The Effect of Governmental Training on Achieving the Training Process Objectives in the Hospitality Industry

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Abstract

The quality and quantity of HR is an asset to any organization, and as a result, training in general has become an issue that has to be faced by every organization. This study, therefore, sought to determine the effect of governmental training on achieving the training process objectives in the hospitality industry, an evaluation study in 5- & 4-stars hotels in Alexandria as a case study. The research was intended to determine the role and effect of government training on employees, with an emphasis on the lower and middle-level staff and the HR hotel managers, who were randomly selected. Two questionnaires were designed using structured questions to collect primary data from employees of participation hotels. Personal interviews were held with some management staff of the organizations. The results indicated that hotels' employees may not be well informed about training and development programs in the organization. Most of the employees were of the view that training and development were effective tools for both personal and organizational success. The findings revealed that training practices, methods and activities at hotels are not in line with the best practices regarding the planned and systematic nature of the training process as is generally known.

Keywords: Strategic Human Resource Management, American Hotels & Lodging Association, Food and Beverage, HACCP, Sales and Marketing

1. Introduction

In recent times, countries of the world are becoming menacing aware that increasing economic growth is not only due to new technology or combination of factors of production only but also the development of its manpower resources. The human side of an enterprise is an important component of an organization, where the enterprise can obtain the best of human capital for effective organizational performances (Perrewe and Kacmar, 1991; Anao, 1993; Gravin, 1993; Wesley and Badwin, 1994; Gray and Iles, 2001; Desser, 2002; O'Connor and Mangan, 2004; Espedal, 2005; Akinyele, 2005; Russ, 2005).

Human Resources have played a significant role in the economic development in most developed countries such as United States of America, Britain and Japan among others. It can, therefore be concluded that a developing country like Egypt, with its rich natural resources and the necessary financial support can also experience such economic success if the appropriate attention is given to the

development and training of its human resource. It is thus seen that in Egypt the government is taking adequate steps to ensure that people acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.

Governments that desire to be effective are increasingly realizing that of the varied factors contributing to the attainment of set goals and objectives, the human resource is the most critical. Physical assets, such as facilities, products and services or technologies can be cloned or imitated by another organization. Human assets cannot be duplicated and therefore, becomes the competitive advantage that an organization enjoys.

How well an organization performs its mission and accomplishes its goals of program service delivery is of paramount concern. Improving administrative capacity and especially, those aspects dealing with human resource offer the most challenge for improving organizational effectiveness. Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) enhances employee productivity and the ability of government agencies to achieve their mission (Jules and Holzer, 2001).

The provision of secondary and technical schools, vocational training institutes and colleges, professional and tertiary institutions, as well as the educational reforms currently taking place in the country, are all geared towards the acquisition of skills and knowledge to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in our workplaces.

With these efforts by the government, it has become necessary for organizations to provide long and systematic training and development programs for its employees. This is because every aspect and activity of an organization involves people. For instance, a manager in an organization will not be successful until he has subordinates beneath him who are well equipped with skills, talent and knowledge (Laing, 2009).

One of the reasons for the tremendous emphasis now placed on manpower training is derived from the current realization that human resources available to an organization constitute the organization building blocks. Despite this awareness, many of the training programs are not sufficiently supported by organizations and the required investment is sidelined.

Training is of growing importance to companies seeking to gain an advantage among competitors. There is significant debate among professionals and scholars as to the affect that training has on both employee and organizational goals. One school of thought argues that training leads to an increase in turnover while the other states that training is a tool to that can lead to higher levels of employee retention (Becker, 1993; Colarelli&Montei, 1996). Regardless of where one falls within this debate, most professionals agree that employee training is a complex human resource practice that can significantly impact a company's success.

The training industry has shown significant growth through the years. Statistics indicate that investment in training is continuing to grow as more and more companies realize its importance. In1995, $7.7 billion was spent on the wages and salaries of in-house company trainers and $2.8 billion was spent on tuition reimbursement (Frazis. et al, 1998).

Training can have a considerable influence on company finances as there are several potential training costs that companies may incur. One type of training related cost is direct cost. This may include instructor salary, materials, and follow-up supervision (Armstrong, 1999). A second type of training related cost is indirect cost. These costs are related to worker output and productivity during and upon completion of the training. Along these lines, once a training program is completed, worker productivity is expected to increase. The benefits will be to the company, due to an increase in worker output and productivity, and to the worker, as the increase in output should translate into higher wages and opportunities for career advancement. In general, a company will weigh the costs and returns to training to determine the amount of investment it will incur (Kaufman & Hotchkiss, 2006).

Therefore, study hypotheses are constructed as follow: -

H1: There is a significant relationship between hotel needs determined by the HR manager and training programs contents.

H2: There is a significant relationship between training programs contents and trainees' satisfaction.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the gained employees' skills after training that was matching with job description and HR hotel managers' satisfaction.

H4: Training and development activities in the hospitality industry are however planned and systematic

2. Study Objectives

The aim of this research is to analyse the effect of governmental training on achieving the training process objectives in the hospitality industry. As a result, this research determined the role and effect of government training on employees, with an emphasis on the lower and middle-level staff and the HR hotel managers, who were randomly selected. More specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

- Assess the training needs at 5- & 4-stars hotels in Alexandria at the lower, middle level staff and the HR hotel managers
- Explore relevant training methods that can be adopted to help employees to grow within the organization.
- Identify potential challenges for 5- and 4-star hotels in Egypt.

3. Methods

The target population was hotel employees from four-star and five-star hotels in Alexandria, Egypt comprising front office staff, kitchen staff, service staff, housekeeping staff, human resource and management staff. The representation of various departments was important in sample selection as they might reflect different communication climates existing in each department. The data were collected during the period from July 2019 to July 2020.

There were 14 hotels in Alexandria, 7 of them were five-star hotels (only 6 hotels agreed to participate) and 7 were four-star hotels.

Table 1 Total number of trainees according to the type of training

NO	Training program title	Total number of trainees	Percentage
1.	F & B	200	16.13
2.	Management Skills	120	9.68
3.	House Keeping	190	15.32
4.	Front Office	80	6.45
5.	HACCP	230	18.55
6.	Steward Skills	170	13.71
7.	Qualified Hospitality Trainer	250	20.16
	Total No.	1240	100

Source: ministry of tourism

The sample size was 260 employees, accounting for a percentage of 26% from the total population and 13 HR hotel managers (100% response rate) over the last 3 years (2009-2012). A total of 260 questionnaires were distributed and 205 usable responses were successfully obtained for data analysis (79% response rate). The sample included full-time operational employees and those that hold supervisory positions.

Random sampling (Bryman, 2004) selection method was applied by contacting hotel human resources (HR) managers in 4-star and 5-star hotels in Alexandria, Egypt and coordinating with them that questionnaire distribution reaches equal proportions of employees within the three job levels (managers, supervisors, entry level employees) and among front and back of-the-house departments. Front-of-the-house departments included Front Office, F&B Service and Guest Relation, while back-of-the-house departments included Housekeeping & Laundry, Kitchen, HR, Finance and Engineering. Besides the help they offered in

the distribution process, HR managers participated in the survey as managers in one of the "back-of-the-house" departments.

1- For employees' questionnaire, in all 260 employees were administered with the questionnaires even though only 205 filled and returned their questionnaires.

2- For HR managers' questionnaire, 13 questionnaires were successfully filled and returned.

Relying on the previous related studies and the theoretical framework, the employees' questionnaire survey was designed which contained two sections to collect data from respondents about the following points.

1.   Basic demographical data – items 1-9 was expected to provide an answer to the age, gender, educational background, employees' position in the hotel, years of working for the hotel, information on training programs since employees joined the hotel and objectives of attending the training. The purpose of this section was to see how closely the sample represented the known population of hotel employees in Alexandria.

2.   The second section (B) provided information on training and employee performance. These parts altogether comprised a total of 50 items.

Items 10-11 of the questionnaire were to elicit information on preparation period of the training programs. Items 12-17 of the questionnaire were to elicit information on the role of the facilitator in delivered the training objectives. Items 18-22 were to elicit information on training facilities. Items 23-27 were to elicit information on the role of the trainer. Items 28-40 were to elicit information on content delivery. Items 41-50 were to elicit information on the general goals of the training and satisfaction.

The questionnaire questions were (open ended) to provide alternative answers to respondents in addition to a few open questions to give respondents the opportunity to express their opinions without an alternative to guide their answer, also five-Likert scale was used to measure trends. These items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (Bond & Fox, 2007).

4. Results

Quantitative data analysis was done using (SPSS) software ver.19 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The technique for quantitative data analysis was the frequency distribution and percentages, which were used to determine the proportion of respondents choosing the various responses. This was done for each group of items relating to the research hypothesis.

By testing study hypotheses, the results indicated that:

- There is a significant relationship between hotel needs determined by the HR manager (independent variable) and, training programs contents (dependent variable).
- There is a significant relationship between training programs contents (independent variable) and, trainees' satisfaction (dependent variable).
- There is a significant relationship between the gained employees' skills after training that was matching with job description (independent variable) and, HR hotel managers' satisfaction (dependent variable).
- Training and development activities in the hospitality industry are however planned and systematic.

Table 2 Training and development activities in the hospitality industry are planned and systematic (employees trends)

Instruments Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Training and development activities in the hospitality industry are planned and systematic.	49	23.9	75	36.6	74	36.1	5	2.4	2	1.0

Table 3 Governmental training is well-planned and systematic (HR trends)

Instruments Statements	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Governmental training is well-planned and systematic.	0	0.00	2	15.4	9	69.2	2	15.4	0	0.00

Based on the above results, table (2) showed that the majority (36.6%) disagreed, (23.9%) strongly disagreed, while (36.1%) agreed that it may be, (2.4%) agreed, and (1.0) strongly agreed. Comprehensively, results on table (3) also showed that the majority (69.2%) agreed that it may be, and there was an equal percentage (15.4%) between those who agreed and those who disagreed.

Results showed that training and development activities in the hospitality industry may be however unplanned and unsystematic.

However, according to the training managers the processes involved in training were not duly followed because of the costs associated with it. They stated that training at hotel was not as planned and systematic as they would have wanted to have it. They indicated that budgetary provisions for training are always below expectation. The training policy gave the general direction, provided guidelines and informed employees of training and development opportunities available. Employees certainly cannot take advantage of the opportunities offered by a policy whose existence they were not even aware of.

5. Discussion

There are increased levels of downsizing and unemployment in many sectors, particularly within the tourism and hotel industry that has encountered several challenges in facing the dramatic decline in accommodation and was adversely affected after 25th January revolution. (Zalaky, 2011)

The two major issues regarding local and international private organizations are their increasingly high rate of staff turnovers and the ineffective performance. It is due to the dissatisfaction encountered by employees and negligence of senior managers in motivating their staff. Keep the employees and volunteers motivated is slightly a difficult task due to various reasons.

Both non- profit and profit organizations are facing challenges requiring them to motivate employees to a higher degree. Challenges of employee motivation are triggered due to various reasons such as low job salary, complex environment, ambiguous duties, job insecurity, and most importantly few orientations as well as required on and off job trainings desirable to execute the job/tasks efficiently (People in Aid, 2007).

Hotels will need to take action to correct its training and development activities, and make sure the processes involved are duly followed. This makes continuous training and development of its human resource crucial and vital, taking into consideration the rapid technological advancement. This research mainly aims at determining the effect of governmental training on achieving the training process objectives in the hospitality industry using 5 and 4-star hotels in Alexandria, Egypt as a case study. This goal was achieved by studying the correlation between most important elements, and by studying some of respondents' demographic characteristics.

After testing the previous hypotheses, the hypotheses indicated that hotels had a training policy which was fashioned to achieve the purpose of training and development and the policy provided a coherent structure for training and development activities that improved access to training meant to help attain organizational goals. The researcher displays the most important results as follows:

1- Based on the first hypothesis to determine the relationship between hotel needs determined by the HR manager and training programs contents, results explained that there is a significant relationship between them.

2- According to the second hypothesis to determine the relationship between training programs contents and trainees' satisfaction, results clarified that there is a significant relationship between them.

3- According to the third hypothesis to determine the relationship between the gained employees' skills after training that was matching with job description and HR hotel

managers' satisfaction, results clarified that there is no significant relationship between them.

4-   According to the fourth hypothesis to determine whether training and development activities in the hospitality industry are however planned and systematic, results clarified that most employees disagreed. Also, most HR managers disagreed. Therefore, it cannot be accepting the hypothesis.

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6. Conclusion

The findings revealed that the training practices, methods, and activities at hotels are different from the best practices regarding the planned and systematic nature of the training process as it is generally known. The research thinks that these three levels—organizational, functional, and individual gaps between expected results and actual results can suggest training needs; for the study, the active solicitation of suggestions from employees, supervisors, managers, and training committees can also provide ideas for training needs. The perspective chosen will depend on the circumstances. For example, if changes in the organization's external environment are exerting pressures for change internally, then a corporate or organizational perspective needs to be taken. If, however, the issue is improving skills in a particular category of employees, then occupational or job groups will provide the focus of efforts.

Findings will help hotel managers better understand the employee skills gap and consider them for advanced training. The results and recommendations can be used by governmental authorities (The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism) and hotel managers to allow HR managers to overcome these obstacles by matching current jobs with future hospitality skills.

It is an undeniable fact that in recent times many organizations have come to realize the importance of training and development programs as they increase the organization's staff's efficiency, skills, and productivity. To reap the full benefits of a training initiative, government training should ensure that the following work practices are implemented.

i) Systematic training

Identification of training needs should be done more professionally in conjunction with the line manager as well as the individuals involved and the HR personnel. Everyone involved should agree on what the trainees are lacking, such as what skills are required and what attitudes toward work performance must be changed. Organizations should see learning, training, and development, as well as training's objectives, plan, implementation, and evaluation as a continuous process for organizational development and survival.

ii) Objective should be SMART and unambiguous

Objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) and unambiguous and should develop individually as well as meet the needs of the hotels. Objectives should also include performance targets and measures standards and should be seen as attainable by individuals. Also, a basis for motivating through intrinsic and extrinsic rewards should be provided as this will lead to commitment and improved performance.

iii) Provide specific information to employees

A system that is used to assess employees' performance should provide specific information about their performance problems and ways they can improve their performance. This assessment should provide a clear understanding of the differences between current and expected performance, identify the causes of the performance discrepancies and develop action plans to improve the performance of employees through training and development programs.

iv) Create more opportunities for training

Training needs should be considered based on overall hotel objectives. The goals of the hotel should determine what training programs are to be organized for staff. Staff should be motivated to add value to themselves and to their lives.

v) Career planning and development

Organizational career planning involves matching an individual's career aspirations with the opportunities available in the

organization. Employees must identify their aspirations and abilities and, through counseling, recognize what training and development are required for a particular career information and training to its employees. Development and succession planning will also play a great role. Career progress projection plans and training and development projections should be made available to each employee.

vi) Develop employees through formal education

Hotels could develop their employees through formal education, which will give employees the opportunity to attend short courses offered by consultants or university programs and governmental institutes, which normally involve lectures by experts, simulations, adventure learning, and meetings with customers.

vii) Motivation and Morale

Motivation generally seeks to boost employees' morale to work hard and thus increase productivity. Motivation includes both extrinsic, such as more pay, allowance, and fringe benefits, and intrinsic such as recognition, appreciation, acceptance by fellow workers, opportunities for promotion, career development, and consultation for important matters. Morale, on the other hand, increases productivity indirectly by reducing absenteeism, accidents, employee turnover, and grievances. This means that the workforce can never develop in an organization where there is low morale and a lack of motivation because motivation and morale lead to job satisfaction, which in turn leads to development.

viii) Enrich job experience

Most employee development occurs through job experiences. Development is most likely to occur when there is a mismatch between the employee's skills and past experiences and the skills required for the job. To be successful in their job, employees in hotels must stretch their skills. There are several ways that job experiences can be used for employee development in hotels, and these include the enlargement of the current job, job rotation, transfers, and promotion to positions with a greater challenge.

ix) Improve interpersonal relationships

An interpersonal relationship is another way for employees to develop skills and increase knowledge about the organization and its clients by interacting with a more experienced member. Interpersonal relationships can develop as part of a planned effort to bring together successful senior employees of the hotel to gather with less experienced ones.

x) Evaluate training for effectiveness

It is vital to evaluate training in order to assess its effectiveness in producing the learning outcomes specified when the training intervention is planned and to indicate where improvements or changes are required to make the training even more effective. The basis upon which each category of training is to be evaluated should be determined at the planning stage while considering how the information required to evaluate learning events would be obtained and analyzed.

The results indicated that hotel employees are not usually well informed about governmental training, and some of the trainee samples involved in the training just to get the certificate of training even if the training topic isn't related to their current job's skill needed. The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism did an excellent approach offering this type of training, but the results indicated that they should revise their training strategy through evaluative research and feedback to match the actual needs of skills. The research advises both the hospitality managers and The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism as governmental authorities to coordinate for overcoming these obstacles through highly effective design of training and development programs. It will be recommended that academics further research this topic to cover more geographic areas for more applicable recommendations.

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