SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP: HONEYBEE PRACTICES AT A THAI TOURISM INDUSTRY

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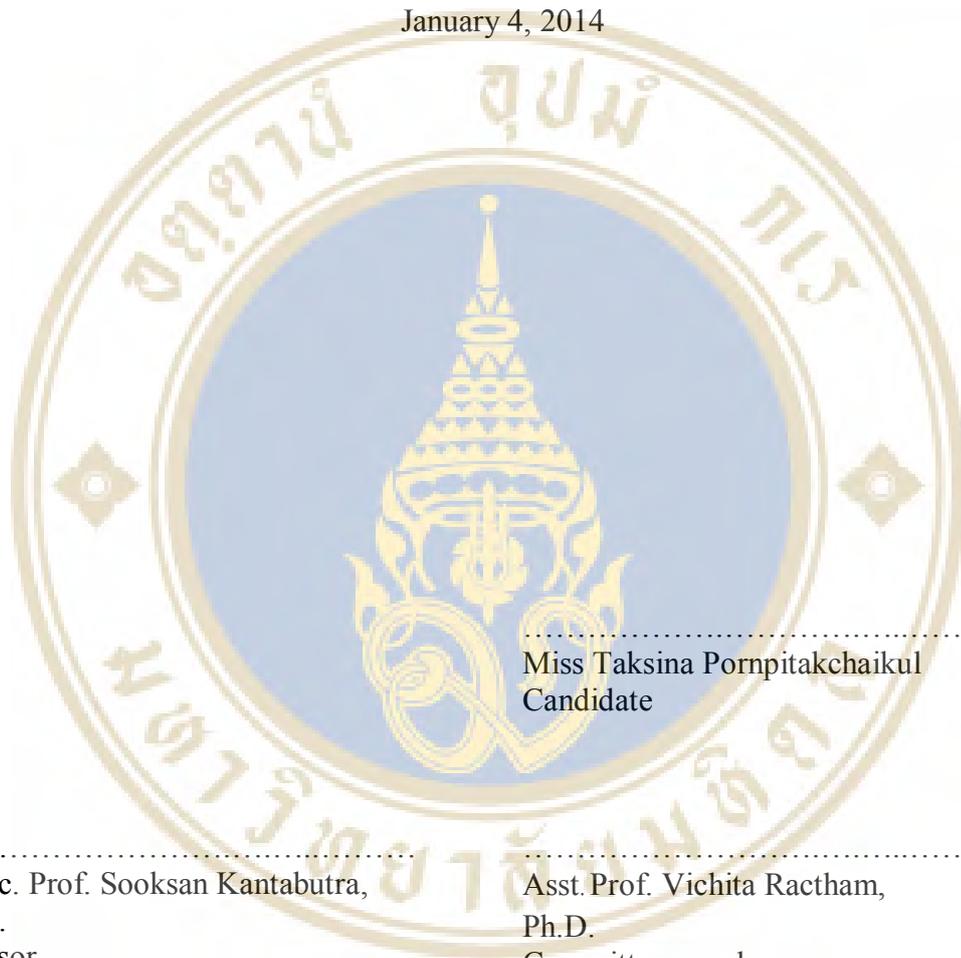
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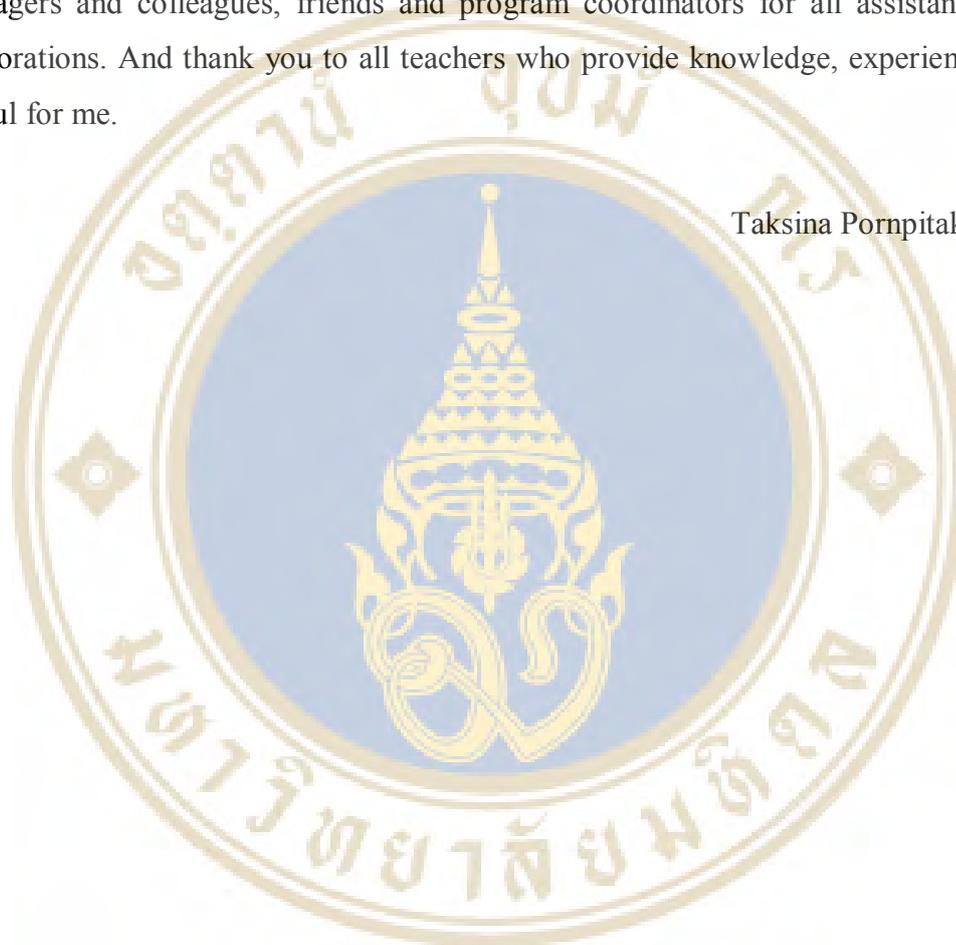
SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP: HONEYBEE PRACTICES AT A THAI TOURISM INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This paper adopts Avery and Bergsteiner's 23 sustainable leadership practices as a framework to examine the leadership practices of Thai tourism industry. Avery and Bergsteiner's principle were formed into three groups; foundation practices, Higher-level practices and Key performance drivers to analyze the company. Adopting a multi-data collection approach use in-depth interview, participant observation and taking note with case study. The 21 sustainable leadership practices are indentified and show that sustainable leadership principles link to customer and staff satisfaction and quality of product and service. This paper contains the examination of sustainable leadership in Thai tourism industry which show even in service industry can adopt the long-term, society responsible principles of sustainable leadership.

KEY WORDS: THAI TOURISM INDUSTRY/ SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP/ HONEYBEE LEADERSHIP/ RHINELAND LEADERSHIP

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Corporate sustainability has been widely discussed among corporate leaders and scholars. One of the well-known concepts, supported by many research, was addressed by Avery and Bergsteiner's Sustainable Leadership. Although corporate sustainability is an important issue, only a few approaches to corporate sustainability have been examined in the Thai context.

This case study of Thai company called Hotelbeds (Thailand) Co., Ltd., therefore, adopts Avery and Bergsteiner's Sustainable Leadership concept as a relevant approach to corporate sustainability. The case study examines business practices and determines if there is a fit between Sustainable Leadership practices and those of the case company.

Hotelbeds accommodation and destination service (Thailand) Co., Ltd. is a global business to business travel distribution partner and online accommodation and ancillary products, providing incoming travel services such as accommodation, transportation, excursion and others to travel trade worldwide. The company serves over 2,500 hotels across more than 80 countries, 1,200 travel organizers with local expertise to deliver high quality "in-destination" services to more than 5 million of clients around the world.

To determine the fit, the relevant literatures on Sustainable Leadership in Thailand are reviewed and the methodology used on identifying, collecting and analysing data on the Sustainable Leadership concept is explained in Chapter 2 and 3 accordingly. Findings are presented in Chapter 4, while conclusion and further recommendation for enhancing the corporate sustainability for the case company are in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, customers prefer high quality and good reputation when choosing products or services, likewise, company also aims to provide satisfactory when delivering products or services for long term goals, simultaneously, contributing social and environmental responsibility to the local community and creating the value among employees within organization (Strandberg Consulting, 2009). Therefore, Corporate Sustainability will be another alternative way for business to growth and maximize profit, considering in how business operates in the social, environmental and economic way. It is a business approach that creates long-term value for shareholder by embracing opportunities and managing risks deriving from economic, environmental and social developments (Wilson, 2003).

On the other hand, The Ecology of Commerce (1993) mentioned that corporate sustainability also means that company's services or products does not only compete in the market in term of brand image, packaging and etc., but also deliver products or services to customer by reducing energy use, distribution cost, pollution and other form of environmental damage.

There are many approaches applied in business model. Slaper and Hall (2011) had developed new accounting framework to measure performance called "The Triple Bottom Line", which business succeeds by monetary gain and organization's social activities. Triple bottom line more concerns on stakeholders who might be affected by a company's practices from workers to surrounding communities (University of Wisconsin, Sustainable Management). Slaper and Hall mentioned about three dimensions involving in consideration which are; Economic (e.g. income, expenditures, taxes, employment and business diversity factors), Environmental (e.g. energy consumption, natural resources and etc.) and Social (e.g. health and well-being of employee and people in society, quality of life).

Another alternative approach is Human Capitalism, which is a measure of the economic value of an employee's skill. The concept of Human Capitalism is the

equality of all employees in the business and the investment in those employees, such as education, health and well-being, knowledge and skill (Schultz, 1960; Larche, Merette and Rugeri, 1999). This concept is strongly found in Japan, many of business focuses on employees as a business-growth driving factor (Ozaki, 1991).

Beside those two approaches, in Thailand, there is one called the "Sufficiency Economy Philosophy". The main objective is aiming for a social balance, which can start from small family to enlarge to community and to the country scale. This philosophy aims for the sustainability in society in long-term perspective (Krongkaew, 2003).

Rhineland Leadership is one of business approach that can be found in European countries. This principle is a management approach based on cooperation, social justice and serving the interests of multiple stakeholders (Albert, 1993). Rhineland stressed about the long-term sustainability of an enterprise and its relationship with other groups, not only with shareholder. Avery (2005) identified 19 elements of leadership practices and applied to organization around the world. Then, Avery and Bergsteiner (2011) expanded the practice list into 23 elements called sustainable Honeybee leadership which its outcome goes above others approaches. In the light of this, Honeybee Leadership is considered the possible approach to ensure corporate sustainability in the future.

The 23 practices of Honeybee Leadership are separated into three catagories which are (Avery and Bergsteiner. 2011):

1. **Foundation practices**: these practices can be applied to all levels when selecting this approach. The foundation level consists of 14 elements; **Training and developing staff**; by developing everyone in the firm continuously even in the crisis, this involves building a relationship, demonstrating ethical behavior, knowledge and skills. Those lead to working quality, good work environment, effective in working process and customers' satisfaction. **Labor relations**; by seeking cooperation between labor and management and creating trust among both sides. These relationships include helping each other to solving problem, clearly communication; face-to-face or among of group and understanding in own role and responsibility. **Staff retention**; by paying attention, valuing for the employees' long tenure at all level to avoid layoffs. Nicole Stika (2010) mentioned that young workers,

especially generation Y, prefer to work with environmental-friendly company, so if those companies can maintain on this point, the firm will gain a high retention rate and high willingness to work. Besides working environmentally, company's reputation, performance development, Cooperate Social Responsibility and etc. can reduce turnover rate (Thornton, 2008). **Succession planning**; ensuring company has recruited and developed employees to fill the vacant position by promoting or training employee within organization rather than outside (Hoffman, 2012). **Valuing employees**; is depending on how the company treats employee including employee's welfare and well-being, and their contribution to customer and innovation. **CEO's role as a hero or Top team member**; CEO act as a hero or there is other management act as a speaker or employee's representative in term of decision making. **Ethical behavior**; "Do the right thing" as a company core value which is distilled from business strategy and translated into accepted and unaccepted action (Recardo, 2000). **Long-term perspective**; not only focusing on short-term profit growth, but also including thinking, planning, investment, work process managing, human resource, policies and stakeholder relationship (Avery, 2005). **Organization change**; company looks at the change as a process which takes time to proceed altogether with a preparation for a change in each time (Avery, 2011). **Financial market**; seeks maximum independence from other. **Responsibility for environment and social**; this is the way for company to enhance a balance of economic growth, environment and social. The interest of **Stakeholder**; this includes everyone in the community who concerns in the company's activities and ensures that **Share vision drives the business**; business's vision should be main focus throughout the organization both top level and employees. Trust, sharing and focusing on same company's vision directly helps to drive the business in the future (Avery, 2005).

        2. Higher-level practices: there are 6 elements covered consensual and devolved **Decision making**; everyone, employees and management team, in the company agrees on the decision, even though it is not the best solution for all, but as an acceptable decision for particular situation. Creating employees' **Self-Management**; then they are able to manage their own tasks. Empowering on **Team**, by developing **Trust** atmosphere through relationship and goodwill, it is also forming an organization **Culture** and **Sharing and retaining** the company's knowledge. The

elements at this level have been developed based on the relevant idea of the foundation practices. For example; an appropriate training enables employees to be self-management. Knowing and sharing company's vision helps understanding culture. Empowering on making decision can create a trust (Avery and Bergsteiner, 2011).

3. Key performance drivers: the third level consists of **Innovation**; provides different points of view which help to solve problem in different way (Makower, 2013), **Self-engagement**; employees are engaged through creating supportive, collaborative, rewarding and empowering workplace (Lovins, 2012) and **Quality**. The key performance drivers are combinations of fundamental and higher-level practices. For example; team orientation, skilled and empowered employees, company culture and knowledge sharing develop trust and enhance the quality.

From the previous study of Rhineland and Honeybee leadership concept, **Sa Paper Preservation House (SPPH)** showed strong result in people priority. The company treats employees as they are family by investing in skill training and development as well as remaining hand manufacturing instead of machine (Kantabutra & Suriyankietkaew, 2013). Moreover, company emphasizes happiness among employee as a key to producing innovative products; employees are allowed to work from home while spending time with their family. Therefore, SPPH's ultimate goal is to aim for employees' happiness in long term perspective. Not only employee are more likely to produce better product quality which leads to customer's satisfaction, but also to maintain strong relationship with stakeholders; suppliers, customers, employees and the community.

SPPH continuously helps community by promoting vacant occupation for unemployed people. It also presents the strong organizational culture; employees sharing vision, values and beliefs in term of environmental, society, innovation and ethical, which lead to low turnover rate and no layoff. Employees are encouraged to behave ethically and think innovatively for product development and organizational process in order to overcome barriers such as shortages of supply and trade law and regulations, for example, replacing whitening chemicals by ashes, using natural color from natural resources. The company enables to trade which countries of environmental laws and regulations are met. All products meet every specific detail. If

customers have their own product designs, they will be kept as confidential to prevent from customer's competitor.

Following the Honeybee leadership, **Thailand's oldest university** (Kantabutra and Saratun, 2012) focused on long-term aspect, especially development of shared strategic directions, involvement and collaboration in decision making. The university president paid attention on involving and collaborating all different levels of management team which facilitates and implemented the strategy of lower level. The succession plan is developed by planning on what skills should be filled for job assignment and on-job-training to produce a number of candidates for a particular vacancy. The university management prioritized its new staffs through an orientation program. The training and development programs are available n order to support to all staffs' levels when needed such as English language, secretary program and others. The evaluation is used to identify the individual development and performance after training program and it applies to senior management which requires leadership behavior. The university has invested in research and knowledge sharing. Ethical behavior is also a university core value to against unethical decision.

Asian industrial conglomerate has practice Honeybee leadership for its sustainability (Kantabutra & Avery, 2013), found that the conglomerate invests for long-term perspective in culture, management development, products and services and others, even though the investment will reduce the short-term profits or long-term thinking of succession planning for top-management. The conglomerate considers employees the most important factor and invests in health, providing training program, knowledge and competencies and internal promotion for employees. Top management is open to any member of the group of companies. Moreover, the conglomerate is strengthening its graduate contingent with scholarship to attend leading universities. The budget for training has never been cut-off for short-term purpose (Kantabutra & Avery, 2013). Management team encourages their subordinates for self-management, teamwork and consensual decision making with trust. There is also a corporation relationship between top management and the union.

New employees are educated on orientation day regarding company's vision, core value by the CEO personally. The management will ensure that employees are willing to share value and understand the company's vision to help business gone

through challenges, competitions and changes. The company promotes employee's engagement and collaborative working environment to drive innovation by emphasizing on consensual decision making of employees. The conglomerate aims for employees to engage and demonstrate responsibility on stakeholder's interests; environmental and well-being of the communities through company's strategy and conduct dialogues with local communities to reflects community needs.

In Thailand, honeybee leadership's practices via **True Corporation (TC)** demonstrated the importance of long-term perspective to the company. They brought up with new strategies such as creating new organizational identity, benefiting their customer and rebranding to drive the long-term goal. By investing in people such as offering competitive salaries, providing training and development program and treating as family, top management realizes the potential in helping company success in the long run. Especially in training and development programs, employees not only improve their knowledge, skills and capability for job, but also prepare for the next step of career path. TC supports staffs by paying half of tuition fee with no obligation graduation for staff whose study in TC's partnership universities and also provides scholarship for staffs' children as a reward. TC gives priority to promote staff within organization where possible by mapping with succession plan. This challenge is very difficult as it take long time of progression in development employees' capacity.

TC does not have a union, but all staff can express their concerns any time. TC's top management visits front-line employee to emphasize the core value. The organization culture consists of caring, creative, credible and courageous. The caring culture is occurred when employees need fact or more information from the organization, therefore, two-way communication is very important among employees and management. The company strongly emphasizes on teamwork to enhance creativity; knowledge sharing and consensual decision making which can bring the innovative ideas. Whenever employees' innovation ideas were selected by the company, in return and a part of performance evaluation, there will be reward. Great investment in product and services keeps True the competitive advantage and increase in Market Share, while company also avoids laying off even in the crisis. The 4 core value of organization culture, on the other hand, shows True Corporation's vision of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Company organizes some activities related to

education, energy and natural preservation and also allocates budget for their CSR activities. The company treats its employee with trust, sincere and respect to show their values contributions. Maintaining ethical behavior with the customers under motto "customer is always right", the management and employees provide quality products and services and solutions to meet customer needs.

Another case study of sustainable leadership is at **Bathroom Design Company (BDC)**. The company invested in and expanded to international market such as Hong Kong, Malaysia and Hawaii for its long-term perspective. Moreover, company offered customers the product longest warranty period comparing to its competitors. BDC prioritized its employees; resulted in high retention rate. BDC also supported internal promotion. BDC Executives are encouraged to study abroad with financial supports. Scholarship is also given to staffs' children until undergraduate studies. BDC has never laid off employees even in crisis situation. A low staff turnover rate, shared vision and values are preserved and passed to next generation of employees. For new product innovation ideas are from employees who present during "creative Saturday" activity to make advices o product improvement.

BDC are aware of environment and social well-being. For example; employees are encouraged to take care of orphans, help to build school, install bathroom equipment and donate to temples. The company's ethical standards extend to the way employees deal with stakeholders in honest way and avoid any action that lead to conflict. Also employees, who are paid above industrial standard and with an annual bonus, are encouraged to adhere to the five Buddhist commandments; abstain from taking life, abstain from taking what is not given, abstain from sexual misconduct, abstain from false speech and abstain from intoxicants causing heedlessness. In addition, company invites Buddhist monks to preach to employees.

Siam Cement Group (SCG) is another organization practice on sustainable leadership of Rhineland principle (Kantabutra and Avery, 2011). SCG's long-term strategies and plan are involved in investment for future growth such as R&D, knowledge management and employee management. The relationship between SCG's union and top management has been amicable. The Group develops employees through training by providing scholarship for studies for technical and MBA degrees. Training programs available to all employee levels, are categorized into 3 sections;

functional training, business management and leadership development. SCG has been running as team-based system with internal succession planning as opposed to relying on a few heroic leaders. Self-governing team and consensual decision making can also be observed. The organization culture is deeply rooted in shared value and vision. Innovative culture encourages employees to be open-minded, think outside the box, take risk and learn. They are treated with proper care, development, equal job opportunities, as well as offered a chance to work in different countries. SCG also boosts exchanging and sharing knowledge among employees to create relationship and enable networking of knowledge for the benefit of business. Company invests in staff and R&D in order to create value products, services and new business models. Training programs such as generate ideas with mind mapping, skills for problem solving and decision making help employees to generate innovative ideas for better products and services. Moreover, the group has sponsored some environmental and social projects in response to the stakeholders' interests. The group views competence and moral integrity as a contribution to sustainable growth and organizational and social prosperity. Employees are encouraged to be good citizens for the benefit of the community.

Another sustainable leadership is practiced to **Thai healthcare services provider** (Kantabutra, 2009). Similar to all above case studies, Theptarin Hospital (TH) adopts a long-term perspective by investing in new public education facilities, prevention of the genetic disease, which open a new market. TH pays an importance to internal promotion for example; a former receptionist became a department manager and also develops employees' skills through in-house training which available for all employees. Team oriented, shared vision and values, trust and respect for lower-level employees are the core values of organizational culture. Innovation helps TH maintaining its leadership in medical field; this encompasses for providing high quality in services and goods, sharing and managing knowledge. Social responsibility is also one of TH's core values; it serves the broader community by sharing knowledge with other healthcare institutions for clients and their families. "ETHICS" for TH are from teamwork, hospitality, integrity, continuous improvement and social responsibility as its core values.

All case studies are similar to each other in long-term perspective and investment in its employees as a key for running business. Creating ethical behaviors, they focus on social responsibility and community surrounding company areas.

Since Sustainable Leadership has gained support in Thailand as the approach for ensuring corporate sustainability and no study has been conducted in Thai tourism industry, therefore, the present study adopts Honeybee Leadership as a framework to explore business practices of business in the proposed industry to determine if they are consistence with the Honeybee Leadership. Recommendations for better improvement on business practices for more sustainable perspective will also be provided. Methodology used for the present study is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodology

Berry (1999) mentions in-depth interview is a method that is used to explore and identify new ideas and/or opportunity of new solution or ideas of particular object. The purpose is to gain elementary understanding and preliminary insights of interviewee's point of view for particular situation. Participant observation is another methodology used to collect initial information. By being a player in a group of participants and observing participant's response and behavior-taking notes; recording voiced and images and asking questions to participants- will allow researcher to gain better understanding of behavior toward particular objects and ideas (Spradley, 1980). Both methods are the effective ways to collect the qualitative data which helps business to find the problems or opportunity for particular business requirement.

Open-ended questions are used because it provides rich qualitative data to the researcher with an opportunity to get insight participant's opinions, feeling, attitudes, thoughts and behaviors. As it is not "Yes" or "No" questions, Participant can answer on their own words and not limit to their thoughts without force by choice of answers (Penwarden, 2013 and Manktelow & Carlson, 2013). Therefore, open-ended questions will help to gain more information from the open-to-all answers which can lead to further discussion and investigation in particular ideas and objects from participants (Richardson, 2000).

A list of open-ended questions is developed for different situation and different information that researcher would like to get answers from participants. These questions are provided below:

Table 3.1 Lists of question

Leadership elements	Participants	Questions
Foundation practices		
1 Developing people	HR	How does company set up training program for staffs in each department?
		What are the criteria that you use to select staffs to be a part of training?
		What are the obstacles effects or influence on training course?
	Employees	What is your opinion of company training?
2 Labor relations		
3 Retaining staff	HR	What do you think which factors effect on staf turnover rate? Why?
4 Succession planning	HR	How does the company set up or plan for employee's career path?
	Management	What are the criteria that you use to measure employee's performance?
5 Valuing staff	Employees	What motivate you to come to work in every day? Why?
	HR	What is company's strategy for workplace and working environment?
		Any rewards or motivation?
6 CEO and top team	Management	What is the CEO policies?
	Employees	How do you feel about your management team?
7 Ethical behavior	Management	What is the company strategy in working business?
	HR	How conpany concern on ethical? And how to deal with unethical issue?
	Employees	What do you think of company ethical? Please give me a example?
	Customer	How do you feel about products and services that you receive?
8 Long-or-short term perspective	Management	What is company's policies investment for long-term; services & product, marketing plan?
		How do you set up the traget for each department?
9 Organizational change	Management	How company prepare for the coming change? Please give me an example
	HR	How do you communicate with the employees regarding the change?
	Employees	How do you feel or prepare for the change?
10 Financial markets orientation		
11 Responsibility for environment	HR	What is the company policies on social (CSR) and environment?
		How do you come up with those activities?
12 Social Responsibility (CSR)	Employees	What do you think about the activities that you participated?
13 Stakeholders		
14 Vision's role in the business	Management	How do you communicate or talk with the employees?
		How do you see this company in next 10 years?
	Employees	What is the company vision?
		What do you feel about company vision enroll for the future?
Higher-level practices		
15 Decision making	Management	How do you make decision in the company? Or process in making decision?
	Employees	As a team player, how decision making inportant?
16 Self-management	Employees	How do you prioritise your work assignment? What is the result?
	Management	How do you manage your subordinate?
17 Team orientation	Employees	Do you love to collaborate with others or work in team environment? Why?
		How do you deal with the conflict if have?
18 Culture	HR	What are the company core value (team, innovation, CSR and etc.)?
		How do you practice it?
19 Knowledge sharing and retention	Management	How do you share knowledge or any update information with employees?
		How will you retain knowledge in the company?
	Employees	How do you get knowledge and information?
20 Trust	Employees	What will you do when you feel uncomfortable to work with someone?
		How do you create a trust among of your colleague?
Key Performance drivers		
21 Innovation	Employees	Have you ever help to develop any working process?
		What do you think of in-house technology?
	Management	What is the investment plan of products and services?
22 Self-engagement	Employees	Do you willing to do the extra work or help other job? Why?
		Will receommend other to work in this company? Why?
23 Quality	Customer	How do you feel about products or services quality?
	Employees	How do you concern between quality or quatity of working?

To ensure validity of the data, the probing technique is adopted. Manktelow and Carlson, 2013 mention "Probing technique" is another way to find additional information and better understand the answer from participant more clearly.

By asking probing question, researcher will get initial response from participant' answer and then use this answer to question further and further to gain better understanding and responses from participants.

Reflective note taking is also used to record observe data because to build up a memory which can be used on the day later, as taking note can help participants to recall memories and information and to avoid forgetting something (Boch & Piolat, 2005).

The sample is convenient as interviewees are separated into three groups' managers, employees and customers who are willing to participate in the study. The discussion was held at the company

Following the previous studies from Kantabutra & Saratun, 2012, Kantabutra & Avery, 2013 and Kantabutra, 2012, Honeybee leadership is adopted as the framework to collect and analyze data.

The 23 elements of Honeybee leadership can be described as follow:

Table 3.2 Honeybee Leadership practices

Leadership elements	Sustainable leadership "Honeybee" philsophy Sophisticated, stakeholder, social,sharing	shareholder-first "Locust" Philosophy Tough, ruthless, asocial, profit-at-any-cost
Foundation practices		
1 Developing people	Develops everyone continuously even in crisis	develops people selectively
2 Labor relations	seeks coopoeration	acts antagonistically
3 Retaining staff	values long tenure at all levels	accepts high staff turnover
4 Succession planning	promotes from within wherever possible	appoints from outside wherever possible
5 Valuing staff	is concerned about employees' welfare	treats people as interchangeable and cost
6 CEO and top team	CEO, works as topteam member or speaker	CEO is decision maker, Hero
7 Ethical behavior	"doing the right thing" as an explicit core value	ambivalent, negotiable, an assessable risk
8 Long-or-short term perspective	teams are extensive and empowered	short-term profits and growth prevail
9 Organizational change	change is an evolving and considered process	changes is fast adjustment, volatile, can be ad hoc
10 Financial markets orientation	seeks maximum independence from other	follow its masters' will often slavishly
11 Responsibility for environment	protects the environment	is prepared to exploit the environment
12 Social Responsibility (CSR)	values people and the community	exploits people and community
13 Stakeholders	everyone matter	only shareholders matter
14 Vision's role in the business	shared view of future is essential strategic tool	the future does not necessarily drive the business
Higher-level practices		
15 Decision making	is consensual and devolved	is primarily manager-centered
16 Self-management	staffs are mostly self-managing	managers manage
17 Team orientation	teams are extensive and empowered	teams are limited and manager centered
18 Culture	fosters an enabling, widely-shared culture	culture is weak except for a focus on short-term results that may or may not be shared
19 Knowledge sharing and retention	spreads throughout the organization	limits knowledge to a few "gatekeepers"
20 Trust	high trust through relationships and goodwill	control and monitoring compensate for low trust
Key Performance drivers		
21 Innovation	strong systemic, strategic innovation evident at all level	innovation is limitted and selective; buys in expertise
22 Self-engagement	values emotionally-committed staff and the resulting commitment	Financial reqards suffice as motivators, no emotional commitment expected
23 Quality	is embedded in the culture	is a matter of control

To adopt the analysis table from previous study, the criteria are used to analyze the data as follow: **Most Evident** means exactly like Honeybee, **Moderately Evident** means somewhat like Honeybee, **Least Evident** means somewhat like Locust and **Does not conform** means exactly like Locust.

Table 3.3 Analysis table

| Honeybee Elements on the sustainable Leadership Grid	Typical Thai Firm	Extent to Conform		
		Least Evident	Moderately Evident	Most Evident
1 Developing people: grow their own				
2 Labor relations: cooperation				
3 Retaining staff: strong				
4 Succession planning: strong				
5 Valuing staff: strong				
6 CEO and top team				
7 Ethical behavior: an explicate value				
8 Long-or-short term perspective: long term				
9 Organizational change: considered process				
10 Financial markets orientation: challenge				
11 Responsibility for environment: strong				
12 Social Responsibility (CSR): strong				
13 Stakeholders: broad focus				
14 Vision's role in the business				
15 Decision making: consensual				
16 Self-management: strong				
17 Team orientation: self-governing				
18 Culture: strong				
19 Knowledge sharing and retention: strong				
20 Trust: strong				
21 Innovation: strong				
22 Self-engagement: strong				
23 Quality: high is given				

Total elements in conformity

Legend: ? = conforms; - =does not conforms; ? = not know

3.2 Company Background

The beginning of Hotelbeds' brand in Thailand was started by integrated company named "Pacific World (Thailand)", the leading destination management company in Asia which was first established in Hong Kong in 1980, to

be a part of TUI Travel PLC in 2006. Then in 2010, Pacific World (Thailand) was merged with one of the famous inbound tour operator in Southeast Asia, Turismo Asia. In 2011, Pacific World started global operation as the MICE providers of TUI Travel. In Thailand, Hotelbeds' brand was formally announced in April, 2013.

Hotelbeds, headquarter, was founded in Palma de Mallorca, Spain in September 2001 following the acquisition of Barceló Travel Division by First Choice PLC in 2000. When TUI Tourism and First Choice Holidays PLC merged in 2007, Hotelbeds became part of the Accommodation & Destination Sector of TUI Travel PLC, the international leisure travel company. Hotelbeds is an accommodation and destination services company which provides receptive and business to business for incoming travel services to travel trade worldwide. The company's products and services comprise accommodation bed-bank, transfers, excursions, group travel, tour programs and support and also provide online reservation solutions to the customers as well.
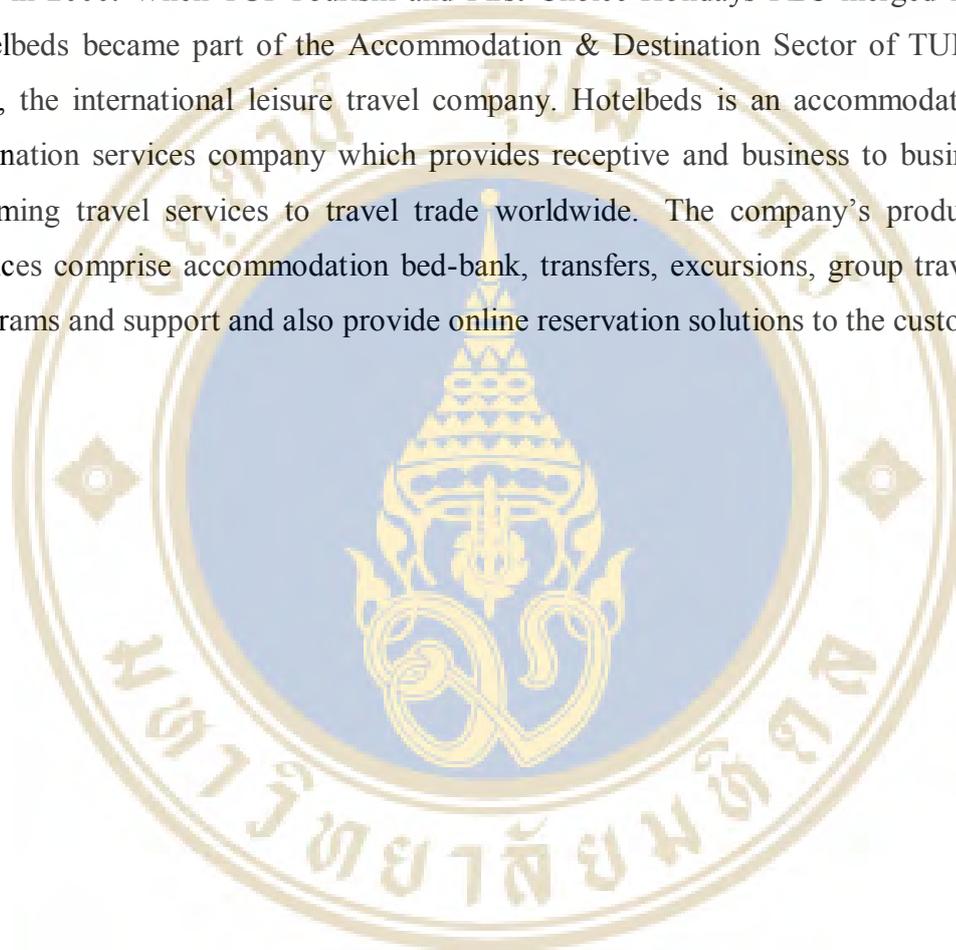
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

Finding were analyzed by using Avery and Bergsteiner's (2011) research framework and Hotelbeds' practices were consistent nearly Honeybee leadership elements. Based on the data collection, the extent to which each of 23 elements was evident at Hotelbeds for the Honeybee leadership approaches in Table 2, was shown in Table 4 using three categories: "least evident", "moderately evident" and "most evident".

From Table 4.1, developing people of Hotelbeds is considered as moderately evident. Company provides training for all staffs in order to develop their skills and improve on working process as well as increase quality of output. But those trainings will not be provided to everyone at once. Plan and set schedule for each staffs will be organized by human resource and head of department. Due to the staffs' differences in background and knowledge, supervisor needs to evaluate and identify what skills or knowledge needed the improvement for them. Parts of the training topic are from staff's specific request. Then, HR will collect from each department and process on training program. Even though, the training was set ahead, it is flexible enough to cope or adjust training schedule depending on unforeseen situation such as natural disaster, political issue and or annual budget.

Staff retention is considered as moderately evident, occasionally; mostly new staffs were taken by competitors because of better reward or working environment. Most of experienced staffs (3 years or more) in Hotelbeds tend to stay with the company due to the tie of working environment and colleagues. Even though they left, but more likely to be back, therefore, working environment and colleagues are key factors to keep employees satisfy. Therefore, each department tends to create a cozy atmosphere and also surrounding office area. Employees are treated equally for both Thai and foreigners.

Table 4.1 The result of finding Honeybee Leadership

Honeybee Elements on the sustainable Leadership Grid		Typical Thai Firm	Extent to Conform		
			Least Evident	Moderately Evident	Most Evident
1	Developing people: grow their own	✓	■	■	
2	Labor relations: cooperation	NA			
3	Retaining staff: strong	✓	■		
4	Succession planning: strong	✓	■	■	
5	Valuing staff: strong	✓	■	■	
6	CEO and top team: top team speaker	✓	■	■	
7	Ethical behavior: an explicite value	✓	■	■	
8	Long-or-short term perspective: long-term	✓	■	■	
9	Organizational change: considered process	✓	■	■	
10	Financial markets orientation: challenge	NA			
11	Responsibility for environment: strong	✓	■	■	
12	Social Responsibility (CSR): strong	✓	■	■	
13	Stakeholders: broad focus	✓	■		
14	Vision's role in the business: share future	✓	■		
15	Decision making: concensual	✓	■		
16	Self-management: strong	✓	■		■
17	Team orientation: strong, self-governing	✓	■		■
18	Culture: strong	✓	■		
19	Knowledge sharing and retention: strong	✓	■		
20	Trust: strong	✓	■		
21	Innovation: strong	✓	■		
22	Self-engagement: strong	✓	■		
23	Quality: high in given	✓	■	■	■

Total elements in conformity

Legend: ✓ = conforms; - = does not conforms; ? = not know

"I prefer to work here because I will not find the helpful colleague and cozy of working environment like this" – staff who left the company and came back again

Hotelbeds' succession planning considered as moderately evident as well. Human resource and management plan the growth for each position.

"To consider staff's performance, we use PDU (Performance & Development Update) and feedback from their supervisor, together with the occasion and vacancy that available for those staffs." – Human Resource Manager

Moreover, if those staffs lack of any skill or knowledge, HR and supervisor of vacancy position will prepare the training programs to get staffs ready for the next step of career.

The valuing staff considered as moderately evident. Staffs received benefits according to government's policies; social security, allowance, public holiday, group insurance and others. The extra benefits such as incentive bonus and staff's party on New Year are provided in order to motivate staff's passion and to encourage them to perform their best for good quality of output which are measured through meeting target, less customers' complaint and increasing of revenue.

Hotelbeds is an international tourism company, therefore, most of top management is foreigners and they act as a company representative in their based region. After employee's interview, each time of decision making, head of each department has to discuss with their subordinates before they present those staffs' ideas to further discuss in head department meeting. If those ideas were approved in the region level, they will continue in the global level. The top management in each region is people who pass the message from local staff to top management and it usually takes time. In urgent issues, one of the top level will make a decision immediately without other opinions involved. Thus, this element was considered as moderately evident.

The ethical behavior is another issue that company pays most attention. To serve a good quality, all employees have to ensure that offered product is the best in market. Otherwise, company may lose trust from clients and suppliers. As participant observation, when submitting the promotion to customers, staff needs to make sure the rate and product are competitive compare to competitors; otherwise, those offers will be rejected from manager or sales team. From discussion with sales team, in competitive market the honesty is very important to the customers and suppliers for intangible products and services.

"If we can provide them a trust and good quality of products and services, they will go nowhere. But we need to be honest and treat them well." – Destination sales team

The company focuses on long-term perspective, although the changes of season and organization will be effected on this element. *"The merging of small*

and middle business together, we need to change and adapt strategies and company's policies for the new business model to build the sustain company in future." said the management team. The collaboration and involvement from the different levels are necessary for the management team, meaning not only informing staffs, but also consulting them. This element is considered as moderately evident. Hotelbeds is focusing on the sustainability by following TUI Travel PLC, strategies to offer special travel experience for customers and to maximize economic impact to the local communities.

The organization change is also effected on this element as well. Due to the impact of global changing; technology, economic and etc., Hotelbeds requires to adapt those changes in order to survive and be more competitive in the market. New working process was created to all staffs levels, for example using new email system, working daily reports. As a participant observation, staffs resisted new system at first. But, with the timing, guide and encouragement from the management and supervisor, new system became one of working process.

Although, consideration responsibility for environment is least evident due to the only paperless project related to environmental concern, the social responsibility and stakeholder were considered as moderately evident from the interview with HR manager and employees. Average 3 times per year, HR setup "Yard sale" activity for staffs to join and have fun together. Staffs submit their unused product to HR, for sale in cheap price. The money earned from this activity will be donated to charity association. Or some department do their own activity such as going to orphan's house and teaching children to drawing and painting, HR will advertise this activity to all employees in the organization.

"The main purpose of this activity is to share happiness and let all staffs to get to know each other more." – Human Resource Manager

"We want company to organize the team building or outing to some place outside the company, nowadays, it has less opportunity to know people outside department" – Employees

From the interview, company has a limited budget for those activities, besides that the lack of staffs' corporation and time. Only low season for the industry

is suitable to organize the activity, but not all staffs can participate as work loading and staff refusal.

Sharing company's vision is considered as least evident because employees rarely know company vision and mission. Monthly meeting, updated information and working performance are the only sharing information. There is no emphasis mission or vision in the meeting or in workplace, only providing in intranet channel, which most of time, employees use relevant functions for work not for communicating with the top management.

As mention in top management element, the department structure is a horizontal and bottom to top. Most of decisions concerning with employees, supervisor will discuss with their subordinate then present to head of department to find out the better solutions to apply to all employees. However, if there is big projects or working process that concern to other region, top management is a person who makes decision. Employees can express their thought later on by using suggestion box. This element was considered as moderately evident.

Self-management is considered as most evident. From the participant observation and interview with management and employees found that employees are fully managed their work and set their own priorities.

"I do not mind what employee will do with their assignment, as long as all assignments are met the deadline and the output needs to be perfect. I found this strategy work efficiently for the staffs. When they were not controlled, the result was better and they have more confident and responsibility on their tasks." – Head of department

The employees also feel more comfortable to work on the given or daily tasks than before. As employees are given a trust to do work, so they tend to do best to complete them.

"I feel more comfortable to work on my daily tasks as no one forces me to finish the job. I will know myself what will happen if I break their trust and I cannot complete the tasks. So I feel good when I can organize my own tasks." –Employee

There is the most evident on team orientation element as it is the company core value. Teamwork is very important as it needs collaboration from all staffs in order to present the outstanding performance to customers compare to

competitors. This collaboration also requires both local and global scale as customers are from worldwide destination that needs staffs to corporate with oversea sale and local team to serve the needs. For example; contracting department finds products to fill in company portfolios, sales teams offer the products to customers, reservation department makes a reservation and provides a local destination services, then, accounting department organizes on payment.

"In my point of view, work as a team can provide an effective output." *– Supervisor*

"I prefer to work as a team and collaborate with others due to the result of assignment is better than working alone. We also do a brainstorming, find out the solution to solve problem together." – Employee

The company culture must be addressed in the company's vision and value. All employees of the company should be directed to single direction or vision. However, company's vision is not communicated throughout organization, only at management level. Therefore, this element considered as moderately evident.

"We try to communicate the company core value to all staff by considered the core value to be one of the evaluation criteria." – Human Resource Manager

Other core values of Hotelbeds are customer oriented, proactive and positive thinking, responsible leadership; honesty and open communication and result oriented. These core values are indicators of staff's performance.

The moderately evident sharing knowledge and retention were found in the company. From every training section, the document was saved in company share drive, every staff can access and view documents they want, but restrict to confidential information. As a participant observation, if there is any interesting information, head of department will share to every staff by sending emails for organize the training course.

"I love to share the information and experiences I have to my subordinate because it might help my staff to improve their working process to be more effective."- Head of department

Occasionally, training course is more effective than sending email or save document in shared drive since all staffs must participate. However, the time limitation could be the obstacle of learning.

Creating trust atmosphere is necessary for employee. In self-management element, a trust for employees to work by themselves will result in better performance and development on their skills and thought.

"As a seasonal business, we need to run the business every day, non-stop, on-the-job learning or training will be a suitable way to practice staffs and they can learn from the mistake. I always give my trust to my subordinate and let them go on their own if they need help or support, they will come to me. From this strategy, the output is better than monitor their work and also save time."- Manager

An online business, the innovation is considered as a business driven. New technology and new working process tool always popup and provide to all employees.

"There is too much working tools to use at once and I do not know which one is better and suitable for the daily task as there is the new tools came out every 2 months."-Employee

Working process is improved to be faster with the online tools; employee needs no manual report, only record date in the system. But the incomplete system causes staff to do double work. So the innovation is considered moderately evident.

The moderately evident result in self-engagement is concerned to team orientation element as company's target is separated into individual and company's target. From the evident found in the company, customer and supplier's email need to be responding within 24 hours, once, the individual target is met, but not company's, supervisor will assign emails to subordinate and staffs will help each other until finish.

From all above elements are linked to the quality of products and services that provide to customers and suppliers. Developing staff and retaining them are considered as a key driving for business, giving trust and teamwork also help to improve the products and services.

"We measure our quality from the production report which is increasing in every year. The staff was practiced to analyze the information and

consider what they need to do next with their job to develop their quality of result."-
Head of department

"Corporation with local team provides a better outcome to the customer, as local team needs to be confident in the product they offer to us is the best." –Sales team

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

From the previous chapter, Hotelbeds' practices are close to Honeybee leadership elements. But there are some different points which will be discussed following Honeybee framework and previous studies.

In comparison the developing people element of Hotelbeds with previous case studies found that the training programs at Hotelbeds is not continuously provided to all employees because of the budget and business seasoning which can be organized training program only in low season period. If there is any unforeseen situation, the training budget might be cut-off. But the conglomerate case study, Kantabutra and Avery (2013) considered employees are most important asset as company invests heavily in employees' development to improve their health, knowledge and competencies and the training budget has never been cut for short-term objective. A middle business such as Bathroom Design Company also supports its employees for knowledge and skills training.

Hotelbeds does not have the labor union which is similar to Theptarin Hospital, Bathroom design, True Corporation and Sa Papers Preservation House, unlike other big companies such as SCG and the conglomerate. The labor union will cooperate with top management for employees' benefit.

In term of retaining staff, Hotelbeds and all companies from previous studies show their strategies to keep good performance both employees and management team. For example; True Corporation also treats its employees as a family and offers competitive salary, the evident shows as one manager almost quit job, but he got a satisfactory compensation package. Bathroom Design has no laid-off policy. Sa Paper House allows employees to work from home as it brings happiness to its employees. Hotelbeds creates cozy and friendly atmosphere in workplace.

Hotelbeds has planned for its employees in career path as one of strategy of business success in order to retain and reduce turnover rate; similar to other companies. Succession planning is the key of employee development by providing training programs and development skills in order to prepare them for next step of career path. Not only big companies as True Corporation and SCG, but also small and medium companies as Thailand University and Bathroom Design Company prefer to promote its employees internally.

Hotelbeds, provides reasonable benefit for each staff as mentioned in finding which is similar to case study companies. However, True Corporation and conglomerate group support their staff's education include staff's children in order to create staff retention rate, moreover, the education is another way to develop and improve staff's skills and knowledge which can benefit company in the future. Comparing top management between Hotelbeds and others, it shows that in Asia business, a heroic CEO plays an important role in the business in term of decision making, but may also upset other in top team. In conglomerate group and Thai university shows least evident in this element due to the role of CEO does not clearly see. However, Hotelbeds' top management plays as speaker role which provide quality of decisions when several people contribute together.

Ethical behavior is the important factor that every business pays attention to. From the previous study, ethical behavior gives advantages for the business than its competitors and also leads to CSR activities that care for society, environment and communities. Like SCG encourages its employee to be good citizens for community benefit. Activities related to society, Bathroom Design Company encouraged employees to take care of orphans or build school to the communities; on the other hand, Hotelbeds does not organize formal activities but donation. Hotelbeds focuses on honesty of employees and avoids any action that lead to conflict to stakeholder which similar to Bathroom Design.

Hotelbeds focuses on long-term perspective, but in moderately evident level whereas other case study companies are in most evident level. Although, company has strategy for its long-run of business, because of the seasoning business, Hotelbeds emphasises more on high tourism season as company can generate more profits and less shares vision with employees, whereas, the conglomerate group has

most clear evident for long-term by investing in research and development to improve its products and services. Succession planning is developed for long-term strategies in every company.

Organizational changes at Hotelbeds are considered as work process, but with less sharing company's vision and value. Resulting, this change is not 100 percent effective comparing to others business like True Corporation and conglomerate which top management shares vision with employees directly.

Decision making for Hotelbeds and previous case studies is mostly considered as moderately evident, but this element does not show at Sa Paper House, which runs business by only one owner. Hotelbeds has a horizontal organization, management team sit on the same floor with employee, which employee can go directly to discuss or consult with.

Hotelbeds considers self-management is very important; staff has fully organized and set priority on their job themselves. Supervisors and management are their consultants and assistants. Similar to others previous study, this element is considered in moderately evident, due to paying respect to seniority in Thai culture. Employees are not empowered enough decision making and controlled by managers or supervisors. Team Orientation is presently focused in many businesses as it is one of core values for Theptarin Hospital and Hotelbeds. The conglomerate also encourages self-governing team and consensual decision compare to Sa Paper House did not mention on team oriented.

Organizational culture in previous studies presented strong sharing value and belief to its employees in order to create special workplace atmosphere. But Hotelbeds has no significant evidence to show strong culture like others due to less sharing vision and value to employees. Knowledge sharing element, Hotelbeds' management has shared some information related to work process to all employees. While other organizations; True Corporation, University, provide information and knowledge to all level of employees not limit for one group only. Creating trust atmosphere in the workplace from self-management and team orientation, comparing Hotelbeds to Thai University, the conglomerate group and True Corporation, is similar by providing trust to its employee, while the rest companies do not mention.

Hotelbeds invests in products and service innovation for business competitive advantages by developing system and working process. Employees can submit their ideas to supervisor or management directly which is similar to True Corporation. Bathroom Design Company encourages its staffs to show or sharing ideas in "creative Saturday". Similarly, all studied companies have focused on the innovation by investing in research and development sector. A happy employee and team orientation at Hotelbeds help to create self-engagement; employees are willing to help team and colleagues to achieve the target together, found in Thai University, the conglomerate and True Corporation. Every company including Hotelbeds focus on quality output; products and services, effective work process and quality in its employees, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

5.2 Recommendation

The present findings provide important managerial implications for tourism industry in Thailand. Hotelbeds management can firstly adapt the Honeybee Leadership framework to examine its own leadership practices and to determine where should be adjusted. As in Figure 1, the 23 practices are categorized into three groups as: foundation practices, higher-level practices and key performance drivers. Honeybee foundation practices can be implemented at any time in organization. The higher-level practices rely on the existence of foundation practices. The key performance drivers, serve customer experience, are combination from other practices.

From the findings indicate that there is three elements get most evident which are self-management, team orientation and quality. The suitable recommendation for Hotelbeds is to continuously maintain the strategies for these three elements.

16 of 23 elements are considered as moderately evident. To ensure sustainability, Hotelbeds should emphasize on developing all employees to improve their knowledge and skills similar to Asian conglomerate by keeping employees development through training program even in crisis. The program can be different according to staff levels, but all employees should receive proper training program. Maintaining retention rate, company can follow no laid-off policy from Bathroom Design or offering competitive salary and benefit from True Corporation, but by

offering better salary may not enough to maintain retention when competitor offers better benefits. Moreover, succession planning helps creating sustainability by promoting staff within organization rather than outsider. Valuing staff is recommended from True Corporation by offering additional benefit such as scholarship for employees' children or staff own education, this also helps to improve their knowledge and skills. Top team speaker can be developed in multinational company, but in Thai culture, there still have a high power distance and respect to seniority.

To raise ethical behavior, company should encourage its employees to participate in CSR activities. It may be difficult during high season, but can be organized during low season. Following SCG in supporting numerous environmental and society projects. Also being honest and trying to avoid conflict to clients, Hotelbeds will be in an ethical manner. Instead of focusing on short-term profit on peak season, company should focus more on long-term by investing in products and services development. Moreover, company should keep changing as a work process and continuously. Consensual decision making can be developed more, but in Thai culture, employees still need top management to assist in decision making. Hotelbeds should also emphasize on sharing core value and knowledge to increase retention. From self-management and team work is creating trust and self-confident to employees, then, self-engagement will be follow. Innovation is also develop by creating or brainstorming idea together among staff and management team as they can speak out during team meeting or other activities like "creative Saturday" from Bathroom Design.

The less sustainable concept of share vision for future business is evident in Thai tourism. To ensure sustainability, whenever meeting has setup management should emphasize on company vision and core value to all employee.

5.3 Conclusion

Overall, Hotelbeds' management practice closely fit the 23 Honeybee Leadership principles. The analysis shows that 23 elements can be observed in organization's behaviors and interview with people who work for the company. The analysis shows agreement on 21 out of 23 elements; it shows that private firm can

adopt Honeybee Leadership criteria for its sustainability. The three practices were found to be strongly evident within Hotelbeds, currently company appears to strongly in self-management and team orientation which can create trust among employees and bring quality of work outcome to serve to customers and reach company target. Sixteen elements were not most evident at the company. Developing people and social responsibility are difficult to organize due to the seasonal business due to employee trend to be busy all the time to prepare product for coming season. A succession plan is developed for employee's career path and personal improvement to increase staff retention rate by collaboration between HR and supervisor in each department.

There is no strong evidence to support environmental activities and vision's role in the organization. Normally, top management communicates through employee via HR and Head of department team. A non-direct or one-way communication can provide incomplete and misunderstand message, even there is information sharing via company's intranet. In term of environmental responsibility, there are no explicit approaches to continuously develop and protect environment surrounding the company. Therefore, environmental responsibility is considered as least evident.

The result of this study suggest Thai tourism industry to sustain their organization and business by adopting 23 elements sustainable leadership, develop by Avery and Bergsteiner, to guide the sustainability of organization. This leadership framework provides the management to examine their sustainable practices and adapt them to become more sustainable. The result also leave the way open for future study to similarity examine other tourism industries in other countries.

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