Toward Integration of Museum-Tourism Destination Management in Thailand: A Qualitative Analysis of Employee Perspectives

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the satisfaction, needs, expectations, and concerns of the main stakeholders in the organization and to suggest management guidelines to improve the satisfaction, needs, expectations, and concerns of the main stakeholders in the organization. The findings of the workshop study, which involved 44 key informants chosen through a methodical sampling process as stakeholders in science and tourism museum organizations, may provide insight into how staff members relate to the operation in terms of their needs, expectations, and expressions of satisfaction, safety, occupational hygiene, and working conditions. The study found that there were differing opinions among the staff members regarding the organization's vision and mission. It also identified important problems regarding the museum's role in advancing scientific knowledge, disseminating scientific knowledge, promoting educational equity, and presenting museum tourism. The outcome suggested a set of management guidelines, such as 1) creating an inspiring environment that might satisfy the stakeholders and fulfill the intended goals; 2) work-life balance; 3) satisfaction improvement; 4) diverse skills promotion and development; 5) transparent leadership; and 6) effective communication channels.

Keywords: museum tourism; employee perspective; museum' stakeholder; Thai museum

Introduction

Even though museums are classified in a variety of ways (ElDamshiry & ElFouly, 2022), their classification is still subject to change due to the ever-changing, dynamic social context. This is because museums are defined and intended to be non-profit organizations, as per the International Council of Museums (2022). Since the 2020s, museums have been recognized as a key component of the "creative economy" and "Industrial 4.0," or the shift to a digital society, which has brought with it new challenges and cultural dimensions that museums must adjust to remain sustainable (Srisuk et al., 2022).

Expectations about the museum as a tourist destination, management that is focused on visitors, marketing that acts as an unofficial conduit between the museum and visitors, and management that meets the requirements and expectations of stakeholders (Kim & Park, 2020). To increase cooperation and provide them with suggestions that meet their needs and expectations, education focuses more on understanding, satisfaction, needs, expectations, and concerns of the stakeholders (Soliman, Al-Shanfari & Gulvady, 2023).

There are many ways to understand the stakeholders, but this study employed a workshop that can be used as Social Value Orientation (SVO), according to the theory by Nishimura, Inoue, Masuhara & Musha (2020). It was possible to gather information from workshop participants, use surveys that weren't unduly challenging, manage without being overly dependent on the workshop context, and sample the participants using certain guidelines.

The employees would actively participate in the study and be committed to increasing organizational efficiency if it considered them as primary stakeholders (Shahzad et al., 2022). According to one study, employee performance and happiness were influenced by how the organization's vision and mission were seen, which in turn was influenced by organizational communication and support (Ibrahim Abdullah et al., 2020). This was particularly true for staff members who were key players in delivering excellent customer service, ensuring customer satisfaction, and fostering success in the service and tourism industries (Jeong & Kim, 2020). Therefore, it was found that the problem of this study was how to enable the museum to develop into a museum tourism destination with the cooperation of personnel, who will be an important mechanism in leading the organization to success.

Objective

The study aimed to comprehend the level of satisfaction, demands, expectations, and concerns held by primary stakeholders within the company. Additionally, management guidelines were to be proposed to enhance these aspects of stakeholder satisfaction.

Scope of Research

The scope of this qualitative study using the workshop of 44 key informants selected by methodical sampling, as stakeholders of science and tourism museum organizations in Thailand in 2023.

Literature Reviews

Thailand Museum Tourism

Thailand's number of museums has grown by 1,574 in the last two decades (The Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre, 2022) in the face of promotional efforts under creative economy and tourism industry promotion in 2004 (ShawHong, 2020) aimed to push Thailand to be the Southeast Asia and the creative industry hub of ASEAN (Punpeng, 2021). Several "New Generation Museums" have been opened rapidly under various forms of cooperation to promote cultural and tourism growth, for example, Museum Siam, Bangkok Art and Culture Centre, Rattanakosin Exhibition Hall, National Science Museum's Science Square, ASEAN Cultural Centre; and the Rama IX Museum that were deemed the largest in Southeast Asia with the capacity of over 1 million visitors per year (Royal Thai Embassy, Washington D.C., 2019). In conclusion, museums were a major factor in Thailand's tourism industry that had a significant socioeconomic impact on the sustainable development of museum tourism, and culturally unique facilities of Thailand that required constant relationship maintenance with stakeholders.

Museum Stakeholder

According to Boukas and Ioannou (2020), there is an inherent link between museum tourism and stakeholder participation. These stakeholders may include local communities, government agencies, tourism entrepreneurs, and/or cultural heritage groups. These organizations have a vital role in shaping the strategy and management of the museum. To manage museum tourism and achieve the financial objective, effective stakeholder participation management was essential

(Zbuchea & Bira, 2020). A study (Martínez–Peláez et al., 2023) showed the ability to use detailed information and stakeholder expertise to enhance tourist planning and sustainability. Shared responsibility for conservation and development would result from using detailed information about stakeholders to foster cooperation and manage satisfaction, needs, expectations, and concerns to create tourism proposals that satisfy needs, are diverse, create experiences, and foster a sense of ownership and engagement (Soliman, Al–Shanfari, & Gulvady, 2023). In light of this, employees' sincere engagement and commitment as primary stakeholders could enhance organizational performance (Shahzad et al., 2022). This is because employees play a critical role in providing high-quality service, ensuring customer satisfaction, and achieving organizational success, particularly in the service and tourism sectors (Jeong & Kim, 2020).

Employee Satisfaction in the Service Sector

In the context of fierce competition in the tourism sector, the competitive edge usually comes from service quality, and user or tourist satisfaction that comes through the satisfaction of the employees. Thus, employee satisfaction is a major factor in service (Kim–Shyan et al., 2023). A study on employee satisfaction was important, even for the tourism industry, where employee satisfaction was found to be influential towards the success and performance of the organization. In academic literature, employee satisfaction is directly related to user satisfaction and loyalty. The stakeholder study also defined employees as part of the stakeholder study within the organization regarding satisfaction, needs, expectations, and concerns (Demetris et al., 2021). High employee satisfaction would lead to high–quality service, a positive attitude towards the customers, and behavioral participation that is conducive to the good experience of the tourists (Cheng & Brown, 2018). Furthermore, organizations that are attentive to employee satisfaction are more likely to attract and retain highly skilled employees, leading to better service, reputation, and a competitive edge (Nunkoo, 2018). Academic work also mentioned tourism employee satisfaction as a major contributor to a positive organizational culture and employee determination (Hayat & Afshari, 2020). The satisfaction concept applied to this study as a workshop and appraised employee satisfaction with the score "1" meaning complete dissatisfaction whereas "10" meant high satisfaction (Dziuba, Ingaldi, & Zhuravskaya, 2020) and the concept of connection between employee satisfaction and the study on satisfaction, needs, expectations, concerns, and suggestions (Jamal et al., 2021), leading to research questions Q3 – Q8:

Q1: How would you rate satisfaction with the organization's process (1–10)?

Q2: Why do you give such a score?

Q3: What would you like to suggest to the organization the most?

Q4: What do you expect for the future of the organization?

Q5: What would you like the organization to retain or change?

Q6: What makes you concerned or frustrated with the work?

Working Environmental and Employee satisfaction

The academic review mentioned the working environment improvement as closely knitted with the achievement of business strategy. This is a major thing that leads to perception, understanding, and a deciding factor for employee satisfaction, which in turn is necessary in the tourism industry (Chawla, 2020). Another issue was the emphasis on and elevation of satisfaction among employees who were like frontline diplomats of tourism that would generate user satisfaction (Hsieh & Chuang, 2019). For the above reasons, investment in a conducive environment, employee development, and career opportunities would lead to satisfaction and participation among the employees. Not only would such a practice improve the livelihood of the employees, but it would also help with the sustainability and profitability of the tourism industry in the long run (Minh Loan, 2020). Thus, Q7 of this study is:

Q7: Please rate your working environment from 1 (dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) and provide suggestions for improvement.

Methodology

Population and sampling design

In Thailand, there are about 1,574 museums. This study used the 4 museums of the National Science Museum (NSM) with 812 employees (full-time employees, contractors, and volunteers). This study is qualitative research with interview techniques. The samples were selected by non-probability sampling with at least 5% of the population, in addition to quota sampling based on the proportion of four departments and then convenience sampling for employees working on a specific date and time. Therefore, in the workshop, there were 44 participants in total, 20 of whom were employees (six directors, senior employees, senior professional employees, and 14 professional or

operating employees), 16 contractors, and 11 volunteers. The sampling process was designed based on the proportion of existing staff.

Personal information of the workshop participants was: gender balance was 45.5:54.5% (men/women); aged 25–35 years at 40.9%, <25 years at 27.3%, 35–45 years at 22.7%, and >45 years at 9.1%; regarding education, bachelor's degree at 61.4%, master's degree and lower than bachelor's degree both at 9.1%, higher than master's degree at 6.8%; about service years, 3–5 years at 45.5%, less than 3 years at 40.9%, and >5 years at 13.6%.

Measures and data collection.

The workshop–based study that could be used as SVO was a perfect blend between the "pro–social" group, or those putting collective benefit above oneself, the "pro–self", group, or those putting oneself above collective benefit, and then the "others" that did not fit into the first two, as the SVO allowed expression of the three groups without each of them influencing each other (Nishimura et al., 2020).

Participants were attracted by simple questionnaires and a relaxed atmosphere as they were randomly sampled, as stated earlier. Nishimura et al. (2020) also found that participants in the workshop were less likely to express their pro–self–view at first, but they would become more pro–self in later rounds.

The study was thus designed for consistency, so that the first part was free expression on an issue, and then the next step would be the selection of five comments that applied to them most. To ensure more consistency with the practical guidelines for SVO per Nishimura et al, (2020), there were efforts to attract the participants; there were single–use online classrooms on ahaslides.com that could accommodate 200 attendants (for observers from the organization).

Measurement was done through eight questions that were designed for the research purpose and verified for IOC value by experts inside and outside the organization. The research was also proven by the Exemption Ethical Review Subcommittee for Human Research in Science Humanities and Social Sciences (Research and Development Institute, Suan Dusit University: COA.NO: SDU–RDI–SHS 2023–058, –062: September 28, 2023).

Data collection was done through the presentation so that participants could have real–time interactions after scanning the QR code to join the workshop with their smartphones. Each question would allow free comments through ahaslides.com. The presentation started with a workshop introduction, the provision of personal information, the company vision, the company mission,

expectations and suggestions, needs and suggestions, concerns and suggestions, overall satisfaction towards the organization and suggestions, and finally satisfaction towards the environment and safety of the organization.

Figure 1 Participation in employees' need, expectation, & engagement workshop.

Data analysis approach

Answering the questions submitted by the workshop participants, along with comments, were calculated statistically, such as frequency and percentage, based on the question and conditions. There were two types of questions: questions with one answer, and then questions with an answer and voting result. In the first part, the participants could choose not more than five answers or questions for comment, and then the system would show the comments. In the second part, each participant would have five votes, which they could give to the answer they agreed with. Finally, the results from both parts will be shown to summarize the total number of comments and the highest-voted issue. (Jiao & Li, 2021; Buryakov, Hino, Kovacs & Serdült, 2022)

Results

The workshop study had 44 informants, 5 observers, and 3 hosts. The questionnaire had nine questions of which the respondent could give 1-3 answers, and each respondent had five votes. The 10 most-voted comments for each question were shown. The result was as follows:

Objective 1: To comprehend the level of satisfaction, demands, expectations, and concerns held by primary stakeholders within the company, the respondents were asked many questions as follows:

1. Overall satisfaction with working with the organization

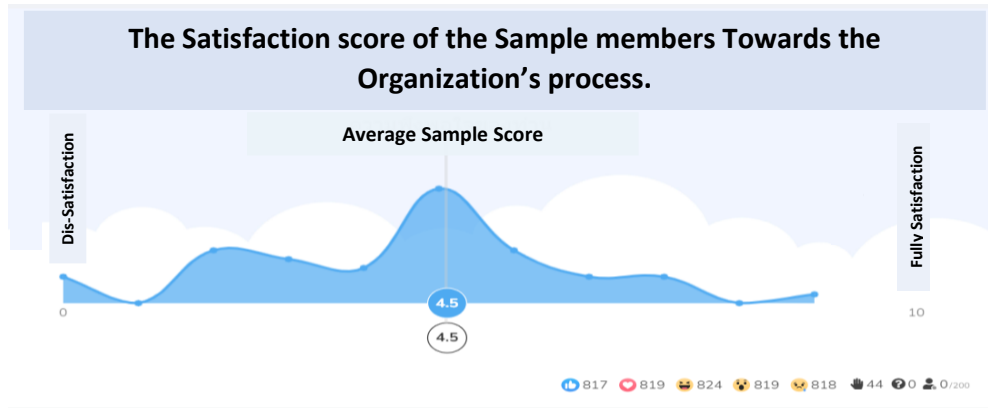*1.1 How would you rate satisfaction with the organization's process (1–10)? The result is shown in Figure 2.*

Figure 2 Satisfaction of the sample group members towards the organization's process.

1.2 Why do you give such a score?

The study found that there were 75 issues and 10 comments on satisfaction with working with the organization: (1) The National Science Museum (NSM) had a good policy, working process, and achievement, but still had problems to manage, and improve so that everyone works in the same tune (27 votes). 2)It was found that excessively complicated and inefficient working processes were associated with excessive collaboration with other agencies or repeated reliance on top performers (25 votes); 3) Opacity, bias, factionalism, and unhealthy self-centeredness within the leadership (24 votes); 4) Abnormal structuring and workload disparity affected performance; 5) No work-life balance, forcing the employees to bring work back home (22 votes); 6) Delays and redundancy in paperwork while there should be streamlining (9 votes); 7) Excessive burden that inhibits quality; 8) Noticeable inappropriateness and unclarity (7 votes); 9) Performance-based management highly affecting the organization, and with unclarity, would need changes (6 votes); 10) Shortage of amenities and access to basic utilities and welfare (4 votes).

2. Needs/Expectations/Concerns and suggestions to improve the Organization.

2.1 What do you expect about the future of the organization?

The study found that there were 98 issues and 10 comments on the employees' expectations towards working with the organization. 1) Job security with good welfare, appropriateness for younger employees, and good career progress (42 votes); 2) Modern

organizations that do not simply adhere to the old ways or culture (39 votes); 3) Appropriate facilities such as basic information, service center, parking space, ATMs, roofed walkways, public transportation, parks, resting areas, and restaurants (18 votes); 4) The organization should be able to keep up with new technology and apply such technologies as much as possible (17 votes); 5) The organization accepts new ideas and keeps up with the society (16 votes); 6) Turn science into an enjoyable experience to create a wise society (14 votes); 7) Streamline the management (13 votes); 8) Improve the work–life balance to make both the employees and visitors happy (11 votes); 9) Use the right man for the job and treat the employees, contractors, and volunteers better (10 votes); and 10) Satisfy the visitors and draw more people to the NSM (9 votes).

2.2 What would you like the organization to retain or change?

The study found that there were 98 issues and 10 comments on the employees' expectations towards working with the organization: 1) appropriate salary and welfare to motivate better results (44 votes); 2) allowing freedom in operation so the staff can stay happy and motivated (24 votes); 3) improve transparency and accountability in terms of management and advancement and eliminate favoritism (23 votes); 4) change the mindset to understand the workers better (15 votes); 6) provide more equal advancement opportunities (15 votes); 7) streamline the paperwork and add more effective ERP systems and amenities (7 votes); 8) set the good goal, change the work method, and assign the right work for the right man (5 votes); 9) improve the employees' life quality (4 votes); and 10) improve specialized knowledge and learn from mistakes (3 votes).

2.3 What makes you concerned or frustrated with the work?

The study found that there were 67 issues and 10 comments on the employees' frustration: 1) an opaque organization that remains trapped in bureaucracy and the "old ways" without opening to new ideas (34 votes); 2) Redundant and complicated structure and work process (28 votes); 3) Unbalanced workload, unclear or redundant missions, and excessive job responsibilities beyond the usual duties (27 votes); 4) Unfair performance assessment (23 votes); 5) Authoritarian management with unclear goal, unrealistic expectation and poor management skills (21 votes); 6) Inability to refuse work that is not within the scope or competency (20 votes); 7) obsolete equipment (16 votes); 8) Unclear communication but excessive rush (12 votes); 9) Concerns about leaving the bureaucracy (9 votes); and 10) waste of budget on unnecessary issues.

3. Satisfaction towards the working workplace, as well as occupational safety and hygiene.

3.1 Please rate your working environment from 1 (dissatisfied) to 10 (very satisfied) and please provide suggestions for improvement.

There is one most outstanding comment, and similar comments were examined by frequency counting. The result is shown in Figure 3 below:
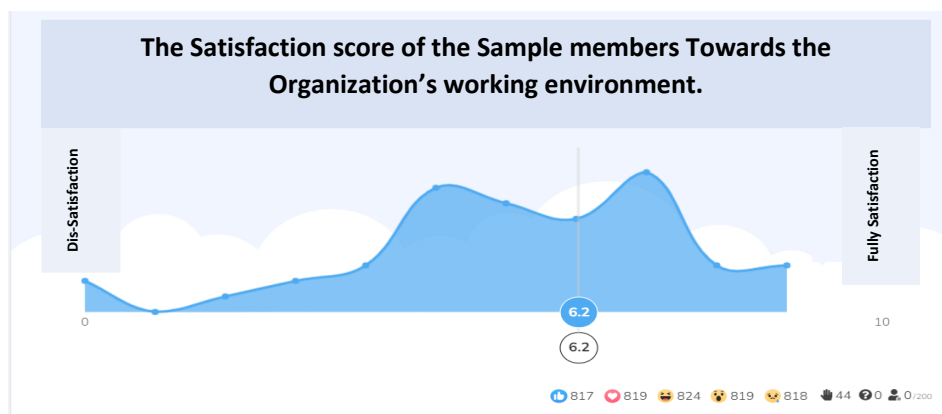

Figure 3 Satisfaction towards working environment.

Regarding satisfaction with the working environment, it was found that the average score was 6.2 out of 10. Most employees (29/44) thought that the organization should build awareness about occupational safety and hygiene, a sense of security, and continuously improve the working space. There should be first aid tools, sufficient working space, and regular safety training. Some (12/44) thought that the working environment was unclear and that there was a disparity in workplace allocation for employees, contractors, and volunteers.

Objective: 2) Management guidelines are to be proposed to enhance these aspects of stakeholder satisfaction. The respondents were asked as follows:

What would you like to suggest to the organization the most?

The study found that there were 98 issues and 10 comments on suggestions: 1) Pay that is appropriate for performance and economy, for employees, contractors, temporary workers, and volunteers (40 votes); 2) Appropriate manpower allocation for the job, put the right man for the job, and reduce workload disparity (31 votes); 3) More clarity about the NSM's vision, perception and performance, acceptance of challenges to performance and internal management (27 votes); 4)

Class division, trust, and respect for the employees and contractors (22 votes); 5) leadership that must have clarity, structuring, assignment, goal, resource support, rewarding with transparency and accountability (20 votes); 6) create a culture of mutual understanding and collaborative work that allows opinions and breaking off the usual mold (15 votes); 7) Transparency and accountability in management with no more favoritism and abuse of power (12 votes); 8) Corporate communication and internal communication such as organization-wide announcement, performance report, and structure review (11 votes); 9) Appropriate budget allocation and cost-cutting; and 10) Reasonable and principled assessment, reward and punishment (10 votes).

The employees would like an improvement including environmental, health and safety (EHS), and utility/facility defects, such as non-functional CCTVs, appliances, poorly-designed crosswalks, traffic management problems, insufficient working space, lack of fire exit, insufficient working space that might lead to safety risk and poor ventilation.

Discussion

The results of the workshop for 44 participants, five observers, and three facilitators gave insight into understanding the satisfaction, expectations, needs, and concerns of employees that were the main internal stakeholders per Nishimura et al (2020), towards museums as tourism service providers in Thailand. The study had nine questions that allowed the participants to freely comment, and five votes for each participant, and lastly 10 main issues to be presented.

The result showed various viewpoints on the assessment of the overall satisfaction towards the organization and showed that a moderate level of understanding about satisfaction was needed, as it affected service quality, in concurrence with Cheng & Brown (2018). The study explained various aspects of employee perception and main issues that indicated their sentiment and comments about the organization, as well as suggestions. There were 98 issues and 10 main issues that stressed the importance of pay adjustment to performance, manpower allocation flexibility, transparent leadership, instillment of the culture of collaborative work, and emphasis on continuous negotiation and operation to promote the performance-conducive environment, concurring with the study by Hayat & Afshari (2020). This also included suggestions regarding the satisfaction, expectations, needs, and concerns that could be improved.

The workplace environment satisfaction assessment, including occupational safety and hygiene, showed a mediocre score of 6.2/10. The employees commented that the organization was

able to promote occupational safety and hygiene, as well as awareness and a sense of safety at work, improvement of facilities, first aid, and safety training. Nevertheless, some staff were concerned about an unclear working environment, disparity in workplace allocation, and inconsistency in safety protocol. There were suggestions about improving of the environment, along with environmental, health and safety (EHS), which covered the need to improve staff efficiency. Defects in the utilities and facilities such as non-functional CCTVs, appliances, poorly-designed crosswalks, traffic management problems, insufficient working space, a lack of fire exit, and insufficient working space might lead to safety risks and poor ventilation. This finding stressed the continuous addressing of occupational safety and hygiene problems as well as working environment improvement to keep performance high.

Conclusion

The workshop study on employees who were internal stakeholders within the organization led to insight into the satisfaction, needs, expectations, and concerns of the employees in detail and revealed many viewpoints about the perception of the organization's vision and mission, as well as existing issues, and perception about the role of the museum in learning promotion, science knowledge promotion and publication, science-based tourism, and the promotion of learning equity. The result could serve as a management guideline that could lead to compliance with the organization's intent and stable performance. Furthermore, the study found that understanding and support on behalf of the employees were important by pointing out outstanding issues that could promote the project and activities related to science learning promotion. This study emphasized changing the organizational goal to match the employees' perception, and there should be strong support for the initiatives for a culture of excellence and innovation.

Research Implication

Theory Implication: Working with organizations is associated with organizational development in two ways, according to the study: "working environment" and "working with organization," both of which have an impact on the caliber of work. They are not dependent on one another; that is, an improvement in one does not translate into an improvement in the other. To improve the caliber of

the work, the company must thus develop both areas at the same time. The following are the matters that need to be prioritized for the "working environment":
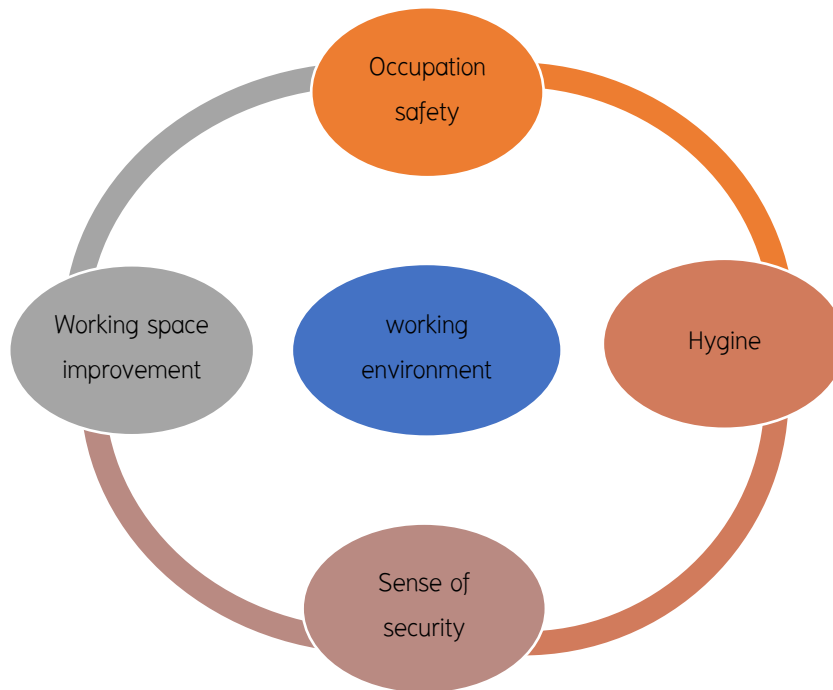

Figure 4: Working environment.

Employees prioritized a range of issues when it came to working with the organization, which may be summed up as follows:

Figure 5: Working with organization.

Managerial Implication:

Nonetheless, research indicates that individuals occupying prominent positions are more likely to be content with their surroundings. Consequently, the research offers suggestions for use in management. If the company makes improvements to the four areas of the workplace, it will be stable. It will improve one's emotional state at work and make adopting a positive outlook easier.

Suggestion

Regarding suggestions on the management of satisfaction, expectation, and needs of the stakeholders, especially the main stakeholders within the organization, they were critical for the success and sustainability of the work, especially the connection with personnel management that would lead to efficiency and satisfaction at work. Suggestions are:

1. Appropriate environment: an environment that is open, conducive to cooperation, and the exchange of ideas and knowledge is important.

2. Life balance: although not directly expressed, the experience during the pandemic showed that employees could work from home as well as at the actual workplace. Thus, there should be a work–life balance and recreational activities.

3. Satisfaction development: this process takes time and continuous effort, but the study of the sample group showed that a comprehensive development method could be made. However, due to diversity and limited resources, the effort might start from the most important issues first. The organization is shown to be full of potential and talents; basing the strategy on the talents might be a good idea.

4. Support and development of diverse knowledge: despite the museum being outstanding in terms of knowledge, most of the knowledge is specialized and thus there should be more diverse knowledge management and lectures on skills that are not work–related or promotion of self–development and learning.

5. Building transparency and confidence: the staff expects that the leadership will be fair in resource allocation. However, the study found issues of opaqueness, bias, disparity, and selective treatment that affected confidence and satisfaction.

6. Organize staff meetings with a specific purpose to find out the proper improvement ways to promote museum tourism destinations.

Effective communication channel: the study could identify poor effectiveness and clarity in communication and suggest open and effective communication management for knowledge exchange, as well as communication with other levels in the organization.

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