Sources of Pride in the Hospitality Workplace: Employees’ Perspective
แหล่งที่มาของความภาคภูมิใจในสถานที่ทำงานด้านการบริการ: มุมมองของพนักงาน

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to explore the sources of pride in the workplace on hospitality employees in various careers. Taking a qualitative approach, in-depth interviews were conducted, 29 employees were selected via purposive sampling. Through the content analysis, the sources of pride in the hospitality workplace were identified and were found to be consistent with previous literature, namely a four-fold classification system consisting of: pride in work, pride in organization, pride in membership in their sections and individual pride. The findings of this study could assist human resource professionals or supervisors in understanding the sources of pride in employees, as well as the direction for building pride in the hospitality careers.

Keywords: Hospitality workplace, Pride in work, Pride in organization, Pride in membership in a section, Individual pride

Background and the Significant of the Research
The hospitality industry is different from other industries because it has a distinctive and particular culture (Dawson, Abbott, and Shoemaker, 2011). Many scholars have described a hospitality career as being servile and dirty work and as having low skilled, low social status, long work hours, little motivation and encouragement and limited promotion opportunity (Guerrier and Adib, 2003; Wan, Wong, and Kong, 2014). The nature of the work, such as physical characteristics of the workplace, physically demanding activities and interaction with...
customers (Goldsmith, Nickson, Sloan, and Wood, 2000), can lead to the employee’s job burnout, stress, job dissatisfaction, and intention to leave (Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007; Chalkiti and Sigala, 2009; Lee and Ok, 2012).

Thus, it is the mission of a human resource professional or supervisor to explore excellent employee retention strategies to reduce the turnover rate of employees. Some studies have suggested that employees’ senses of pride result in greater commitment to an organization and job satisfaction (Helm, 2011) which then reduces the turnover rate (Wan et al., 2014). Employees’ high level of pride in their organization not only lead to positive employees behaviours (Arnett, Laverie, and McLane, 2002). Moreover, it can increase employees’ effort but also an increase in their work performance (Decrop and Derbaix, 2010).

Pride is a motivating factor for employees to feel a sense of achievement for acknowledging their efforts (Hackman and Oldham, 1976). Katzenbach (2003b) implied that pride is the power of the world’s greatest motivational force which has arisen from a number of sources, including, but not limited to, the persistent pursuit of validation for a job well-done, being affiliated with a successful and positive organization, or overall personal achievement, each of which have beneficial effects.

The notion of pride in previous studies was approached from the organization’s perspective, such as the effect of pride on job satisfaction at work and within an organization, on organizational commitment, in creating positive employees, and on job performance (Arnett et al., 2002; Decrop and Derbaix, 2010; Helm, 2011; Gouthier and Rhein, 2011). These studies have neglected an evaluation of developing the sources of pride in the workplace. Moreover, few studies have thoroughly explored pride experienced by employees in the hospitality industry during their work or serving. Even though pride affects employees positively, only a small number of literatures in the field of hospitality have discussed this issue.

The hospitality industry is faced with a turnover problem. If employees in the hospitality industry experience pride, it could lead to retaining the employees (Katzenbach, 2003a). Moreover, employees’ organizational behaviour, as well as job performance, will be positive affected. Therefore, this study attempted to uncover the sources of pride by employees in the hospitality workplace. The findings of this research is hopefully useful and appropriate for providing some suggestions to human resource professionals, supervisors and hoteliers in understanding the sources of pride in employees, as well as the direction for building pride in the hospitality careers. Furthermore, this study takes the initiative in exploring
the topic of the sources of pride in the field of human resource management in the hospitality workplace. It contributes in demonstrating the importance of motivational role of pride in human resources practices of the hospitality industry.

**Purpose of the Study**

The aim of this study is to explore the sources of employees’ pride in the hospitality workplace by using a qualitative method.

**Literature Review**

**Definition of Pride**

Pride is a positive emotion and it generally is derives from events that have positive outcomes from oneself (Pinder, 2014). Pride is a feeling of satisfaction, enjoyment or pleasure with something one has achieved and/or one can do, or in the accomplishments and/or abilities of someone (Decrop and Derbaix, 2010). It affects pro-social behaviors and its appearance may communicate high status and success to others (Tracy and Robins, 2007).

**Pride in the Hospitality Workplace**

Pride in the hospitality workplace is defined as a feeling of satisfaction, enjoyment or pleasure the employees have achieved from their work efforts. It also includes the capabilities and accomplishments of their organizations, sections, supervisors, colleagues and subordinates that they are in contact with. This study searched out pride in the hospitality workplace that have been mentioned in past literature and categorized it into four sources of pride themes: pride in work, pride in organization, pride in membership in a section, and individual pride.

1. Pride in work is the pleasure and satisfaction one feels from doing his or her tasks well (Wollack, Goodale, Wijting, and Smith, 1971), and it is associated with commitment to an organization (Ferris and Aranya, 1983). Pinder (2014) indicated that pride is positive human emotion that accompanies work experiences and which influences the motivation in work. Employees who take pride in their work indicate that they regard their works as enjoyable, meaningful, remarkable, provocative and worth-while (Jin and Guy, 2009).

2. Pride in an organization is derived from specific views of the organization and from experiences within the organization. The employee’s pride in an organization identifies the organization as being noteworthy, significant, effective, and a valuable part of society (Amett et al., 2002). Pride could be motivated by a pleasing community awareness of the
organization because employees may deem the organization’s success and social status as part of their individual accomplishments and position in society (Helm, 2011).

3. Regarding pride in membership in a section, hospitality work involves teamwork or working as a part of a group. The membership refers to the employee; the section refers to the group in which the employees work. The supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates from all membership work together like a team. The successes of the group or membership in a group are essential to serve as a means of motivation and building pride for members in a group (Gouthier and Rhein, 2011).

4. Individual pride depends on individual achievements from which they gain inspiration, such as the ability of one to carry out their work assignments and a sense of one's own worthiness and self-esteem gained from their achievements (Lea and Webley, 1997; Helm, 2013). In this study, individual pride refers to a feeling when employees take pride in their competence, skills, characteristics and the abilities that they possess in their hospitality work.

Methodology

Participant Characteristics and Data Collection

This study conducted in-depth interviews of employees in 5-star hotels, resorts and high-class restaurants in Thailand. Pride may vary with the different characteristics in the work or careers of the employees who could be receptionist, catering sales, housekeeper or bellman in a hotel, or chef, waitress, waiter, bartender, or hostess in a restaurant. Data were collected from September 1 to November 30, 2015. The participants consisted of 14 males and 15 females, aged between 23 to 52 years old, with a minimum of two years of work experience. Each interview lasted an average of 45 to 60 minutes and all interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim in Thai language. The demographics of the 29 interviewees are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of the Interviewees

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</table>

**Research Instrument**

In this study, the interviews were conducted without the direct support from the organizations, as the organization is one of the sources of pride in hospitality workplace. To ensure that the interview proceeded smoothly, this study developed an interview handbook.
At the beginning of each interview, pride was explained and defined as “...the feeling related to confidence and success from your ability and performance which can be perceived by your organization, section, supervisor, and colleagues.” Through literature review, this study identified sources of pride in the workplace: pride in work, pride in organization, pride in membership in a section and individual pride. The following question was presented to the participants:

“What matters or situations make you take pride in each of the following areas: 1) your accomplishments in your work or occupation; 2) your organization; 3) your section; and 4) your professional, abilities, or skills which you possess in hospitality work? Please describe these situations in detail.”

Data Analysis

1. This exploratory research used a qualitative research method, and content analysis was conducted to find specific patterns in the data. Two coders (one is a researcher who is acquainted with content analysis, and the other is an experienced hospitality worker) were requested to execute content analysis. They read the interview scripts and screened the pride situation involving the interviewees to define the unit of analysis. They served as two judges and independently coded the transcripts into 284 units and then collaborated to categorize the units of analysis into different categories.

2. The categories were clustered into four themes derived from literature review: pride in work, pride in organization, pride in membership in a section and individual pride. Then, the researchers reread and reclassified, and thereby constructed 27 categories.

3. Reliability was employed to define numerous aspects of trustworthiness in qualitative research. One doctoral student performed a reliability test; the standard for reliability is that the ratio of the coding acceptance to the total number of coding judgments exceeds 0.8 (Kassarjian, 1977). The result of the third judge’s reclassification was 0.85 (23/27) and 0.86 (245/284), indicating acceptable reliability.

Findings and Discussion

There are four main sources of pride in the workplace themes that were generated from the interview data. Furthermore, under each theme there are eight, four, four and eleven categories respectively (See Figure 1). Each theme is described below.
Pride in Work

Pride in Work refers to a pleasurable feeling that employees experience in their jobs, the skills that they use to do their jobs well, and the sense of achievement from their efforts. There are many situations that make them feel proud.

1. The interviewees mentioned that their uniforms built their confidence, which is consistent with the study by Panmunin (1993) which found that employees took pride in their uniforms when they were serving. Employees’ wearing uniforms is the part of hospitality work that reflects which duty or work they perform. It is employed as a position or identity symbol of work, and it can enhance and build low or and high self-esteem (Yeh, Tu, Chuang, Lim, and Lin, 2013).

2. The interviewees took pride when they could be a helper and took good care of guests, which was similar to the study by Thomas (2000), which found that employees took pride when they assisted their customers.

3. The interviewees took great pride when they received a reward, praise or tip and interacted with their customers. Positive feedback is an incentive which reinforces and
encourages an employee’s work. The employee took pride in achievement, along with witnessing the reaction of their customers or supervisor (Katzenbach, 2003b).

4. The interviewees took pride when their work had challenges as they must remember what the customers requested and be able to respond accordingly. Job challenge is defined as the excitement and inspiration that one feels toward a specific task (Meyer and Allen, 1988). Job challenges both exhaust employees’ energy and arouse them to persist in their job, as they result in the achievement of goals and fulfillment of needs.

5. The interviewees mentioned that their work varied and that they were busy, as they always encountered customers and resolved problems for them. This made them perceive pride as they overcame problems smoothly and immediately responded to the customer’s needs. Solving problems immediately is a work skill. Employees solve problems as soon as they can make customers feel satisfied (Pollitt, 2008); this indicates that they achieve success in their work.

6. The interviewees took pride when they provided the customer some details, and when they fluently answered the customer’s questions concerning tourist information. The duties of employees in the hospitality industry include delivery of valuable knowledge and quality service to their customers. Also, the training in hospitality work addresses issues focusing on knowledge, skills and attitudes (Conrade, Woods, and Ninemeier, 1994).

7. The interviewees took pride and honor when they served VIP customers because they had the opportunity to interact and be close with VIPs more often than others. One interviewee mentioned as:

“"We serve exclusively for those hotel members who are famous people in the country. By being allowed to serve VIP guests, I am very proud to make their bed, clean and organize their room."” (H4) It is known that most VIP customers or well-known people stay at five-star hotels. In this study, serving VIPs is also a source of pride in work.

8. In this study, delivering excellent service is a source of pride in work for hospitality employees when they serve. In hospitality work, whether a customer experiences top-notch service absolutely affects the customer’s decision to revisit. Delivering an excellent service experience is a hard job and is valuable for the full awareness of all employees, from top management to the guest-interaction service provider (Ford, Heaton, and Brown, 2001).
Pride in Organization

Pride in an organization refers to a pleasurable feeling that employees gain from the positive aspects of their organizations. There are many situations that make them feel proud.

1. The findings of this study show that CSR made the interviewees take pride in their organization. One interviewee mentioned as:

“In order to protect the world from global warming, the hotel joins in green hotel activities, so I feel proud of it.” (B3)

The hospitality industry has increasingly paid attention to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) over the past few decades. From the employees and customers perspective, CSR affects benefits, positive image, and social value of a corporation (Bohdanowicz and Zientara, 2008). CSR attracts new employees and solicits employees’ pride in organizations.

2. Most of the interviewees took great pride in their organizational reputation and its long history. For example:

“I take pride in telling others where I work. My workplace is well-known, high class and luxurious.” (S3)

Corporate reputation relies on the awareness, trust and imprint in the attention of external employers and relates to work and social identity (Helm, 2011; Helm, 2013). The employees perceive the reputation of, and honor in, their employer and organization; therefore, corporate reputation affects an employee’s pride in their organization.

3. The interviewees took pride in the uniqueness of their hotel which was different than others. They stated that their hotels were unique because the guest rooms, furniture and walls were decorated and immersed in traditional Thai culture, the uniforms reflected ancient Thai elegant attire, and employees greeted customers using ancient Thai vocabulary. Mone and McKinley (1993: p.285) defined that “Uniqueness is analogous to such terms as novel, original, new, innovative, and different.” In this study, uniqueness is also a source of pride in organization.

4. The interviewees took pride in their hotel’s good training, as it enabled them to focus on work completely and serve the customers perfectly. New employees must be trained in the service skills before they begin to work (Ford et al., 2001). Training is the core of the hospitality industry, and it can generate a sense of pride among employees (Pollitt, 2008).
Pride in Membership in a Section

Pride in membership in a section refers to a pleasurable feeling that the employees have about group members and their achievements and capabilities. There are many situations that make them feel proud.

1. Good leadership generated a sense of pride in being a member in a section in this study. In a section, leadership roles are divided into many types, such as controller, monitor, mentor, supporter, etc. These roles are very important in affecting the outcome of teamwork and the work climate (Leevongvorakul, 2015). When employees take pride in their leader, they are more likely to be loyal to their organization (Chan and Mak, 2014).

2. The interviewees mentioned that everyone was busy working with team spirit, as it increased motivation and created a good climate in the workplace. Hence, they took more pride in their teamwork. One interviewee mentioned as:

   “I take pride in my section because all of employees work with spirit. We work as a team and we help each other and share their experiences together.” (R1)

   Teamwork spirit or the sense of commitment and loyalty, binds together a group of individuals and develops a team committed to its goal (Conti and Kleiner, 1997). It influences membership attitudes which positively contribute to teamwork.

3. Harmony within a team is significant and it affects the success or achievement of a team; it is also a source of pride in membership, as shown in this study. In an organization, team problem-solving affects harmony among team members (McKnight, Ahmad, and Schroeder, 2001).

4. The interviewees took great pride in their section’s high performance which was derived from all of the team members’ efforts. Team performance is vitally important and a source of pride in membership in a section. It arises from group members’ awareness of group achievement, rather than from awareness of his or her own individual achievement (Berkowitz and Levy, 1956).

Individual Pride

Individual pride refers to a feeling by which employees take pride in their competence, appearance, abilities and the potentiality that they possess in the hospitality work. There are many situations that make them feel proud.

1. The interviewees took great pride in their foreign language capability because they could serve customers smoothly. Having a bilingual employee increases employee productivity, as well as customer satisfaction ratings (Yuan, Houston, and Cai, 2006). Foreign
language capability is essential for a hospitality employee to interact with customers from all over the world.

2. The interviewees took pride when they had good communication with their customers. Having good communication is essential for the employee who has direct contact with customers because it affects customer satisfaction and their intention to revisit the hotel. The employees have to be trained in effective communication skills including interdepartmental and customer communication (Pollitt, 2008).

3. The interviewees took pride in their cultural competence, as it helped them in the management of seating areas to provide food and drink zones for customers. Many foreign customers with different backgrounds, culture and religion visit the hotel or restaurants, so cultural competence is essential for service providers. Having cultural competence is a source of individual pride because it assists the employees in serving smoothly, understanding customers’ needs, and avoiding conflict among culturally diverse customers. Yuan et al. (2006) stated that when employees know other cultures and languages, it can lead to their accomplishment in their international job assignment.

4. In this study, creativity is a source of individual pride, as interviewees mentioned:

“I have knowledge in the arts which I use to decorate my dishes. Each of my dishes leaves a good impression on the customers. I use this talent and apply it to my kitchen job to bring me success.” (K2)

In hospitality work, creativity is the utilization of original ideas regarding the provision of products/services to customers by employees. Wong and Pang (2003) stated that creativity and its advocate of innovation are critical for long-term organizational achievement. Employee creativity is beneficial as it helps result in customer satisfaction and a good impression.

5. The interviewees took pride in their attractiveness because it resulted in customer satisfaction. In hospitality work, attractiveness and good appearance are vitally important for some employees at work. Tsaur and Tang (2013) stated that a pretty voice and appearance of hospitality employees when serving their guests delivers an aesthetic expression beneficial to the organization’s image.

6. The interviewees mentioned that their willingness to serve and to interact with a smile made them take pride while serving. Service is the heart of hospitality and some organizations as service providers require employees to have service mind in their heart
Employees who have “service in mind” reflect their positive attitudes towards their work.

7. The interviewees took pride in their politeness because it reduced customers’ complaints and increased customer satisfaction while serving. For example:

“I am trained to speak nicely with correct and polite words to everyone, especially to customers. I take pride in this politeness because it can make customer satisfaction.” (FB3)

Politeness is one of three elements in the main perceived management service quality which was recognized by employees (Ross, 1993), and politeness refers to showing good manners and etiquette toward others. Due to constant interaction with customers, politeness is necessary for employees in hospitality work, and it was found to be a source of individual pride in this study.

8. The interviewees took pride in themselves being able to always listen and smile in order to make the customers calm down and feel relaxed. In hospitality work in Thailand, employees are trained to provide service with a smile. Ford et al., (2001) indicated that employees should perform their job with a friendly smile. In some situations at work, a smile and being a good listener helps the work atmosphere, and it decreases the emotional labor from customers.

9. The interviewees took pride because they had empathy. They were always concerned about customers’ safety and belongings, which made them take pride in their service. The best way to understand people is to develop empathy; it assists the employees in comprehending what customers need (Sue Reynolds and Chase, 2014; Punyalikhit, 2015).

10. The employees sometimes encountered customers’ negative attitude or misbehavior; thus, good management or strong emotional control is important and beneficial in hospitality work. In the hospitality industry, the employees as a service provider should have positive emotions and attitudes when they serve, which can build a good impression with customers (Lee and Ok, 2012). Having good emotional management is also a source of individual pride in this study.

11. The interviewees took pride in their good human relation skills because they always dealt with customers and other sections within and outside of the hotel. Host-guest interaction is constant; moreover, customers come from different backgrounds and having good human relation skills assists the employees to work smoothly and be successful (Blanch, 1998).
Conclusion

The findings confirm that the employees take pride in their workplace; furthermore, the sources of pride arise from an employee’s work, their organization, leadership, teamwork, colleagues, and customers, as well as the feeling of oneself as a whole. The results of this study not only support that employees take pride while working or serving, but also the duty of work and work itself can be the sources of employees’ pride.

First, from the results under the theme of pride in work, human resource professionals can communicate and encourage their employees by acknowledging the excellent employee of the month, or by sending a letter of praise via email. The supervisor trusting employees to serve VIPs also institutes a feeling of pride in employees. Second, from the results under the theme of pride in organization, the owners or employers could undertake activities for social causes, charity or the community. These activities not only create or build a good image for the organization, but also make the employees take great pride and build a good perception of the organization’s reputation.

Third, from the results under the theme of pride in membership in a section, the role of the leader in a section is significant, especially those who can build a feeling of success at work. Instilling team spirit, harmony and section performance can make the employees take pride and be happy while working; furthermore, these can reduce an employee’s pressure during work. Hence, it is seen that the climate of teamwork is extremely important, as it creates a feeling of pride in employees by being members in a section. Finally, from to the results of individual pride, each category differs based upon the work and occupation the employees do. The employees who have individual pride, such as service mind, always smiling, politeness and empathy, have a positive attitude in providing service and a good image of their hospitality workplace.

Suggestions

1. Suggestions for Implementation

1.1 The findings of this study can help human resource professionals, supervisors and hoteliers in understanding the sources of pride in the workplace. The role of human resources as a builder of pride should create or foster pride in work, the organization, membership in a section, and individual employee pride during training. Training is the best time for the human resource professionals to communicate with the employees (Pollitt, 2008), as well as to build employee pride.
1.2 All of the categories relating to individual pride can be utilized for educational purposes, and can be employed by college recruiters to determine if a student is a potential candidate for their hospitality industry program (Dawson et al., 2011).

2. Suggestions for Future Research

2.1. The results may be limited to the particular industry practices and cultural contexts of this sample, this study focused primarily on hospitality employees in Thailand. Extending this research approach to other regions and cultural contexts may improve the generalizability of these findings.

2.2. Future research can undertake a larger-scale comparative study to explore pride in the hospitality workplace more deeply in other countries to allow for generalizability among all the employees and in the hospitality industry as a whole.

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