bad experience in dealing and communicating with colleagues because they had different personality, perception and attitude. The sampling group had expressed as per followings.

"My colleagues should not always give feedback to others if they cannot do well enough, I think they had different perception. I think people should keep quiet and do their job." (Male, 40, chef)

"My team sometimes does not agree with my opinion and my action, so they give negative response which demotivated me and I felt disappointed. Sometimes, they had different point of views." (Male, 28, waiter)

"Many times, my colleagues like to put pressure on me because they do not agree with my idea. They talked badly about myself and others had negative perception towards me. I feel uncomfortable to work with the team, but I do it because it is my duty."(Male, 23, chef)

"My team members are not friendly like me, and they like to separate groups and bias each other. This caused internal communication to fail, I feel that this is beyond my control and I feel bad about it." (Male, 25, chef)

"Many people in the department like to gossip each other which I do not like. They do not listen to boss's advice as well. I do not like this attitude and this made me feel different from the team. To be honest, I felt demotivate experiencing this, I do not want to come to work."(Male, 34, restaurant supervisor)

This finding clearly reflected Thai people as being collectivistic society. Being collectivist means they preferred to gain in-group harmony (Hofstede, 2011). They concern on group membership goal instead of individual. They prioritize group preferences but not personal desire (Triandis, 1995). Sense of belongings is an important factor which caused people to drive to cooperative behavior. Conflicts created distance between people causing problems on teamwork (Olu, 2005). It created negative feelings of employees which tended to give inefficient consequence leading them to perform unproductively (Mullins, 2005).

4.2.2 Client's complaint

The significant number of the employees at 63% (10 out of 16 respondents) felt that complaints from clients caused disappointment and lower down their level of self-respect. Even though they understand well about nature of hotel business, the study shows that it is one of the reasons that lead to poor performance of employees. The interviewees shared their experiences as follows.

"Sometimes, I think I do my best already but guest still complained. I lose self-confidence when guest gave negative comment about my job. If they have different preferences they should communicate to me, not only complain after I have done my work."(Male, 32, waiter)

"Guests are too demanding, I have to cook for more than 300 guests per day and I cannot remember all of their preferences. I do not like when they reprove me. Sometimes, I am so upset and would like to leave my work station." (Male, 40, chef)

"Moody guests made me feel stress. Many times, their demands were beyond my control, and I could not serve their needs. They then started to shout and gave a huge complaints to my boss. If any day, I received a complaint, I always feel depress

for the whole day. I cannot concentrate on my work, and then I made mistakes." (Male, 41, doorman)

"I feel uncomfortable being blamed by guests, it would be good if my boss could confront with guests instead of me by myself. I usually give great contribution in my work, so when guests complaint, I feel why they do not appreciate my effort. I feel demotivated." (Male, 33, laundry supervisor)

This finding also supports the fact of Thai culture as uncertainty avoidance. It is the extent which people like situations and outcomes to be predictable, and they are afraid of making mistakes (Hofstede, 2011). Additionally, customers' complaints caused negative consequences towards employees' well-being both physically and mentally (Song, 2010). They get stressed from the demand, causing their performance to be limited.

4.2.3 Manager's unfairness

Unfairness treatment from manager ranked third place in which 9 out of 15 respondents mentioned about it during the interview session. This factor had discouraged them from performing well. Respondents felt that they were not rewarded equally even they produced the same level of work. They had shared their direct experiences as follows.

"I think my boss made a judgement based on her emotion. It depends on who are close to her. One time I just forgot to clean glasses in guest room, I received a verbal warning while some staffs did even worst and they get nothing. I realized that it actually doesn't matter how potential you are, but it matters how close you are with your boss." (Female, 38, housekeeping supervisor)

"My boss never investigates before she makes judgement. I was blamed by colleagues and my boss just believed that person. I would like her to listen to me first before making a decision. This made me feel stress, and I felt like an idiot when she blamed me in front of everyone for the thing I did not do." (Female, 35, bartender)

"I do not take my manager's feedback because I do not think he is fair. He does not think I am important, he clearly treats others differently. This is my huge challenge at work because I do not know what to do to make him satisfied. Sometimes,

others performed worse but my manager never complains. He just lets it go." (Female, 27, chef)

Unfair situation leaded people to think if it was worth putting efforts. They started to question whether the organization appreciated their contribution (Markman, 2014). In addition, Priesemuth et al. (2013) found that an unfair work environment encouraged political behaviors among team members, causing employees to start delivering negative behaviors. People did not have a sense of belongings if they were not fairly treated, they began to wonder if they were a part of the organization. Therefore, it was not worth trying to put hard effort to do their job, causing level of performance to drop respectively.

4.2.4 Workload

Feeling of overworking was also reported during the interview. Workload was considered as a challenge in their work confirmed by 44% or 7 out of 16 respondents. It affected their professional responsibilities. The employees had stated as per below.

"To be honest, I think I have a lot of assignments at work. I spent a lot of time completing daily tasks and I start to question if it is worth. Sometimes, I cannot handle it and it made me feel pressure." (Male, 46, technician)

"Timing and the amount of my work is a big issue for me. My work usually delays and cannot meet with the deadline because I have excessive workload. This caused me to unable to prioritize my work as I do not know where to start." (Female, 27, chef)

"My work was too broad and required multi-tasks. By handling multiple tasks, I made simple mistakes. This demotivated me and I lose self-confidence. At first, I think excessive work was okay, but when time passed, I started to think of my life balance." (Female, 27, HR Executive)

"One part I dislike about my work is workload. It had come to my thought many times if company's compensation deserved this level of contribution. Even I received clear task assignment, it is sometimes still beyond my control, and I lost focus." (Male, 34, restaurant supervisor)

This finding indicated that workload was one of key factors that discourage employees in performing at their best. Sudden workload caused impaired performance

of employees (Cox-Fuenzalida, Hittner & Swickert, 2004). Moreover, workload had negative impact on performance because when employees handled too many tasks, they experienced work-related stress (Jones et al., 2003). As aforementioned, workload caused the respondents to feel pressure, demotivated and unfocused. Therefore, the overall quality of work was below expectation.

4.2.5 Lack of feedback

Despite the new findings stated of this study, there were confirmations from the interviews that key factors from other previous studies were valid. The most apparent factor is lack of feedback. From the review of literature, feedback from managers encouraged employees to have higher motivation (Burke & Wilcox, 1969; David, 2013; Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). The finding also showed that the respondents considered proper feedback as important for them. Some experienced shared by employees are as follows.

"I think feedback from my manager is important because it is like an advice on my job, which allows me to know more and can make things right." (Male. 39, technician)

"Feedback from my boss gives me a chance to work according to the team's goal. Sometimes, we think our work is up to the expectation, but it may not. Therefore, feedbacks would help a lot." (Female, 40, florist supervisor)

"My work can be more effective with a lot of feedback received. It works like a mirror for me. I like feedback because I can see others' point of view and can obtain different perception." (Female, 27, HR Executive)

This finding indicated that efficient feedback made employees more confident in accomplishing their assignments. It was also used to guide them in reaching their manager's expectation. With proper feedback, employees can work towards their goal easily (David, 2013).

4.2.6 Lack of empowerment

While previous studies have identified that lack of empowerment leaded to poor performance (Hechanova, 2006; Nzuve & Bakari, 2012), 63% of respondents confirmed that empowerment was not important to them and they felt comfortable to

let their managers making decision. The interviewees mentioned at during the interview as following.

"I don't like making decision because I think my boss has a better decision. My judgement could be wrong as my boss know more about work." (Male, 23, chef) *"Normally, I prefer my manager to make a decision for me because I may not know all details. I am not quite confident if my decision is right. Also, if something goes wrong, my manager will have more capability to deal with it."* (Male, 41, doorman)

The study showed that empowerment was not considered as an important factor for employee's poor performance. This implied the fact that Thailand has uncertainty avoidance culture, whereby it indicates the level of certainty people prefer to have for abnormal situations (Hofstede, 2011). They had a strong need of definite direction and advice in performing job. Besides, Robertson (2004) indicated that empowerment had negative effect on performance if employees lacked experience. It could create mistakes and unnecessary risk.

CHAPTER V
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Practical Implications

Effort and contribution of employees are the main factors that drive business toward future success. The improvement or sustainability of performance does not primarily based on knowledge of a job but other factors as well. The result showed that conflicts of self-personality with colleagues, client's complaint, manager's unfairness, workload, as well as lack of feedback are the key factors that demotivated employees to perform well.

The findings of this study provide guidelines to the hotel to implement the best practices to improve employees' performance. First, the hotel should now focus in building a better relationship among the team members in order to reduce conflicts which apparently caused negative impact on their performance. Team building activity and department meeting should be prioritized in order for employees to meet each other, share ideas, and give feedback of challenges they may have. Relaxing activity such as dinner or birthday celebration should be considered therefore, staffs could spend their time together when they are not at work. In this way, they could feel more at ease to talk with each other and would make them to understand more about their colleagues. Second, in order to handle self-sensitivity against complaints of clients, employees are to be trained more on the nature of business. They should be trained on how to deal with their emotion and benefits they can get from making themselves less sensitive. Moreover, managers should implement 360-degree feedback system, in which employees receive anonymous feedback from people who they work with (Fleenore & Prince, 1997). This is to ensure judgement from the manager is sound and fair to employees. The system does not only help in providing a fair judgement but also improves team communication. Once they learn about their colleagues' strengths and weaknesses, they can improve their interpersonal skills. Furthermore, as lack of feedback was confirmed

that it leaded to poor performance, the hotel is to ensure feedback given is specific. For example, an ability to perform particular tasks and guidelines, ensuring employees focused in the right areas. Last, workload factor can be caused by two reasons. First one is the hotel has an improper manning plan. Second one is the hotel has lack of teamwork. Improving interpersonal skills to enhance teamwork needs to be emphasized due to the fact that negative relationship among team members is one of the top factors which demotivated them to performing well (Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002). The commitment of the employees needed to be prioritized if they have to handle a lot of work. With passion and commitment they have towards their job, workload may become a minor factor of consideration.

5.2 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations and opportunities for future research are as follows. Firstly, this research was conducted with small sampling group (n = 16). If it was done with a larger sampling group, other behavioral patterns may be found. However, even no new finding is found, the study will be more sounded because the population is large enough to represent the whole organization. Secondly, as all employees are current workers, some of them may not share their exact thoughts during the interview. Thai culture also reflects their behavior whereby people feel more comfortable not to express all ideas in order to avoid conflict or contradiction. Therefore, exit interview approach for resigned employees could be considered as it would produce a sounder result. Lastly, working environment of each department can be observed. Culture of the team or department can impact on people's perception. Future studies can combine interview with observation approaches in order to study 360-degree of possibility which could affect the employees' performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Interview Guide

Introduction: this research was conducted to study key factors that lead to employees' poor performance in a hotel in Bangkok, Thailand. 16 employees were selected from various departments to investigate the issue.

Objective: it aimed to find out behavioral patterns of low to average performance levels employees, to offer the best practices in performance improvement.

Length of an interview: approximately 20-30 minutes per person.

Interview questions:
1. What do you like about your work and why?
2. What do you dislike about your work and why?
3. What could have been done in order to improve your performance?
4. What make you stress and pressure?
5. Please rate your knowledge you have on your job. (Rating is in percentage 1-100%).
6. Do you think feedback on your performance is important?
   6.1 How does feedback will help you?
   6.2 For no answer, why feedback does not help you?
7. Your motivation at work
   7.1 What factors that motivate you to perform well?
   7.2 What factors that demotivate you from performing well?
8. What challenges you find in your work?
9. Do you like to make decision on your own and why?
10. What is your ideal type for your boss and why?
11. Your personality comparing to your team members and colleagues.
    11.1 Please describe similarity you have comparing to your team members and colleagues.
    11.2 Please describe difference you have comparing to your team members and colleagues.
12. What make you continue to work here?