ENRICHING HRD THROUGH TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN TRAINING: THE HOTEL INDUSTRY, NAKHON RATCHASIMA, THAILAND PERSPECTIVES

Kannapat Kankaew
Burapha University International College, Chon Buri, Thailand

Nakhon Ratchasima is the biggest province in Thailand. Geographically, its splendid tourist sites attract numerous travelers each year. Consequently, the growth of the hotel industry is serving the demand. Though the studies of human resource development (HRD) in its areas are limited, this study aims to investigate the training approaches practiced in disruptive technology and assess how the approaches impact the employees’ high performance. The mixed-methods study was administered. The in-depth interview was used to identify the training approach. The sample groups are the hotel’s top management. Besides, Pearson’s correlation and SEM were used to analyze the data collected by using questionnaires from 400 hotel employees in the province. Contrarily, the results were different between top management and employees’ perspectives. Anyhow, the impactful training toward high performance was classroom training, hybrid training, and job rotation.

Keywords: Human Resource Development (HRD); hotel industry; Nakhon Ratchasima; hybrid training; corporate sustainability

Introduction

Human resource development has become more vital for hotels as they navigate the challenges posed by the pandemic and work towards recovery. The industry required various workforces to serve the demand surge responding to Thailand’s tourism revitalization. HRD, then, is significant for the hotel for multiple reasons, including adapting to new operational norms, reskilling and upskilling, enriching customer services, boosting employee morale and engagement, leadership and crisis management, talent retention, cultural diversity, and digital transformation.

Beyond these reasons, the hotels have to implement new health and safety protocols to ensure guests and employees’ safety, known as the Amazing Thailand Safety and Health
Administration (SHA). In addition, the hotels need to adapt their services and offerings, for example, smart technologies for contactless check-in/out or online interactions.

Whereas, the workforce also needs both mental and physical support, career development, motivation, and engagement to deliver exceptional services.

HRD also plays a key role in making the hotels better prepared to handle changes, disruptions, and uncertainties that might occur. As well, it helps the employees embrace new technologies and integrate them into their tasks. By implementing the right HRD approaches, hotels can position themselves for successful recovery and sustainable growth in the post-pandemic era. Therefore, this study aims to assess the HRD approaches that best fit the hotel industry in Nakhon Ratchasima province, Thailand.

Since the effectiveness of HRD results in the growth and success of organizations, the knowledge and skills of the workforce in hospitality are the keys (Kleefstra et al., 2020).

As Bentalha (2023) stated, the hotel’s workforce is immensely important in providing customer experiences, and they are the primary pillar of hotel services. Where the training is one of the motivation factors affecting the hotel’s employee performance.

Nakhon Ratchasima is the biggest province in Thailand. It was named the gateway to the northeastern part of the country. There are numerous travelers who visit Nakhon Ratchasima each year. In conjunction with the country’s development plan to construct modern transport infrastructure to Nakhon Ratchasima, This plan leads to the explosion of tourist visits and stays in the province (Suksutdhi, 2022). Unfortunately, the study on hospitality, specifically the hotel’s workforce’s development, has not been conducted. On this account, this study led to these research questions:

RQ1: What are the HRD approaches implemented in the hotel industry in Nakhon Ratchasima, especially in disruptive technology and the new normal lifespan?

RQ2: Which approaches significantly impact employees' performance?

Literature review

HRD refers to the process of improving an organization’s employees through training, development, and other initiatives to enhance the performance, skills, attitude, and behavior of the organization's members. HRD principles and practices are dealing with (1) needs assessment, (2) training and development align with organizational goals (Mehale et al., 2021), (3) customized to the specific needs of different employee groups, (4) variety of learning methods, (5) measurement and evaluation, (6) leadership support (Greenan, 2023), (7) feedback and continuous improvement, (8) career development opportunities (Kleefstra et al., 2020), (9) flexibility and adaptability, (10) inclusion and diversity, and technology integration.

HRD would change the attitude and behavior and elevate competence and performance (Kankaew et al., 2023). Then, HRD is flourishing with the abilities, expertise, and competence of the workforce. The initial training commences once a person gets hired and continues for their career development and performance management throughout the career (Dahiya et al., 2023).

Addedly, Dahiya et al. (2023) cited the objectives and benefits of HRD in hospitality associates with talent management, organizational effectiveness (Potnuru et al., 2021), employee commitment, succession planning, and elevating customer satisfaction and loyalty. In the meantime, the ASEAN Secretariat (2021) mentioned that HRD is to empower people to design their future in the contemporary world with the swift changes in the environment.
through education and training systems. In addition, the training shall be practiced at all levels, as Lee (2023) emphasized that supervisor training delivers organizational socialization, inspires, and has a positive effect on the organization.

Several types of training and development have been imposed by scholars, as Kankaew et al. (2023) indicated, including classroom, field trip, education, mentoring, job rotation, on-the-job training, and off-the-job training. Initially, the training is based on the principal concepts, the organization’s requirements, and its behaviors. Thought and behavior can be learned by observing, whether negatively or positively, a role model. Then, the real training practice from right to wrong in the workplace should be stressed (Greenan, 2023).

While Ahadi & Jacobs (2017) explained off-the-job events occurring in organizational settings, whether classroom or online training. Further, the scholars extended on-the-job training to structured on-the-job training (S-OJT). It refers to the delivering and developing of the training systematically in the workplace. The experienced employees take responsibility for training new employees in the work environment. The structured on-the-job training entailed multiprocessing as such, establishing general job skills prior to learning, training mentors, documents, and procedures, and evaluating and reinforcing skills. Nevertheless, the purpose of adult learning is to allow the participants to learn or take a break at their convenience. Besides, the adult learners expect the trainer to provide current knowledge, have the ability to integrate theory into practice, be interactive, and tailor contents to their needs (Stoffers et al., 2018).

On the other hand, Park et al. (2018) underlined the advancement and implementation of technology in HRD and the alignment of technology in workplace learning. It encourages the learning capacity and opportunities to solve individual, group, and organizational problems. Information technology and communication-based virtual learning tools, such as massive open online courses (MOOCs), were introduced. The strong benefit of MOOCs is their high quality for a larger group of participants. Organizations could also improve employee attitudes and motivation in training and development through the adoption of MOOCs. And its content could be designed to meet the needs of both the organization and its employees.

Captivatingly, Meier et al. (2021) cited that we are in the second period of digitalization, where artificial intelligence (AI) enabled smart machines, including intelligent digital assistants, autonomous driving modes, AI-based apps, and web services in the workplace. Henceforth, it is inevitable that digitalization will affect learning in organizations and HRD. The capabilities of AI entail the inherent skills of learners interacting in two ways: communication between man and machine. The scholars proposed fusion skills that HRD professionals shall consider for implications in workforce development.

Likewise, Prabhakar & Kumar (n.d.) proposed the online training program for organizational learning and development by taking advantage of technology. The organization should assess the correlation between effectiveness and engagement. The interactions between participants and trainers, for instance, questions and chat boxes for sharing, are vital.

Today, information technology has reached its peak in educational development and training through AI. The AI generates more adaptability and personalization through learning, virtual assistants, gamification, and automatic evaluation (Syzdykbayeva et al., 2021).
It is noteworthy that HRD practices positively impact workforce competencies and enrich organizational effectiveness (Potnuru et al., 2021). Meanwhile, the role of the trainer and the content that echoes real-life situations are significant to the comprehension and motivation of the trainees (Yaqub & Singh, 2020). Therefore, line managers and HRD professionals shall assess the workforce’s skill positions, future needs, and appropriate training approaches in order to elevate their performances (Mehale et al., 2021).

Even more, taking advantage of technological advancements for hybrid learning and corporate sustainability enlarges knowledge sharing and innovation. Referring to Shenkoya and Kim's (2023) systematic review, the digital transformation in education has improved learners’ skills and engagement, which leads to creativity and the sustainability of curriculum. Consequently, Lee (2023) proffered HRD reform in the digital era to hybrid learning or omni-learning. Organizations should integrate working with learning through on-the-job, on-the-job, synchronized, and diversified communication channels where spaces and times have no constraints.

**Methodology**

Responding to the research questions, this study applied the mix method. The sought-after training and development approaches were conducted through in-depth interviews and content analysis. The sample group consisted of 20 people from top management: department managers, human resource managers, and supervisors of hotels in Nakhon Ratchasima.

There were seven training and development approaches identified, namely: classroom training (CT), coaching (CO), on-the-job training (OJT), hybrid training (blending of online, onsite, and on-demand learning) (HT), job rotation (JR), field study (FS), and gamification (GM). Further, they were asked to assess the training approaches on a rating scale from 1 to 3. Rating 1 refers to the approach having little effect on the employee’s behavior; rating 2 refers to the approach having a moderate effect on the employee’s behavior; and rating 3 refers to the approach having a high effect on the employee’s behavior.

To be more specific, the descriptive statistic was weighted by the mean score, which was interpreted as follows: 1-1.66 reveals a little effective training approach, 1.67-2.33 represents a moderate effect, and 2.34-3.00 discloses a high effective training approach.

Using the quantitative method, we delegated questionnaires to 400 hotels’ employees in the province. They were asked to respond to the questionnaires twice, prior to and after the training. The questionnaire tested the approaches that were most effective relating to their understanding and skill improvement by using a simple descriptive statistic.

Two types of inferential statistics were administered, including Pearson correlations for prior training and structural equation modeling for after-training. The structural equation modeling fit indices were measured, including CFI = 1.00, GFI = .996, AGFI = .989, RMSEA = .000, RMR = .005, and Chi-square = 6.150.

The two-time data collection for quantitative was conducted because we provided training to the hotel’s employees with different methods.

**Results**

The descriptive statistic revealed the perspectives of hotel management along with the in-depth interview. It has to be pointed out that the two most effective approaches were classroom training and on-the-job training, with mean weight scores of 2.97 and 2.63.
Then, followed by coaching, hybrid training, and job rotation, with mean weight scores of 2.63, 2.61, and 2.54, respectively. The last two effective approaches were gamification and field study, with weight scores of 2.42 and 2.33.

These results help us to understand how management prioritizes classroom training. By logical means, the management shall meet, brief, and bridge the organizational culture, norms, regulations, and objectives of the training to the employees.

What is more, the grooming of employees will be addressed and adjusted to hotel standards. Since the grooming and personality of frontline employees attract the first impression and mirror the hotel image. These results further provide support from the in-depth interview that practical training with coaching positively flourishes the employees job performance. In contrast, the field study is to motivate the employees by seeing a new environment, socializing, and relaxing. One of the issues that emerges from these findings is the adoption of technology for training and development through hybrid training.

That is a combination of online, onsite, and on-demand learning. Whereas, the gamification can be done both online and onsite. These two approaches were considered highly effective. For instance, hybrid training allows employees to learn depending on their readiness.

Gamification is a joyful training that encapsulates knowledge with memorable experiences. And in this sense, the trainees would better comprehend and remember the trained topics in their long-term memory.

Figure 1 - Mean score of training methods
(made by the author)

There is, however, the data from the questionnaires collected from 400 hotel employees. It shown that the respondents were 176 male and 224 female accounted for 46 percent and 56 percent. The majority of them was 21-30 years old 51 percent and hold bachelor degree 77 percent.

There were 30 percent of respondents having experience less than five years in the hotel industry. While, 29 percent of them have worked in the hotel for five years. More than 30 percent of the respondents working in the supporting department, whereas 29 percent of them working in food and beverage department.

The descriptive statistic revealed that all the training methods were at high level on developing the skills. That was based on their understanding and better performing the task.
There were slightly differences among each training method as shown in Tab. 1.

Table 1 - Mean and S.D. training approaches  
(made by the author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Training</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Interpret</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom training (CT)</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching (CO)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-job Training (OJT)</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid Training (HT)</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job rotation (JR)</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Study (FS)</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification (GM)</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To increase the reliability of each training approach correlates with high performance (HP), the Pearson Correlation was used for further assess.

It can be seen from the data in table 2 the results illustrated the hybrid learning and job rotation have strongest significant to high job performance, followed by coaching, gamification, filed study, classroom training, and on-the-job training respectively. Interestingly, this correlation is stressed on the new learning approach that is the technology-blended training.

From the findings, it can infer that technology facilitates the adult learning especially the hotel employees who have uncommon working schedule to learn at their preferences.

These can lead to better knowledge absorption and high job performance. In regards to the job rotation, it shapes the employees’ multi-skill, the understanding of other positions duties and processes. That helps a better communication among employees.

Table 2 - Correlation of training approaches to high job performance  
(made by the author)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CT</th>
<th>CO</th>
<th>OJT</th>
<th>HT</th>
<th>JR</th>
<th>FS</th>
<th>GM</th>
<th>HP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>0.622**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OJT</td>
<td>0.561**</td>
<td>0.663**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HT</td>
<td>0.555**</td>
<td>0.649**</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JR</td>
<td>0.618**</td>
<td>0.652**</td>
<td>0.673**</td>
<td>0.741**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS</td>
<td>0.515**</td>
<td>0.558**</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
<td>0.684**</td>
<td>0.679**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>0.514**</td>
<td>0.570**</td>
<td>0.654**</td>
<td>0.600**</td>
<td>0.656**</td>
<td>0.745**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP</td>
<td>0.641**</td>
<td>0.691**</td>
<td>0.639**</td>
<td>0.741**</td>
<td>0.740**</td>
<td>0.652**</td>
<td>0.662**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bartlett’s test of sphericity Chi-Square =2273.898, df=28, p = 0.000, KMO = 0.931

** p < 0.01

To the extent of the training approach relate to high job performance. The confirmatory factor analysis was applied for a solid prediction of the training methods to job performance.
Surprisingly, the most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that OJT has highest statistic explanation at 64 percent with $\beta = 0.80$, C.R. = 5.04, and p value less than 0.00. It is somewhat the hybrid training was ranked in the second with $\beta = 0.79$, C.R. = 4.88, and p value less than 0.001, and the statistic explanation power is 63 percent. As the third place was quite similar level of planation of the second.

It was the job rotation with at 62 percent with $\beta = 0.79$, C.R. = 4.83, and p value less than 0.001.

Table 3 - The confirmatory factor analysis results of training methods and job performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training methods</th>
<th>Standardized estimate</th>
<th>Nonstandardized estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>C.R.</th>
<th>SMC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Training</td>
<td>.693</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>2.469***</td>
<td>.480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>.668</td>
<td>1.076</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>2.648***</td>
<td>.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-job training</td>
<td>.802</td>
<td>1.306</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>5.041***</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid Training</td>
<td>.793</td>
<td>1.251</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>4.889***</td>
<td>.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job rotation</td>
<td>.790</td>
<td>1.338</td>
<td>.090</td>
<td>4.839***</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field study</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>1.308</td>
<td>.091</td>
<td>4.418***</td>
<td>.587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamification</td>
<td>.750</td>
<td>1.320</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>4.124***</td>
<td>.562</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(* * * < 0.001)

Conclusion

There is a remarkable outcome from the qualitative results and the twice-assessed different inferential statistics. For the qualitative data, all key informants reported that the three major methods affecting high performance were classroom, on-the-job training, and coaching, respectively. In contrast, the respondents, who were hotel employees, felt that the hybrid training was highly effective, followed by job rotation and coaching. Yet, after the training was finished, the results revealed that the most effective was on-the-job training, followed by hybrid training and job rotation accordingly.

This combination of findings provides some support for the conceptual premise that the perspective of leaders and managers considers the physical meeting in the classroom essential for delivering the messages, for instance, vision, mission, and training’s objectives. Extendedly, the grooming and personality of the trainees were observed.

Subsequently, the direct experiences were put into practice as on-the-job training with a coaching system. Contrariwise to the results prior to employees attending the training, the hybrid approach, which comprises onsite, online, and on-demand, facilitates the uncommon working schedule around the clock of service personnel. It is comfortable for them to learn whenever they are ready. Despite the fact that the job rotation flourishes, the employee's knowledge and self-development are novel.

Still, coaching is required to guide you to perform the task confidently. Turning now to the employees’ post-training, another important finding is that on-the-job training is confirmed to be most effective after all. However, the hybrid training and job rotation accorded with previous assessments prior to the employees attending the training.

Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between the methods of training and the job performance of service providers in the hospitality industry.
With respect to the research questions, classroom training is necessary as an initial step before practical training. Emerging from the prior and post-training analyses, it is obviously stated that hybrid training and job rotation positively influence work performance.

The present results are significant in at least two major camps, including the management views on the training approaches and the trainees’ who get trained and employ the knowledge into practices. Then, the implication of this study shall be combined with both aspects for a greater result that is impactful on job performance. That leads to corporate sustainability.

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References:


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