

Agile Leadership Among Hoteliers and Its Correlates in the Hospitality Industry in Central Luzon, Philippines

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Abstract: *Agile leadership is a current topic of interest among researchers, practitioners, and corporate executives (Worley et.al, 2014). The globalized economy and the spread of connective technologies force the pace of change and the degree of complexity to shift for organizations to an entirely new level especially in today's pandemic crisis where business had to survive in a new dimension. This study will benefit future research, it is critical to generate new knowledge regarding the agile leadership practices that can provide insight to the hotel industry about how to transform their operations according to newly emerging customers' needs and wants due to COVID-19 pandemic and to upcoming fortuitous event especially in Subic Bay Freeport Zone. The type of research used in this study is descriptive correlational research that involves observing two variables to establish a statistically corresponding relationship between them. The location of the study is on Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the respondents are all managers in the area. The researcher used frequency distribution and multi variate regression. The proposed comprehensive leadership enhancement program, training and development plan intend to enhance the practice of agile leadership among hotel managers in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in the new normal environment.*

Keywords— agile leadership, pandemic, challenges, hotel managers, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, Enhancement program

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitality industry specifically the hotels has been conscious with the continuous changes in the business environment, enabling some hotel companies to grow and develop in a competitive hotel environment. An agile hotel system operates successfully in highly dynamic and complex environments. With this, agile organizations can replace existing processes by applying new procedures and resources and can redesign organizational structures based on new conditions (Teece, 2016).

With the present scenario in the hotel industry, hoteliers gained capacity for complexity, novelty, adaptability, cognitive flexibility, risk, ambiguity, and change. These changes may be characterized on having professional attributes which contributes dogmatism and rigidity, and particularly high value on learning and growing from experiences, including failures. In general, leaders or managers who accrues more on professional attributes tend to achieve and attain managerial and leadership agility compared to lesser personal profiles and experiences.

Across the psychological research literature, agility typically shows positive correlations with leadership emergence, leadership effectiveness, compensation, leadership competence, and promotion rates, and conceptualizations of leadership potential (Lewis, 2015)

which strengthens the contributions of their professional attributes.

This study aims to critically analyze the relationship between agile leadership practices and professional characteristics of hotelier (correlates) of the Hotel industry in Subic Bay freeport Zone in Central Luzon, Philippines with the end view of formulating a training development plan in promoting self-managing teams in the developing positive organizational culture and environment towards strategic positioning of the hotel in the new normal.

Specifically, it seeks answer to the following questions:

1. **What professional attributes characterize the respondent's managers of the hotels in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone along the following aspects:**
 - a. Educational background;
 - b. Training Related;
 - c. Affiliation/Organization;
 - d. Awards and Recognition;
 - e. Salary per month;
 - f. Type of Accommodation and;
 - g. Years in Service as Hotel Managers
2. **What is the extent of agile leadership practiced in the hotels of the Subic Bay freeport Zone along the following aspects?**
 - a. Adaptability to changes;
 - b. Collaboration;
 - c. Self-organization;
 - d. Enhancing creativity and innovation;
 - e. Accepting feedbacks;
 - f. Supporting teams

3. What is the level of significance relationship that exist between the professional characteristics of the hotel managers and their extent of agile leadership practice?
4. Based on the significance of relationship what development plan can be proposed to enhance the practice of agile leadership among hotel managers in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in the new normal environment?

2. METHODOLOGY

The type of research used in this study is descriptive correlational research that involves observing two variables to establish a statistically corresponding relationship between them. Constructed survey-questionnaires were formulated to accumulate the needed data to be analyzed in the study using the relevant statistical treatment employed in the paper. The researcher had chosen Subic Bay Freeport Zone for its best advantages on its strategic location - at the heart of central business district where major transport terminals, shopping malls, restaurants and sports centers are perfectly situated that gives guests the opportunity to explore the experience they desire. The researcher used total enumeration of (60) hotels to ensure the reliability and validity of data. The researcher then created and developed an improved survey-questionnaire after presenting a preliminary draft which was distributed as pretest and test the reliability of the questionnaires, validated by her adviser, a college professor in business administration, and research professor for further checking of the efficacy and adeptness of the survey-questionnaire and improvement of its content. Prior to conducting the study, a preliminary survey and informal interview was conducted in Olongapo City to further improved the instrument and to validate its content. Upon approval of the survey-questionnaire, permission had been asked from the managers of the hotels inside the Subic Bay Freeport Zone. After the approval of the request through a formal letter, the researcher had been given access to give questionnaires. To invoke an interest in the study, all managers will be initially informed about the purpose and objectives of the study including its confidentiality. The data gathered had been organized and processed through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The frequency and percentage distribution utilized to describe the professional attributes of the respondents, and mean in the extent of agile leadership practices. Multivariate regression was used in the assessment of the agile leadership practice to observe multiple regression of one dependent variable and multiple independent variables.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This significant of this study are outlined following the sequence of the research questions as indicated in the statement of the problem.

Professional characteristics of Hotel Managers in Subic Bay Freeport zone

Based on the data gathered from the respondents and with the researcher's personal observations and interviews, the following significant findings were revealed:

- a. Educational Background. Sixty (60) respondents, eight (8) of them graduated with post-graduate degree while fifty-two (52) respondents graduated college degree.
- b. Related Work Trainings. Among the sixty (60) respondents, four (4) of them went abroad for international trainings, twenty (20) has national trainings and thirty-six (36) attended local trainings.
- c. Affiliation / Organization. Two (2) of them has international affiliation, thirty (30) had national affiliated organization, while there are twenty-four (24) locally affiliated managers and only four (4) among them who has no affiliated organizations.
- d. Awards and recognition. Two (2) managers have international recognition, while eighteen (18) among the sixty (60) respondents got national awards, and twenty (20) managers have locally recognized.
- e. Salary Range. Managers' salary ranging to Php26,000.00 to Php30,000.00 have twenty (20) respondents. Fourteen (14) respondents each answered how much were their salary based on Php31,000.00 - Php35,000.00 and Php15,000.00 - Php20,000.00. However, there are eight (8) respondents who were receiving a salary based on Php36,000.00 - Php40,000.00, and only four (4) respondents have Php41,000.00 and above salary range.
- f. Types of Accommodation. There are fifty-four (54) respondents with (90) percent of the total respondents that respond to hotel services while there are only six (6) respondents categorized their existing hotel as inn.
- g. Years in service as hotel managers. Four (4) respondents have stayed for almost two decades servicing its clientele in the hotel industry. Two (2) of the respondents stayed for 11 - 15 years of service, while there are eighteen (18) respondents or (30) percent rendered their service for 6 - 10 years and thirty-six respondents serve the hotel for 1 - 5 years.

Extent of Agile Leadership Practices of Hotel Managers in Subic Bay Freeport Zone

- a. Adaptable to changes. Respondents were more agile to adapt the situations as they come along, do not always rely on what worked yesterday to solve tomorrow's problems and use my experiences as a

- too but not rely on it solely to solve fortuitous event with weighted mean of 4.50; while promoting empowerment to the subordinates and adhering flexibility weighted mean is 4.47, leading by example, and actively engage in new development in the workplace/ hotel business environment, 4.43 and acknowledging the management principles of the 19th century are suited to solve complex problems of the 21st century due to rapid changes in the hotel business environment of tourism industry was 4.27.
- b. Collaboration. Hotel managers practiced agile leadership by collaboration with average weighted mean of 4.36, remark as strongly agree. Initiating telling comments or suggestions which remove barriers from customers to the subordinates to provide development opportunities, encouraging a healthy function of grouping together with the preservation of psychological safety, and encouraging the subordinates, department, and colleagues to rely heavily on respect to enable them to be accessible, open, honest, and transparent while expecting the same from others has a weighted mean of 4.40 which scaled as strongly agree. While recognizing the subordinate who work at their best when they are enabled and working through issues, work processes, and solve problems with the subordinates, which remove barriers and set boundaries for the team has a weighted mean of 4.33 and 4.27 respectively, both also scaled as strongly agreed.
 - c. Self-Organization. Valuing high quality thinking and focusing on the highest priorities at any given time is the most practiced in the extent of agile leadership which resulted to 4.47 weighted mean and scaled as strongly agreed. Next is the setting of clear vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the organization rated with mean average of 4.43; Providing all that the need to operate efficiently and to function autonomously within boundaries and providing the development opportunities to both formal learning and embedded learning such as job shadowing and job rotation evaluated with weighted mean of 4.37. while challenged to leverage the busy periods to stretch and contribute in new ways through new roles that develop their skills marked 4.30. The said extent of agile leadership practices through self-organization had been observed by the hotel managers with average weighted mean of 4.39 and scaled also as strongly agreed.
 - d. Enhancing Creativity and Innovation. Helping the hotel business to progress their ability to learn, change, and adapt new norms of management and leadership practice by permeating all aspects of an organization or change initiative ranked the highest weighted mean of 4.50 as illustrated on Table 10. Viewing problems from many different angles were signified 4.37; Encouraging to a continuous flow of creativity by helping to understand which ideas were useful by giving them guidance, not command & control, and change alignment across the organization instead of the pursuit of local optimization efforts or personal agendas, 4.33; Practicing and performing agility in making decision and actions by looking at the big picture, 4.30; and Ensuring that the subordinates, department, and colleagues are well-informed about the business strategy and context surrounding their work at the hotel by strengthening the new work methodologies in the workplace to help and to ensure success in the new world of agile were weighted 4.23.
 - e. Feedback. Employing constant communicating feedback to promote positive effect hotel workplace as organization was perceived with 4.31 weighted mean; Giving effective feedback wherein couching any perceived criticisms, 4.30; while Demonstrating constructive feedback to accept and to realize that the objective to ensure there is a common understanding and agreement, not only on the specifics of the feedback but also on any actions that should be taken for improvements, Giving feedbacks to empower by discussing flaws without letting the conversation turn personal treats, and Receiving negative feedback as positive experience tallied 4.23 respectively.
 - f. Supporting the teams. Giving motivation and inspiration by understanding their emotion as an important part of their work and experience, 4.23; Helping and supporting learning process and continuously improve and deliver stronger positive services hotel management results and Always developing depth in the organization's leadership which allows to mentor tomorrow's leaders in the principles and practices of servant leadership sows the seeds for the agile culture to thrive resulted 4.20 respectively; while Encouraging to rely heavily on respect to enable to be accessible, open, honest, and transparent while expecting the same from others were given a weighted mean of 4.13.

Extent of Agile Leadership Practices of Hotel Managers in Subic Bay Freeport Zone

Significant relationship between professional characteristics of the hotel Managers and their categorized extent of Agile Leadership practice.

- a. Adaptability to Change. There is no significant relationship between the professional attributes and the extent of agile leadership according to adaptability to change.

- b. Collaboration. The result shows the coefficient of the regression model on collaboration. Since there is a significant effect, it can derive a model to forecast collaboration. The model is Y (collaboration) = 0.46 of educational background + 0.08 of related trainings + 0.02 of affiliations and organizations + 0.43 of awards - 0.06 of salary - 0.12 of types of accommodation. The factor that yielded significant effect is awards since $t = 3.37$ with p -value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significance.
- c. Self-Organization. The result illustrated the coefficient of the regression model on self-organization. Since there is a significant effect, it can derive a model to forecast self-organization. The model is Y (self-organization) = 0.11 of related trainings + 0.06 of affiliations and organizations - 0.08 of awards - 0.00 of salary - 0.55 of types of accommodation. The factor that yielded significant effect is educational background since $t = 2.11$ with p -value of 0.04 which is less than 0.05 level of significance.
- d. Enhancing creativity and innovation. It shows the coefficient of the regression model on enhancing creativity and innovation. Since there is a significant effect, it can derive a model to forecast enhancing creativity and innovation. The model is Y (enhancing creativity and innovation) = 0.29 of educational background + 0.07 of related trainings + 0.06 of affiliations and organizations - 0.02 of salary - 0.44 of types of accommodation. The factor that yielded significant effect is awards since $t = 2.08$ with p -value of 0.04 which is less than 0.05 level of significance.
- e. Feedback. The result exhibit the coefficient of the regression model on feedback. Since there is a significant effect, it can derive a model to forecast feedbacks. The model is Y (feedbacks) = 0.11 of related trainings - 0.11 of affiliations and organizations - 0.04 of salary - 0.02 of types of accommodation. The factor that yielded significant effect is educational background since $t = 2.67$ with p -value of 0.01 and awards since $t = 3.89$ with p -value of 0.00, both which is less than 0.05 level of significance.
- f. Supporting the team. The result shows the coefficient of the regression model on supporting the team. Since there is a significant effect, it can derive a model to forecast supporting the team. The model is Y (supporting the team) = 0.32 of educational background - 0.19 of related trainings + 0.08 of affiliations and organizations - 0.05 of salary - 0.15 of types of accommodation. The factor that yielded significant effect is awards since $t = 4.85$ with p -value of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significance.

Significant relationship between professional characteristics of the hotel Managers and their extent of Agile Leadership practice.

The summary of the effect of each of the professional attributes to agile leadership of the respondents. It can be seen from that none of the professional attributes significantly affects adaptability to change; only awards have significant effect to collaborations; educational background have significant effect on self-organization; awards have significant effect on enhancing creativity and innovation; educational background also have significant effect to accepting feedback; awards significantly affects supporting the team; and in general awards significantly affects agile leadership. Among the professional attributes, only educational background and awards can explain why managers have the kind of agile leadership one manager has.

The multiple regression analysis on professional attributes of the respondent and their agile leadership management effect size of the professional attributes is (34) percent and the affected part on the extent leadership management practices to adaptable to change is just (11) percent. The same on the result on self-organization that yield only (18) percent effect. Since $F = 1.14$ and with $F = 1.54$ with significance level of 0.35 and 0.18 respectively, which is greater than 0.05 level of significance, professional attributes does not have significant effect on agile leadership practices of the respondent managers in terms of adaptable to change and self-organization. However, the effect size of professional attributes of the respondents is (60) percent to collaboration, (56) percent on enhancing creativity and innovation, (66) percent on feedbacks, and (71) percent on supporting the teams, which has been affected by (36) percent, (31) percent, (44) percent and (50) percent respectively. Since $F = 4.92$, 4.03, 6.95 and 8.96 with significance level of 0.00 which is less than 0.05 level of significance, personal attributes of the respondents significantly affect collaboration, enhancing creativity and innovation, feedbacks and supporting the team. Furthermore, the result between the level of significance between the professional attributes and the extent of categorized agile leadership practices manifest that award and recognition influence the agile leadership practices has long been a cornerstone of effective management. As the competition for talent escalates, how organizations value their employees has become more important than ever.

Based on the significance of relationship the development plan can be proposed to enhance the practice of agile leadership among hotel managers in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in the new normal environment

To enhance the practice of agile leadership among hotel managers in the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in the new normal environment, a proposed comprehensive leadership enhancement program, training and development plan shall be applied and utilized to the new breed of hotel managers.

4. Conclusion

Based on the significant findings of this study, professional attributes strengthen the active participation and performance of hotel managers in practicing agile leadership, development of collective knowledge and skills competencies and the relevance of professional qualifications to manage and lead hotels in changing hotel industry business at Subic Bay Freeport Zone. At present, the competence of the hotel managers in Subic Bay Freeport Zone is relevant to their agile leadership practices which provide direction, process, and coordination to both hoteliers and employees of their company to attain their aims and objectives. However, it has been significantly manifest that professional attributes according to awards and recognition correlates in practicing the agile leadership. This emphasized that awards and recognition support and employs hotel employees and the hotel company to initiate success in working relationships which values every growth and changes with the developing business economic zone in Subic Bay Freeport Zone. The challenge lies on the implementation of training development training which will be supported, endorsed, complied and permitted in the hotels for the growth of every hotel employee.

5. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions the following recommendations were endorsed:

1. An actual leadership enhancement program through self-assessment of agile leadership practices must be prepared to identify the high-potential leadership candidates who can demonstrate agility among hotel managers applicant and trainees, and development programs need to focus on helping them build the skills to succeed.
2. A leadership training plan through attending and joining seminars, conventions, or team-building should be encourage and approved by the owners of the hotels to develop a holistic hotel organization where a group of hotel managers could adapt its organizational practices and cultures to improve hotel market changes.
3. A collaborative effort of the management and employees to prepare and organize a leadership development plan through evaluation of yearly report and yearly strategic planning to improved quality services of the hotel industry that ensures a clear path to sustainable success in handling issues and challenges.
4. The training development plan should adopt and implemented to increasingly diversified the competitive hotel business industry and its hotel managers. Coping with different types of uncertainty requires specific strategic development plan and agile

leadership to identify the type of uncertainty and its impact that would enable hotel managers to make proper decisions and establish coping strategies to reduce any possible risks and improve organizational creativity.

5. The researcher recommends the future researchers to conduct further and parallel studies regarding the agile leadership to enhance and develop the leadership skills of the hotel managers in the changing hotel business industry.

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